

INSPECTION REPORT

Dysart School

Kingston-upon-Thames, Surrey

LEA area: Kingston

Unique reference number: 102623

Headteacher: Petra Smillie

Reporting inspector: John Currie
15289

Dates of inspection: 27 - 31 March 2000

Inspection number: 188445

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	2-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Dukes Avenue Kingston-upon-Thames Surrey
Postcode:	KT2 5QY
Telephone number:	020 8546 0610
Fax number:	N/A
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Philip Donne-Davis
Date of previous inspection:	3 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
John Currie	Registered Inspector	Art	How high are standards? a) The school's results and pupils' achievements
		Integration	How well are pupils taught?
			How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to the pupils?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Brian Sampson	Lay Inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mary Kingsley	Team Inspector	Mathematics	
		Information technology	
		Physical education	
		Equal opportunities	
Margaret Hart	Team Inspector	Science	
		Modern foreign languages	
		Under fives	
Eric Nash	Team Inspector	Geography	
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		Design and technology	
		English as an additional language	
David Dewhurst	Team Inspector	English	
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		Religious education	
		Special educational needs	

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The Registrar
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The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Dysart School is a community special school for pupils between the ages of 2 and 19. There are 66 pupils on roll, 64 of whom have Statements of Special Educational Need. The range of special educational need catered for by the school includes severe learning difficulties, profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and multi-sensory impairment. The attainment of the pupils on entry to school is well below the national average. The majority of pupils are white and there are some pupils from Black Caribbean, Black African, Indian and Bangladeshi backgrounds. There are 10 pupils for whom English is an additional language and all are in the early stages of language development. About one quarter of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. At the time of the inspection there were three children under five who were being taught in the nursery and in a reception class.

Since the last inspection the number on roll has increased from 54 to 66. The proportion of pupils with autism has increased.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Dysart is a good school. Pupils' achievements are good in English and personal and social development and they make good progress towards the targets set in their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The achievements of students in post-16 are very good. Teaching is good overall with some significant strengths in post-16 and in the classes for pupils with autism. The school is well led and managed and all staff are committed to providing for the care and education of the children, pupils and students. The school has addressed the issues raised by the last inspection and is well placed to continue in this way. The school overcomes many of the limitations caused by the very poor accommodation. Overall, the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- A high proportion of good or better teaching and very good quality support staff result in good achievement overall.
- Very good provision for post-16 students; very good careers guidance, work experience and links with local business and the community enhance overall quality of education.
- Very good provision for pupils with autism and complex needs.
- Promotes the moral and social development of the pupils very well.
- Monitors and is successful in promoting very good behaviour.
- Works very effectively with parents and this helps them to work with their own children effectively.
- Promotes inclusion and integration very well indeed and thus broadens opportunities for achievement.
- Provides very good support and training for all staff and this raises quality and standards.

What could be improved

- The planning for the pupils' and students' spiritual development.
- Religious education for all students aged 16-19.
- The use of time at the start and end of the day, particularly for pupils aged 11-16.
- The accommodation for under fives, pupils aged 11-16 and for specialist subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in June 1996. Since then it has acted very effectively on the key issues raised and has improved many other aspects of its work. The weaknesses in teaching have been resolved and there is now much more good and better teaching. The achievements of pupils and students have improved. There are schemes of work in place for all subjects and the timetable now reflects a good range of subjects. The school has provided extensive training and staff development in a wide range of subjects and there has been very good improvement in information and communication technology. The monitoring of teaching and learning is now very good. Pupils'

achievements in English, science and personal and social development have improved. It is planned for the school to move to new accommodation in the very near future and the new school building is close to completion. Overall, the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 11	by age 16	by age 19	Key very good A good B satisfactory C unsatisfactory D poor E
speaking and listening	B	B	B	A	
reading	B	B	B	A	
writing	B	B	B	A	
mathematics	C	C	C	B	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	A	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B	B	B	

* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.

The school has set targets for improvement in English and mathematics for pupils aged 11; for pupils aged 16 targets are related to achievement in ASDAN courses. These targets are challenging and the school is making good progress towards them. Students in post-16 achieve very well in most subjects. Pupils achieve well in English across the school. Their achievements in mathematics are satisfactory. Pupils aged 11-14 achieve well in science. Pupils with autism achieve good standards of work. The majority of pupils make at least good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs. Some make very good progress, particularly those with more severe and complex needs.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The children, pupils and students enjoy coming to school and are very enthusiastic about learning.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is very good. Pupils and students behave very well on visits out of school.
Personal development and relationships	The pupils and students get on very well with one another and with the staff. There are many examples of pupils helping and caring for each other.
Attendance	Good. It has improved since the last inspection.

A significant strength of the children's, pupils' and students' attitudes to learning is the very positive approach so many of them display when in school and in lessons. They are well motivated and this helps many of them overcome some of the difficulties they have in learning new skills and acquiring new knowledge. A few pupils have difficulty in managing their own behaviour and this affects their capacity to join in some lessons.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16	Aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	good	good	Very good

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

Overall the quality of teaching is good. It was very good or better in 32 per cent of lessons observed. There was no unsatisfactory teaching observed. In 70 per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better. Teaching is good in English and is satisfactory with some good features in mathematics and science. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good. The school meets the needs of the vast majority of pupils well. The teaching of literacy and numeracy is good and teachers use signing and other methods of communication effectively to support the development of communication skills. Teachers are particularly effective in managing behaviour and expect the pupils to work hard. In some sessions for pupils aged 11-16 the time at the start of the day is not used effectively to promote learning. Pupils and students learn new skills quite well and the majority work very hard.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn; the quality for post-16 students is very good. The school prepares the students well for life after school.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The teachers are effective in ensuring that all pupils develop skills of communication.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for the pupils' moral and social development is very good and is good for pupils' cultural development. The planned provision for the pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is good in ensuring that the pupils are safe and well looked after.

The school works very well with parents. It keeps parents well informed and ensures that they are active partners in their children's learning. The curriculum for pupils with autism, complex and profound needs and students in post-16 is a strength. However, religious education is not provided for all students aged 16-19. The school works hard and is effective in ensuring that the personal and physical needs of the children, pupils and students are met.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is well led and managed by the headteacher, ably supported by the deputy headteacher. Subject co-ordinators manage their subjects well.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors take a keen and active interest in the work of the school and are very supportive of the staff. They have yet to take a more active part in monitoring standards.

The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good in monitoring teaching and learning and uses this information to promote improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The school deploys staff very well and makes the best use it can of very poor accommodation. The budget is carefully planned. Staff development is a strength.

There are an adequate number of experienced teachers and support staff. Resources for learning are satisfactory with some gaps in English, science and music. The school is very effective in monitoring teaching and ensuring that it knows how its own performance compares with that of other similar schools.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like coming to school. • The teaching is good. • The school expects the children to work hