

INSPECTION REPORT

ROYAL WEST OF ENGLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Exeter

LEA area: Devon

Unique reference number: 113654

Principal: Mr. John Shaw

Lead Inspector: Janet Bond

Dates of Inspection: 9-12 November 2004

Inspection number: 268624

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special school
School category:	Non-maintained
Age range of pupils:	7 - 22
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	78
School address:	50 Topsham Road Exeter Devon
Postcode:	EX2 4NF
Telephone number:	01392 272692
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Richard Speight
Date of previous inspection:	March 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This is a mixed non-maintained residential special school and college for 78 pupils and students with hearing impairment aged between seven and 20 years. A total communication approach is used, with all pupils, students and staff signing. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs with a number of pupils having additional learning and/or behavioural needs. It is not appropriate to compare the attainment of pupils in this school and college with national expectations or averages. Currently, there are very few pupils from a mixed ethnic background and two speak English as an additional language. One third of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average. On leaving college most students go on to continuing education or employment. The number of pupils joining and leaving the school at times other than those expected is average.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
2642	Janet Bond	Lead inspector	Mathematics, art and design, special educational needs, English as an additional language
9079	Ann Moss	Lay inspector	
4989	Lynn Lewis	Team inspector	English, religious education, design and technology
9079	Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	Science, information and communication technology
17182	Dr. Michael Farrell	Team inspector	Physical education, personal, health and social education, work related learning, residential provision

The inspection contractor was:

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

This is a very effective school and it provides very good value for money. Pupils and students have very good attitudes to learning because relationships are excellent. All pupils and students, including those with additional special educational needs, achieve very well in nearly all subjects because teaching is very good and is matched to individual needs, and because the very effective total communication approach helps them access all aspects of learning. Residential provision is very good. Very good leadership and good management and very effective governance have enabled the school to successfully develop and improve the quality of education provided to pupils and students.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- It provides a very effective learning community by promoting relationships that engender an excellent ethos.
- High quality teaching and a very good curriculum, both in school and in residence, enable pupils and students to achieve very well.
- Pupils and students behave very well and have very good attitudes because personal development and guidance are very good.
- Very good use of signing plus high quality accommodation and resources very effectively support learning.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not sufficiently used in all subjects to effectively support learning.
- Pupils and students are very well prepared for life after school and leave as confident and mature young adults.
- Very good leadership and good management have created a commitment to raising standards further. However, monitoring of teaching and learning by subject leaders is not in place.
- Governors make a very positive contribution to the school's effectiveness.
- The school has very good working links with parents and provides very high levels of care and safety for pupils.
- Staff involved in the good outreach provision do not have opportunity to share their findings of mainstream developments with other staff in school.

Although further work is still needed on the use of ICT to support learning, there have been significant improvements and developments in many aspects of the work of the school, resulting in good overall improvement since the last inspection. These have resulted in improvements in pupils' and students' achievements. Leadership has been successful in empowering staff to develop more appropriate programmes of work and more effective systems of tracking individual progress and this has had a very positive impact. All issues raised at the last inspection have been addressed. The school is much more effective than at the time of the last inspection.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 6	very good	very good
Year 9	very good	very good
Year 11	very good	very good
Year 15	very good	very good

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

Achievement is now very good overall for all pupils and students, including those with additional special educational needs. There is no difference in the achievement of boys or girls. Achievements have improved since the last inspection, particularly in English, mathematics, science, physical education, religious education, personal, health and social education and ICT. Older pupils and students achieve well in the extended range of accredited programmes they follow.

Pupils' personal qualities and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Their attendance, attitudes and behaviour are very good. Relationships are excellent.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. Teaching is **very good** for all year groups, which results in pupils achieving very well in their learning. Teachers have a very good understanding of pupils' and students' learning needs. Information from very good assessments and individual education plans (IEPs) is used well by staff when they plan and teach their lessons. This means work and resources are appropriate and effectively support individuals' learning. Very good support from learning support assistants and communication support workers makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' and students' improved learning through effective individual support and small group work.

The curriculum is very good and is effectively enhanced by a rich range of opportunities through the use of the local community and other schools and colleges. The very good out-of-hours learning programme further enriches learning opportunities. There is very good care, guidance and support for pupils and students. Very good partnerships with parents further contribute to improved learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good overall. The leadership of the principal is very good. Whilst management is very good in most respects, subject leaders do not yet sufficiently monitor teaching. The very supportive and challenging governors are well informed about most aspects of the school but could do more to monitor the school's effectiveness. The governors, principal and new leadership team have successfully moved the school forwards in raising standards. They have the commitment of all staff, who continue to work to further raise and improve the quality of provision. Statutory requirements are fully met. The recently established good outreach provision is developing well, but leadership and management of the service are not yet maximising its impact on the school.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents, pupils and students have very good views of the school. Parents receive very good information about their child's progress and about the school. Pupils and students love school and are committed to the well-being of the school community. Inspectors found behaviour to be very good.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Continue the developments in the use of ICT across subjects to support pupils' learning.
- Enable subject leaders to monitor teaching and learning in their subject across the whole school to ensure consistency in teaching.
- Provide opportunities for outreach staff to share their mainstream practice with school staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Achievement overall is very good and is consistently so across the school. There are no differences in achievement for boys and girls, those with additional special educational needs or those with different levels of ability.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement throughout the school has improved because teaching and planning are very good.
- Pupils and students achieve very well in developing their communication and social skills.
- Pupils and students make very good progress towards their academic and their individual personal and social targets in their IEPs.
- Pupils and students achieve very well in the wide range of accredited course work made available to them.

Commentary

1. Pupils of all ages achieve very well because teaching is consistently very good, pupils have very positive attitudes to learning and the curriculum is very well planned and relevant. Skilful teaching using high quality signing and very good assessment procedures means that achievement in mathematics, science, religious education, personal social and health education (PSHE) and the overall development of communication skills are very good. There is no difference in the achievement of pupils of differing abilities or in those of pupils with additional special educational needs because all have full and effective access to all learning. Due to the small year groups and the very wide range of learning needs, the school is grappling with setting whole-school targets, although they have been set in some subjects and data collection and analysis are taking place.
2. Teachers and support staff ensure that new entrants to the school quickly master their signing and communication skills and progressively improve them. By the time pupils become students and join the post-16 provision with its distinctive adult approach, their integration into society is a smooth one. The increasing number of accredited courses being offered shows an upward trend in those able to achieve at GCSE and entry levels and other appropriate accredited courses.
3. All pupils do very well in their social development and achieve very well against their individual social skills targets, with most being completed successfully within the predicted time-scale. Staff are very well acquainted with pupils' and students' targets and they do well in incorporating them into lessons, as well as lunch times and the boarding provision. By the end of Years 6, 9 and 11, pupils show very good achievement in the subjects of the curriculum and this is maintained until they leave school.
4. In English, pupils achieve well, but the very nature of their deafness and the fact that increasingly they are entering the school at secondary phase means that their ability to acquire the skills of communicating and those of reading and writing are slower. Despite this, at post-16 students achieve very well in English because the introduction of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has developed teachers' knowledge and skills most effectively and raised expectations of what can be achieved. English and mathematics are well taught in other subjects. Pupils' and students' achievement is very good in mathematics, science, religious education, design and technology, art and design, personal, social and health education and citizenship (PSHE), work-related education and physical education. In these subjects very good subject leadership, very good curriculum planning and assessment and very good teaching to individual needs promote high levels of achievement. In art and design and physical education a number of pupils and students achieve higher than expected for their learning needs. Pupils

and students in Years 10 and 11 and post-16 achieve very well in British Sign Language, which is very well taught and reinforced constantly by very effective communication support workers. In religious education high quality, thought-provoking teaching encourages pupils to grapple with complex moral issues. In ICT, achievement is satisfactory. It is not yet planned for or used effectively to support pupils' learning across all areas of the curriculum. There is currently a lack of dynamism in the promotion of ICT as a tool for supporting learning.

5. The achievements of pupils and students have improved very well since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' and students' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are developed very well. Their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good. Attendance and behaviour are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' and students' relationships with each other and with staff are excellent and contribute to the excellent school ethos.
- Spiritual and social development is very good.
- Moral development is excellent.
- Cultural development is good.
- High attendance levels and the punctual arrival of pupils contribute very well to their high attainment.

Commentary

6. Pupils and students love coming to school and their attitudes to learning and to school life are very good. This contributes significantly to their very good achievements. Behaviour is very good. Pupils and students take a keen interest in all aspects of school life and in the rich variety of activities provided. Their willingness to take responsibility is clearly shown in their active participation in the school council.
7. Pupils and students agree there is very little bullying or other forms of harassment and on the very few occasions when this does occur it is dealt with very effectively. Pupils' and students' relationships with others are excellent and the school promotes these very well. They care for each other and have a warm and trusting relationship with staff. Their confidence and self-esteem develop very well. This is because they respond very well to the school's effective ways of encouraging pupils and students to want to learn.
8. Pupils' and students' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness develop very well. They achieve this through their contributions to school assemblies, through discussion groups, through PSHE work and through the one-to-one counselling sessions in which they eagerly participate. Progress against targets in pupils' IEPs is very good in personal development.
9. Pupils and students interact very well with the range of visitors coming into the school. They use the many opportunities for visiting other schools and colleges and the rich and varied programme of community activities very effectively to support their very good social development.
10. Pupils' appreciation of their own culture and that of others is good overall, being very good for pupils aged 7 to 16 and satisfactory for students aged 17 to 20. All pupils and students discuss, learn about and compare deaf and hearing cultures. For pupils aged 7 to 16, studies of other cultures includes work about Native Americans, the study of some of the world religions and visits to centres linked to other cultures. Very varied and well-chosen books and other resources underpin this. Post-16 students from other cultures are encouraged to talk about

their beliefs and values and to demonstrate skills associated with their culture: for example, fruit carving.

11. Attendance levels are very good. There have been three fixed period exclusions during the past academic year. The inspection team judged that the school's action had on these occasions been used as part of the behaviour policy as a necessary and effective strategy for managing pupils with extremely challenging behaviour. The pupils concerned were successfully re-integrated into school after their periods of exclusion. Pupils arrive punctually, except on some occasions when their transport is late. Procedures for monitoring attendance now meet statutory requirements. Since the last inspection there has been a good improvement in pupils' and students' attitudes, behaviour and personal development as well as in their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	5.7
National data:	5.6

Unauthorised absence	
School data:	0
National data:	0.4

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
74	2	0

Note: the table only includes pupils and students of compulsory school age.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is very good for all age groups. Teaching, learning and assessment are all very good. The very good curriculum, range of subject-specialist rooms and resources, links with the local colleges and the very good support from learning support assistants and communication support workers very effectively supports pupils' and students' achievements.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers use assessments very well to plan appropriate lessons and work for individual pupils and students.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are very good in most subjects.
- Learning is very good because in most lessons teachers match their knowledge of the subject to pupils' and students' needs well and work is planned for the full ability range.
- The very high quality learning support assistants contribute to effective subject teaching teams to support high quality learning.
- The use of ICT across the curriculum is under-developed.
- Very good procedures for the assessment of academic and social development effectively involve pupils and students.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 49 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3 (6%)	26 (53%)	16 (33%)	4 (8%)	0	0	0

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

12. Teaching and learning are very good. Teaching teams are consistent and proficient in their signing support, which gives pupils and students access to what is being taught. Pupils and students show a remarkable level of concentration as they follow teachers' sign-supported language throughout each lesson. Teachers have a clear understanding of this and are able to pace their lessons at a level that maximises concentration. The quality of support given by the well-trained signing learning support assistants is a fundamental reason for the very good quality of the learning, as is the very good pupil/staff ratio maintained by the principal.
13. Relationships are a great strength and as pupils become more proficient in their communication skills, the trust and belief they have in their mentors becomes increasingly evident. An excellent example of this is the teaching of British Sign Language (BSL) given by a profoundly deaf teacher aided by the speech and language therapist. In the lesson observed pupils were captivated entirely by the sheer dynamism of the team. The fifty-minute lesson was vibrant and interesting throughout with a great deal of mime and humour. Pupil dismay at the bell to end the lesson was a clear indicator of their complete involvement. The management of behaviour within lessons is very good and rarely does a situation become a disturbance affecting the learning of others. Teachers are challenging in their delivery and pupils and students enjoy the high quality of the thought-provoking questions. This was particularly evident in English, mathematics, science and religious education (RE) lessons where teachers probed understanding of complex issues. There were times when teachers of these subjects were surprised and delighted by the quality of the responses.
14. English is well taught throughout the school and is very good at post-16, where BSL is used more. Mathematics throughout the school is very well taught and there are good examples of its application across the curriculum. Science, religious education, PHSE, physical education and art and design are also very well taught, as is the specialist teaching of BSL, which can at times be excellent. However, the teaching of ICT is satisfactory and ICT is not well used across the curriculum to support learning.
15. Teaching and learning at post-16 are very good and this was evident when students were placed off site at local colleges of further education. Some of the learning observed in a training restaurant was of a very high standard with students very well integrated, appropriately dressed in kitchen whites or waiters' uniforms. One of the deaf students was pleased to be asked to demonstrate his skills with fork and spoon in silver service. This student had struggled initially but with typical determination he took his utensils home at the weekend and practised until perfect. That summed up the strong desire, so evident in all of the students, to succeed.
16. Specialist teaching combined with the philosophy and practice of total communication strategies for all pupils and students provides excellent support for their learning. When challenging behaviour was once exhibited the pupil was treated with dignity as teaching staff gently yet assertively reminded him that he was there to learn. All pupils are fully included in all of the activities and so make very good gains in their communication. There has been some monitoring of classroom performance by members of the governing body. A good example of this is evident in a full report written after a monitoring visit to the English department, which included a suggestion that a further visit would be necessary to deal with the complexity of the department.

17. Progress in teaching and learning since the last inspection has been good. There has been a major improvement in the number of lessons judged to be of a very high standard and teaching is now very good overall. The quality of assessment is very good. Teachers work very well together with subject leaders to assess how well each child is doing in each subject. This information is collected regularly so that teachers can see what pupils have learnt and what they should learn next. Assessment in English, mathematics and science is very good and lessons are planned to take full account of what pupils can already do. Assessment of pupils' and students' personal and social development is very good. Members of school and residential staff work very closely together on this aspect of their work, and so have a very effective and consistent approach to supporting pupils and students.

The curriculum

The curriculum caters very well for both pupils' and students' interests and learning needs. The school provides an abundant range of rich and varied opportunities for learning in the school, the wider community and the residential provision. The accommodation and resources meet the needs of the curriculum very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal has put in place a curriculum committee of senior teaching staff which has become a major strength and contributed significantly to improved achievement.
- The PSHE and citizenship curriculum and an extensive range of extra-curricular activities, clubs, visits and links with other educational establishments contribute very well to enriching pupils' and students' learning.
- The support given by other professionals is central to pupils' and students' access to the rich and varied range of learning opportunities.
- Insufficient use is made of ICT across the curriculum. Although there are plans to include it in subjects there was very little evidence of it during the inspection.
- The very good range of college courses contribute to very good outcomes for students.
- There have been many useful curriculum links with other schools, including outreach provision, but these have not been systematically used to inform curriculum planning.

Commentary

18. The school's curriculum is moving forward in a planned, well managed and progressive way, and is one of the successes of the school's dynamic curriculum leadership. The curriculum management group (CMG) is an energetic group of teachers who have a clear view and understanding of where they want to take the curriculum in planned, logical steps to provide for the very wide range of special educational needs of the pupils. Schemes of work are now fully in place and better planned than they have been in the past. The CMG has produced a curriculum full of rich and varied learning experiences with the support of the teaching staff and other professionals. This has resulted in very high morale and enthusiasm by teachers and complementing professionals at a very difficult time in the history of the school. All staff work hard to achieve a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to the needs of pupils and students and that meets the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. No pupils study a modern foreign language and instead follow a British Sign Language course, and following parental requests two have been withdrawn from religious education and receive additional English or communication skills at this time.
19. Provision for all pupils and students is very good. There is very good support from outside agencies in preparing for the next stage of education and life beyond school. There is very good support from 'Connexions' staff who visit regularly, offering help and guidance on a wide range of future needs. A very good programme of PSHE and citizenship is evident in many areas of the curriculum. Sex education is of good quality and involves other professionals, as does that involving drug and alcohol abuse.

20. Together with the school development plan there are subject action plans which set targets for moving a subject forward. For example, in English this year they plan to consolidate a database on each pupil and track outcomes, and to establish ICT as part of routine teaching. Introducing pupil self-evaluation is a key to enable pupils to take an active part in evaluating and planning their own learning. Mathematics is planning the development of the financial literacy strand of citizenship within mathematics, including 'work-related learning'. These plans give a very good indication of the determination of subject leaders to move forward.
21. The support given to the curriculum by other professionals is central to pupils and students accessing a rich and varied range of learning opportunities. The wide range of expertise offered by the other professionals is fully exploited by the curriculum leaders to enhance and support the learning experiences of pupils and students.
22. Pupils and students benefit greatly from the rich and varied extra-curricular activities available to them. The carefully planned and recorded 24-hour curriculum contributes very effectively to the pupils' and students' personal and social development. Sporting facilities are well used and there are numerous visits to theatres, with very good links with the local Theatre Royal, which also delivered workshops prior to the visit. The school is currently investigating the possibility of running an after-school drama club with links to the theatre. Some pupils have visited the Holocaust Centre in Nottingham and a survivor of the death camps has visited the school to tell of his experiences. This had an excellent impact on the interest level shown during lessons in the RE curriculum. This is a school where inclusion in activities in the school, and the world beyond it, is very important and is very effective.
23. There is a very good match of well-trained and signing teachers, learning support assistants and other professionals who are able to engage both pupils and students fully in their learning. Accommodation is very good with a wide range of specialist rooms for both learning and recreational activities. The library is an attractive multi-purpose facility which is well used and enjoyed. There is a heated swimming pool, activity playground, a floodlit hard court for a range of ball games and very good playing fields. Resources for delivering the curriculum are very good and there is a continuous programme of updating and extending them.
24. College provision is integral to the programme for students in the further education department. They participate in a full range of mainstream vocational and academic courses, taught by members of the college staff and supported by signers from the school's further education department. The tutorial support that they get from school staff helps them achieve very well.
25. There are good arrangements for shared training with other schools. Teachers, as part of performance management, are beginning to visit other schools to share ideas and observe teaching and learning in different situations. Members of the CMG have been attending meetings with other secondary co-ordinators. This is a very useful initiative. Very good relationships exist between the school and other local schools. Over time there have been many projects such as joint productions and pupil exchanges for particular courses. Although the links are still in place and several schools use the facilities, such as the swimming pool, on a regular basis there are no current curriculum projects. The teachers involved in outreach work are very well positioned to develop wider networks and management skills. They are able to compare the progress that pupils at the school make with progress of pupils in mainstream schools, and to exchange information on the resources and strategies to support pupils with hearing impairment and, for example, literacy difficulties. There are not yet formal opportunities for these teachers to share their knowledge with other school staff. This is a lost opportunity for staff development.
26. Progress since the last inspection has been good. The impact of the curriculum management group of very experienced subject leaders has revitalised the content and delivery of this rich and varied resource.

Care, guidance and support

The school ensures pupils' and students' care, welfare and health and safety very well and it provides them with very good support and guidance. Pupils and students, through such forums as the school council, are actively involved in the work and development of the school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students have excellent and trusting relationships with all adults in the school.
- Day-to-day attention to health and safety matters is very good.
- Child protection procedures are of high quality.
- Students and pupils have access to very well informed support, advice and guidance.
- Induction arrangements for pupils and students are very good.
- Pupils and students are becoming much more involved in aspects of the school's work and development.

Commentary

27. The school provides a happy environment that is conducive to learning. Pupils and students feel very secure and well cared for and they have excellent and trusting relationships with all adults. There are very good induction arrangements and very good support for new arrivals to help them settle in the school. Pupils were seen to care for and help each other. Parents confirm that their children love coming to school. Their healthy and safe living is promoted through very good personal, social and health education and citizenship lessons. Child protection procedures are very good and there is good liaison with other agencies. Designated members of staff are fully up-to-date in aspects of first aid and risk assessments are undertaken regularly. Pupils are very well supervised at lunch and break times and in residence.
28. The excellent relationships that pupils and students have with all adults ensure that teachers and support staff know the pupils very well and provide them with a high level of pastoral support. Pupils and students are encouraged to raise any concerns they may have, knowing that they will be dealt with sympathetically. Staff are sensitive to individual needs and are thus able to provide very good support and guidance. Assessment procedures are very good for supporting the personal development of students and pupils. Pupils and students keep their own progress files, and are encouraged to set their own targets and monitor their own progress. This represents very good practice and contributes to pupils' and students' very good achievement in personal and social development. The monitoring of short and medium term planning and of IEPs by subject co-ordinators has had a very positive impact on the raising of achievement. Teachers work very well together with subject leaders to assess how well each child is doing in each subject.
29. There is very good practice in the identification and monitoring of their personal development and progress against targets and through the home/school books. Pupils and students are well informed of their personal targets, which are discussed with teachers and tutors and communicated to parents. Consultation with pupils and students is in the early stages of development through the school council and student forum. Pupils and students contribute to their IEPs and older students evaluate their own work. They are confident that their teachers listen to them and that they would act on their ideas when appropriate. Provision for careers guidance is very good.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has very good links with parents, other schools and colleges and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in high regard.
- Very effective links with the community make a very good contribution to learning.
- Very good information is given to parents about the progress of their children.
- The school is providing skilled support to mainstream schools and services in the area.

Commentary

30. Parents are very pleased with their child's achievements. These views were amply demonstrated by the very positive views expressed in the parents' questionnaire and in conversations during the inspection. They feel the school is well led and managed and they feel very comfortable about approaching the school with any questions, problems or complaints. Parents are also pleased with the range of support services to help their children. They feel that their children are encouraged to be mature and responsible and they appreciate the good range of extra-curricular activities offered. They also say that their children love the school.
31. Parents are provided with a very good level of information about the school and their child's progress and the very close partnership between parents and teachers ensures concerns and queries can be quickly addressed. Although a very small minority of parents expressed concerns that they were not kept well informed about the progress of their children and that they did not receive enough information about how they can help their children at home, the inspection team does not support these concerns. Parents know that they can contact the school at any time to speak to staff and there is an annual open day when any matters regarding the children can be discussed. The end-of-year progress reports are well detailed and provide parents with appropriate levels of information about what their children know and can do. Teachers and parents work together, particularly during the annual reviews, to help pupils and students to improve, for example, their behaviour and attitudes towards their learning in the home and school environment. The home/school books are also well used as a communication device between teachers and parents.
32. The school has a flat where parents are welcome to stay to help their children settle in to school life. Local parents have started a youth club for deaf and hearing youngsters and use the school hall. The school holds signing classes for parents.
33. Parents' views are sought by the principal sending out letters or asking the parents directly on open days for their ideas, and they feel confident that any suggestions would be valued. They are also reminded regularly that they have even better links through the recently appointed parent governor.
34. The very good links with the community are used to the pupils' benefit. Many visitors come in to the school, such as a rabbi and pupils from a mainstream school who join in with the school council meetings. All pupils value these experiences and enjoy teaching and learning signing with each other. The swimming pool is well used by the community. Other visitors to school include theatre groups and the police, and a war veteran has recently been to the school to talk about Remembrance Day. The local community is used for many visits to such places as supermarkets and the Guildhall. The wider community is also very well used as an education resource. For example, pupils visit the Houses of Parliament and Exeter University for Science Week. They also have residential visits in the British Isles and abroad.
35. The school has very good links with local colleges. A rich range of courses that meet the wide range of students' learning needs are planned for and made available. The communication

support workers provide very effective support to students, which greatly enhances their learning. Students benefit from follow-up tutorials back at school.

36. Outreach work is a recent development for the school. Teachers work on a part-time basis for local Hearing Impairment Services and one works as a special educational needs and ICT advisory teacher. They also run signing classes and provide deaf awareness sessions for a number of schools, colleges, universities and other institutions. These activities provide valued and skilled input to the community, and in some cases a useful additional source of income for the school. They also raise the profile of the school in the local area. The teachers involved are very well positioned to develop wider networks and management skills. They are able to compare the progress that pupils at the school make with progress of pupils in mainstream schools, and to exchange information on the resources and strategies to support pupils with hearing impairment and, for example, literacy difficulties. There are not yet formal opportunities for these teachers to share their knowledge with other school staff. This is a lost opportunity for staff development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership is very good and management is good. The principal and governors are providing a clear direction for the school. Very good leadership at all levels is successful in raising achievements. The school is managed and organised well. Governance is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The principal has been most effective in enabling other staff to use their leadership qualities and in achieving a strong commitment from all to the raising of achievements.
- Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are developing well but subject leaders are not yet involved in focused classroom observations.
- Governors offer very good support to the school and make a major contribution to its success.
- Arrangements for the continuing development of signing for staff are very good and have made a major contribution to the raising of standards.
- Opportunities to maximise the benefit of outreach work, for school staff and pupils, have not been fully explored.

Commentary

37. The principal's role in creating a positive climate for change and in motivating staff, at a time of redundancies and declining pupil numbers, has been a key factor in the continuing improvements since the last inspection. All staff, parents, pupils and students now have opportunities for their voice to be heard. The school runs as an inclusive community, in which each individual child and staff member matters, with all working as a team and being supportive of each other. This has resulted in an excellent school ethos. The principal has been creative in staff deployment to allow the subject expertise of subject leaders to be maintained even though pupil numbers have decreased. In recognising that the very good practice of the school could contribute to proposed changes, by developing a useful outreach service and by providing for a wider range of learning needs, the principal has adapted and changed the role of the school in the light of national policies on inclusion.
38. The school is organised efficiently and staff are clear about their roles and responsibilities. All are well supported and have access to relevant training. Day-to-day management by the vice principal enables the school and residence to run smoothly. The clear leadership and management of the post-16 college by the assistant principal, in conjunction with the principal, have had a significant impact on the high quality provision now in place. Very effective working links with local colleges have been established to enhance students' learning opportunities. Teachers and other staff are taking on leadership responsibilities and are making a very positive impact. Staff have shown themselves to be very receptive to advice and very

responsive to new challenges. The curriculum management group (CMG), for example, has had a significant impact on lesson planning, assessments and monitoring pupils' progress. Each member has a clear vision of the priorities for development and they work effectively as a team with other senior management. All departments have action plans that are very well planned to further develop the subject and the curriculum. Subject leaders have a very good knowledge of their subject and a very good understanding of teaching approaches that are appropriate to the very wide range of learning needs.

39. The monitoring of short and medium term planning and of IEPs by subject co-ordinators has had a very positive impact on the raising of achievements. Despite the fact that subject leaders do not have the opportunity to monitor teaching, the excellent relationships seen and commitment of staff help to ensure teaching is of a very good quality. Subject leaders are just beginning to analyse results of groups of pupils in detail, to see the impact of different strategies and to see where a greater emphasis is required. The principal is now observing teaching in classrooms and providing feedback and support to continue to raise the quality of teaching and learning. Performance management systems are developing well and include the learning support assistants; this is beginning to contribute to the improving provision.
40. The school improvement plan has a clear and measurable agenda for improving achievement, teaching and learning. Finances are very well managed and used to support improvements. Principles of best value are applied very well. Through competitive tendering the school ensures that it obtains best value for money when purchasing resources and services. As a registered charity the school runs to achieve a nil carry forward in its budget planning. However, there are reserves held by the Trustees if required.

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	2,362,346	Balance from previous year	0
Total expenditure	2,362,346	Balance carried forward to the next	0
Expenditure per pupil	29,165		

41. The principal is actively seeking ways of comparing the school's performance with that of similar schools. He has been creative in maintaining and managing staff to provide a very good curriculum coverage while at the same time developing the services the school can provide to outside agencies in order to generate income. By participating in the good outreach service members of staff are gaining wider experience and skills from work in other settings. Formal reporting or monitoring of the impact of this aspect of the school's work is in the early stages of development. The monitoring work that has taken place has been undertaken jointly between officers of the receiving local education authority and the principal or senior member of the outreach team. Opportunities to systematically develop the service and to maximise the benefit for school staff and pupils have not yet been fully explored.
42. Non-teaching staff are very well deployed to support individual learning. There is a comprehensive programme of staff development that reflects the school priorities and individual needs. All staff participate in regular training on signing and this is reflected in the good signing used by all staff to support pupils and students. Although there have not been any new teaching staff for some years, induction procedures for other staff are good.
43. Many of the governors, including the chair of governors, have been appointed within the last three years. The governing body now includes representatives from staff and parents. The chair of governors has been very actively and productively involved in this very busy period for the school. Under his guidance the governors have a very clear understanding of the main challenges facing the school. Under the dynamic leadership of the chair of governors, a detailed review of the school's current situation and priorities for development has taken place, resulting

in the production of medium- and long-term strategic plans. Governors have extended their knowledge of many aspects of the school's work through information sharing with teaching and other staff and are considering ways to more systematically collect information to continue to monitor the school's effectiveness. Statutory duties are met.

WORK-RELATED LEARNING

The provision for work-related learning (WRL) is very good with excellent arrangements for work experience. Statutory requirements are met well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- WRL is very well led and managed.
- Provision for WRL is very good for pupils and students aged 14 to 19 years and older.
- Arrangements for work experience for pupils aged 14 to 16 years and work preparation for students aged 16 to 18 years and older are excellent.
- Provision for careers guidance is very good.
- The range and appropriateness of accredited vocational courses are very good.

Commentary

- 44 For pupils aged 14 to 16 years, vocational General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) are offered and the school liaises very closely with the committed and enthusiastic Connexions adviser. Pupils and students are motivated to learn about work and have a good understanding of such aspects as health and safety in the workplace. The rigorous arrangements for the very comprehensive range of work experiences are excellent, involving preparation, the work placement itself, and monitoring and debriefing.
- 45 For students aged 16 to 19 years and over, the grouping of students assists WRL very well. For example, the students following the 'Personal Achievement and Communications' courses participate in a range of work-related activities such as horticulture. For students in the 'Support for Working Life' group, there is a very good balance between outside college based work, follow-up work with their in-house tutor, and related work in the school's post-16 provision. For example, the group worked on dealing with petty cash and balancing books in Exeter College then later in the week developed and consolidated this work in the school, where the work helped further understanding to build students' confidence. For other students, through very good management and organisation, sector college courses that offer extensive experiences and a wide range of accredited courses are made available, with communication support provided by the school, to meet individual needs.
- 46 The 'Life after Further Education' arrangement for older students is excellent, involving all students and staff working closely with the very supportive Connexions adviser to provide a rich variety of activities including work visits, visiting speakers, CV preparation and interview practice.

RESIDENTIAL PROVISION

Residential provision is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Residential provision makes a very effective contribution to pupils' and students' education.
- The use of the 24-hour curriculum is very effective in supporting learning.
- The provision is very well organised and led.
- It promotes independence and personal development very well.
- The links between school provision and residential provision are very effective.

Commentary

- 47 The very effective residential provision combines necessary structure with a happy settled atmosphere. The carefully planned and recorded 24-hour curriculum contributes very effectively to the pupils' and students' personal and social development. Social and personal targets, daily records and other documents are very well organised and used. Varying degrees of support and independence are provided including, for older students, an independent living flat. A very good balance is found between encouraging responsibility and providing necessary support and encouragement.
- 48 A rich and wide variety of activities, both within the residences and outside, is offered which pupils and students enjoy and appreciate. This supports their integration into the community and increasing independence very effectively. All staff sign, which enables effective communication with pupils and students. Good links are maintained with parents, and more parents would like their child to board to benefit from the very good extended curriculum.
- 49 Staff development is systematic and pertinent. The key worker system is very effective in ensuring that pupils and students have a member of staff they can turn to for support and guidance. Hand-over procedures between teaching and care staff are effective in helping ensure that necessary information is shared and acted upon.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2, 3, 4 AND POST-16

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement in English and communication in its wider sense is consistently good up to the age of sixteen and it is very good for students at post-16.
- Whilst satisfactory, achievement in writing is a relative weakness.
- Teaching and learning are good and based on a well-planned curriculum and schemes of work.
- Learning support assistants are a tower of strength and contribute significantly to pupils' and students' achievements.
- There is currently insufficient planned use of ICT to support teaching and learning of communication skills.

Commentary

- 50 Teachers have a very good understanding of individual needs through the use of assessments and appropriate IEP targets. Achievement is firmly based on good and very good teaching. The pupils' and students' ability to maintain high levels of concentration over the length of a lesson, which is a crucial aspect of learning for hearing impaired pupils and students who need the support of signing for effective communication, contributes significantly to their learning. The other professionals who teach pupils British Sign Language are highly trained and deliver their lessons in an entertaining style, ensuring that pupils and students maximise the learning opportunities being presented.
- 51 Achievement in speaking and listening is very good because teachers are able to make very effective use of questioning to promote understanding of often complex ideas. Some impressive achievement was evident in poetry lessons where pupils were recognising couplets and linking these to the past learning of Shakespeare's sonnets. They also showed a very good understanding that 'imagery' was a picture in words. Achievement in reading is good although pupils and students have found that reading is a skill that follows the acquisition of language, which for many doesn't begin until they are in Years 8 or 9. Satisfactory achievement and progress are made in writing. It is clear that many pupils struggle to improve their presentation and to acquire the basics of letter formation and cursive handwriting. The English co-ordinator has recognised that issues of handwriting and presentation are likely to be resolved when pupils use lap-top computers. These are beginning to arrive at the school but were not in evidence during the week of the inspection.
- 52 The quality of teaching and learning in the subject is good; it is never less than good and frequently very good. In the best lessons there are high expectations set and some interesting ways of including all pupils and students in learning. An example was observed where pupils were required to write a letter to an Agony Aunt whilst the higher attaining pupils studied ways of replying to such letters. The work was challenging and the final outcomes matched the expectations of both the teaching teams and the pupils. A great strength of the teaching is the very high quality of the support given by the learning support assistants to individual pupils.
- 53 The teaching and learning of post-16 students are consistently very good. Here the approach is more individualised with students concentrating on a wide range of course work which in most cases will be entered for external moderation. Department records show an amazing range of positive comments on the work entered for external moderation. Moderators appreciate the difficulties experienced by students. A very good and wide range of interesting activities support

learning. For example, there are regular visits to the theatre in Dawlish to watch the Royal Shakespeare Company and to Plymouth to watch sign-interpreted performances followed by a tour of the rehearsal facilities.

- 54 Both leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator is a visionary with a clear determination to raise the status and standards in her subject to the highest levels. There is a very good policy document and schemes of work which lay the foundation for quality learning. The English action plan for the current school year addresses areas of concern. High priority is given to further involving pupils in assessment, recording and reporting in an effort to give them greater ownership of their learning. The need to plan for the use of ICT in English lessons to support learning and progress has also been recognised. She has also encouraged further monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning in English by members of the governing body, one of whom has made visits and provided written observations in detail.
- 55 The quality and quantity of resources are very good and are soon to be supplemented by lap-top computers. A wide range of ICT and 'Deaf Friendly' resources is available with a good range of Big Books to support the Literacy Strategy. A good range of age-appropriate reading schemes and a very good range of reading material for pupils aged 11 to 16 is available for use in the classroom and for homework. The accommodation is very good with classrooms tastefully decorated with very well presented displays and an excellent library which can be used for a wide range of language and communication activities.
- 56 Since the last inspection, there has been good progress made, especially in the achievement and progress of pupils in Years 7 to 9 and those in Years 10 and 11.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

- 57 The teaching of literacy across the curriculum is good. Where it is being taught in subjects such as mathematics, religious education (RE) and personal, social and health education it is very well promoted. In RE there is a great deal of emphasis placed on writing, such as writing out questions that will be used when a visitor comes to address the group.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils and students achieve very well because teaching is very good. Individual learning needs at all abilities are very well met.
- The programme of work is well planned for each year group and for the full ability range, and this helps all teachers to plan effective lessons.
- Good assessments and IEPs allow teachers to track individual and group achievements and to set whole-school targets.
- The subject is very well led, much has been achieved and there is a clear direction for future developments. Numeracy skills are developed well in other subjects.
- The subject leader does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching and so further support other teachers teaching mathematics.
- ICT is currently insufficiently used to support learning.

Commentary

- 58 On entry to the school most pupils have limited attainments in mathematics. As a result of very good teaching, all pupils and students achieve very well across all year groups. In the 2004 accredited courses, higher attaining pupils achieved GCSE's grade C and D. Other pupils and students achieved passes in the National Skills Profile, OCR Level 1 certificate in bookkeeping and AQA "Making sense of data" foundation grade B. Pupils with additional learning needs, very

ably supported by teachers, learning support assistants and communication support workers, achieve very well. Where appropriate, post-16 students, very effectively assisted by communication support workers, continue accredited work at the local college. Boys and girls are currently making similar progress. These good improvements in achievement are the result of very strong and effective subject leadership. Annual test results clearly show the good and often very good progress pupils make. The school has successfully incorporated aspects of the National Numeracy Strategy into the structured scheme of work that is used and this has had a significant impact on improving teaching and progress in the subject. The subject leader monitors all lesson planning and has been tracking and analysing the achievements of all pupils, which has resulted in improved teaching and learning. There has been a good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

- 59 Teaching and learning are very good and lessons are well planned to ensure that all pupils and students have work that is appropriate to them. Because of this, they are confident and enthusiastic in lessons and try very hard to succeed because they are building on their earlier learning. Pupils and students make good progress towards the very appropriate targets set for them in their IEPs. In all lessons key mathematical words are introduced and used appropriately and very good use of signing allows all to fully participate.
- 60 Most of the work of the younger pupils is practical, which helps them sustain their interest. In one lesson, pupils enjoyed estimating how many objects there were, whether there were more or less and then counting them to see if they were correct. A lower attaining group of Year 9 and 10 pupils worked very hard on budgeting for their Christmas presents, working out suitability of presents and how they could purchase four presents within a budget of £20. At the beginning of the lesson they showed very good recall of the vocabulary covered the previous day. The lesson was very well planned to cover life skills and aspects of citizenship as well as money management. A lesson for higher attaining Year 10 pupils was very successful in investigations, looking for patterns, making predictions and writing a conclusion. Skilful teaching supported pupils in explaining their methods and reasoning while challenging some of their conclusions. When working on negative numbers pupils discussed with each other and were able to explain how they had worked things out and why they had used the particular approach.
- 61 Post-16 students continue accredited work and also apply their skills and knowledge in practical situations such as work experience, office management or life skills. Older and higher attaining pupils and students work well independently and collaboratively. In all lessons seen, excellent relationships and very good use of support staff contributed significantly to pupils' and students' confidence and desire to learn.
- 62 The subject is very well led and managed by a knowledgeable, enthusiastic and very well organised subject leader. Despite the fact that she does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching, her excellent relationships with and commitment to staff help to ensure teaching is of a very good quality. There has been a significant improvement in achievement since the last inspection. Resources are very good and well used and there is a very useful development plan for mathematics. Although the use of ICT to support learning is planned for, it is not currently well used in lessons.

Mathematics across the curriculum

- 63 Numeracy is planned for and used in most subjects. In technology pupils revisit and extend their mathematical language, as when weighing and measuring ingredients for pizzas and toasted baguettes. In a science lesson on magnetism pupils enjoyed counting forwards and backwards from BC to AD following the story about lodestones. Teachers plan the mathematical vocabulary to be introduced and used, and pupils remember the words very well and use them appropriately.

Science

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well throughout the school because teaching and learning are very good.
- The curriculum is very well planned and resourced and assessment procedures are very good.
- Leadership and management are very good, even though the coordinator does not have the opportunity to monitor teaching in science.

Commentary

- 64 Achievement in science is very good throughout the school because pupils follow a progressive and very well taught programme of work, where teachers are very clear about what they want each member of the class to learn and know what the next step for each pupil and student should be. At the end of Year 11, most pupils gain Entry Level OCR accreditation.
- 65 There is a clear progression in scientific knowledge and understanding as pupils move through the school. The programme of work has been well planned to cope with the mixed age groups in each class. Teachers and learning support assistants monitor each pupil's work very effectively and are constantly looking for the best ways to help them understand scientific concepts and processes. There is a very good emphasis on the experimental and investigative aspect of science supporting pupils' achievements very well. For example, the youngest pupils were not able to describe a 'fair test' but could see that it was not right to change the height of the ramp, or the starting point for the ball in an experiment on friction, and in Year 9 pupils knew that hanging a lodestone in an environment that contains metal might contaminate the results. By the time that they are in Year 11, the most able pupils are beginning to understand and use technical terms for dependent and independent variables. Throughout the secondary department, there is a clear emphasis on developing vocabulary for different topics and learning to sign, read and write these in appropriate contexts.
- 66 Teaching in science is very good throughout the school. In a lesson for the youngest pupils there was very good teamwork that allowed the teacher to focus very effectively on the key concepts of the lesson and give pupils first-hand experience of forces and friction. This kept them challenged and very interested by the demonstrations and investigation. In a lesson for Year 8 pupils, the teacher used very good storytelling, with props, to teach them how magnets had been discovered and to give them a practical understanding of their use to find 'North'. In Year 11 lessons, the pace was fast and purposeful with each pupil being given very good feedback on how well they are doing and what they need to do next to meet the accreditation criteria. When pupils tested artificial urine for glucose, the explanation of how insulin regulates sugar levels in the body showed high expectations of what they can understand, and they all worked very hard to use the correct vocabulary, asking for repetition and clarification when necessary. High quality experiences are sought. Pupils talked excitedly about double helixes and golgi bodies, having seen a performance at the recent British Association for Science festival in Exeter.
- 67 Recording is comprehensive and regular. The co-ordinator has devised a very helpful proforma that shows how well each pupil is doing, the work that they have covered and what should be done next. There is also a separate section for experimental and investigative skills, so that these are progressively developed alongside other concepts.
- 68 There is very skilled and knowledgeable leadership of science. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision and works energetically to raise the profile of science within the school. Although she does not monitor teaching, she does monitor lesson planning and pupils' progress towards their IEP science targets. This contributes significantly to pupils' improved achievements. There are high quality displays that link current issues and pupils' experience to science topics. Good professional links are nurtured and contribute to the successful development of the subject, for example there have been exciting environmental projects with bodies such as the Institute of

Grass Research. The development in provision and the pupils' achievement shows very good progress since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6.
- All pupils learn to use communications technology that is useful for people with hearing impairments.
- The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory.
- There has been a significant increase in the quality and quantity of computers.
- ICT is not used sufficiently to support work in other curricular areas.

Commentary

- 69 In Years 3 to 6, pupils show good achievement in their ICT skills because they experience a very broad programme of work. Satisfactory achievement takes place in Years 7 to 11. Pupils and students experience a broad programme of work that develops basic skills in appropriate areas of work such as desktop publishing, word processing and control technology. However, much of this work is heavily teacher-directed so pupils and students do not have opportunities to develop the accompanying knowledge and understanding of how and when to apply these skills. In Years 10 and 11 pupils gain accreditation at an appropriate level, following CLAIT or ASDAN courses. Some students achieve CLAIT at a higher level in the further education department and others follow office skills and other courses with an ICT element at college. Pupils and students also learn to use mobile phones, a minicom and fax. They learn to touch-type, which enables them to type at an efficient speed for chatting on-line to other people.
- 70 Teaching and learning are satisfactory. The good features of lessons are the very good quality of support given to pupils and the very good communication between pupils and students and adults. In one lesson students went to take digital photographs of the school but the battery ran out. There followed a very good discussion on preparation for using a digital camera and the advantages and disadvantages of rechargeable batteries, including ecological issues. Behaviour is very well managed, and clear expectations are shared with the class, and pupils and students respond appropriately and receive good feedback on their co-operation and conduct. Expensive equipment is respected and well cared for by everyone. Pupils and students are well prepared by all lessons having an appropriate introduction so they know what they are to do. In most lessons, however, there is little scope for initiative or decision-making. Pace is sometimes slow when the class has to wait for everyone to do the same thing. Sometimes pupils do work that does not have sufficient meaning for them, as when lower attaining pupils typed large quantities of data into tables, and higher attaining pupils worked with dense text in a desktop publishing exercise that they could not read. Pupils and students are eager to achieve and work carefully to present their work as attractively as possible.
- 71 Leadership and management of ICT are satisfactory. Currently there is insufficient emphasis on developing resources to engage and challenge pupils or sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply their skills in a wider context. There has been a significant investment in new computers in the school, with three suites now well established and laptop computers for all teachers. Interactive whiteboards are beginning to be used well. Pupils enjoy this technology and respond with interest. This represents satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

- 72 Digital cameras are well used to record events and activities, and make some learning resources. Good use is made of ICT to provide captions for displays. There is now a second ICT suite for the use of all teachers to support work in other curricular areas, but this is not yet regularly used. Teachers have had lottery-funded ICT training, and all have their own laptop computers, but some are still not confident to use ICT to support their teaching, and do not feel that they have the appropriate resources. Overall, there is too little ICT used to support work across the curriculum and too little to support pupils' and students' individual learning needs.

HUMANITIES

Religious education was inspected in detail and is reported in full below. Work in geography and history was not inspected.

Religious Education

Provision in religious education is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good or better across the school.
- Schemes of work are rich and varied.
- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.

Commentary

- 73 Pupils throughout the school achieve very well, increasing their knowledge and understanding of what God means to a Christian, a Jew and a Muslim. Much of the progress made is gained through first-hand experience by visits to places of worship and from followers of the three major faiths studied coming into school. These add significantly to pupils' understanding of the symbols and beliefs of different faiths. Pupils have gained greatly from a visit by a survivor of the Holocaust and a follow-up visit to the Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire. Evidence suggests that this topic created a wealth of understanding of the horrors faced by Jewish children during this period. Assemblies make a good contribution to pupils' understanding and achievement.
- 74 The quality of teaching and learning of the subject is very good and there are times when it is excellent because all religious education lessons are taught by the skilful coordinator. Such an occasion during the inspection occurred when pupils were given a talk by a rabbi. Pupils had prepared questions to ask which built clearly on the answers given. There was great thought given to their interpretation of peace and the Hebrew word 'shalom'. They expressed their inner feelings and how they reflected on these when they saw the candle. During the talk pupils benefited from the interpretation given by a chaplain for the deaf. All of the pupils demonstrated significant maturity in their thinking and, having been part of a powerful spiritual experience, responded in a wholly adult way. Teachers' skilful planning consistently reflects an understanding of pupils' learning needs and the needs of the subject. Individual lessons are creatively adapted to allow pupils to access difficult concepts.
- 75 Both the leadership and management of the subject are very good. Schemes of work are based on the Hampshire Agreed Syllabus and are rich and varied in their coverage of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. Accommodation is very good for the teaching of the subject and creates a suitable atmosphere for the weekly lessons. The library is used very well when there are visiting speakers. There is a good range of resources which includes artefacts for the three major faiths that are studied in depth.

- 76 The subject has made good progress since the last inspection and is making a significant contribution to pupils' personal, social and health education.

CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS

Art and design, design and technology and physical education were sampled. Music was not inspected.

- 77 There is every indication from pupils' and students' work, lessons observed, displays of art work, progress files and a video recording of a film made by them, that pupils' achievement in **art and design** and the performing arts is very good.
- 78 In the 2004 GCSE art examinations one pupil achieved a grade A, one a grade B and two grade Cs. In the OCR examinations three pupils achieved a level 3 pass. Pupils and students develop skills, knowledge and understanding and apply these skills creatively and expressively. Work is developed imaginatively and linked well with other subjects. The eye-catching, high quality displays around the school help to foster visual and aesthetic awareness. Pupils experience a rich range of media that enables the very skilful and knowledgeable art teacher to ensure that pupils have stimulating and challenging tasks to which they rise. Pupils' and students' skills in the performing arts are visible in the very good film written, acted and filmed by them.
- 79 Two very good lessons were seen in **physical education**. In a very good lesson for pupils in Years 8 and 9, the pupils developed circuit work in the gymnasium. The very clear structure provided by the enthusiastic teacher and the very skilled support of the learning support assistants enabled all pupils to achieve very well. Pupils responded very well to the lesson and worked particularly well in pairs, for example running between two points with one pupil timing (and encouraging) the other. In a very good swimming lesson for students in Years 11 to 13, the students were keen and motivated and confident in both swimming and diving. In both lessons, learning support assistants gave invaluable and skilled support. The subject is very well led and managed and pupils and students experience a rich and varied range of physical activities both in school and in the community. Provision for physical education benefits from very good school facilities including a swimming pool, a gymnasium and facilities for tennis, football and hockey.
- 80 In **design and technology**, one lesson was observed in each of design and food technology. In both lessons good teaching and planning enabled pupils to learn well. In a Year 8 design and technology lesson pupils had a good grasp of planning and making in the mechanisms topic on moving monsters. The teacher demonstration of moving a book with air created great interest, with pupils eager to build their monsters from an egg-box and an empty plastic washing-up container. In a challenging lower attaining group lesson the teacher and two learning support assistants worked very well together, enabling pupils to be fully involved in the learning.
- 81 In a Year 10 food technology lesson, pupils were confident in using basic kitchen equipment to prepare vegetables and ingredients for a vegetarian pizza. Their work with paring knives was done with complete safety and the preparation moved forward with pace.
- 82 Scrutiny of documentation and work completed earlier in the term gives a clear picture that design and technology is a strong subject and continues to build on the very positive findings of the previous inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE) AND CITIZENSHIP

Both PSHE and citizenship are taught and the subjects are appropriately combined.

The provision for PSHCE is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The integrated schemes of work for pupils in Years 3 to 11 are very good.
- Teaching is very good throughout the school.
- Provision for PSHCE is very well led and managed.
- Assessment is very good and well used to support planning and teaching.

Commentary

- 83 In Years 3 to 11, very well thought out integrated schemes of work for PSHCE, careers and work-related learning are in place. Pupils are assessed very carefully and the information is used very well to inform teachers' lesson planning.
- 84 Teaching is very good. For example, in a very good Year 10 lesson about Christening, the teacher and the chaplain worked very effectively together to encourage the pupils' sense of personal responsibility. Role-play was used to very good effect with touches of captivating humour as pupils played the parts of the parents and godparents. A strong moral element of being a good example to the growing child after Christening was very clearly conveyed. In an excellent lesson on active citizenship, the teacher and a visiting deaf speaker, who works to improve community access for deaf people, worked harmoniously to convey the message of the lesson very clearly. The visitor took every opportunity to encourage and inspire the pupils, who were captivated by the lesson, as when a pupil asked, "Are there any deaf members of parliament?" and the reply was, "One of you could be in the future." One pupil typified the excellent response when asked what he thought about the speaker's work and replied, "It's fantastic."
- 85 For students in Years 11 to 13 and over, teaching is also very good. In a discussion session for students in Year 12, the adult leading the session very skilfully encouraged the theme of having respect for others and recognising the consequences of one's actions. Students were honest, direct and sensitive in what they said and in expressing their feelings, such as "What do you feel if someone swears at you?" "I want revenge". A very strong moral content permeated the whole session. Outside speakers and visitors contribute successfully to the very appropriate programmes of work, as do visits into the community.
- 86 PSHCE is part of all aspects of school life, including the residential provision. A strong emphasis is put on developing pupils' and students' personal and social development in preparation for life after school. All pupils and students have personal and social targets that they know and work hard to achieve and there is a very good range of assessment and accreditation relating to PSHCE. The leadership and management of the subject, which is carefully planned and thought through, organised and very well delivered, is very good. This is a good improvement since the last inspection.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

The overall effectiveness of the school	2
How inclusive the school is	1
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	2

Overall standards achieved	2
Pupils' achievement	2

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	1
Attendance	2
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

The quality of education provided by the school	2
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	2
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

The leadership and management of the school	3
The governance of the school	2
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	2
The effectiveness of management	3

"In a special school such as this standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not national standards"-

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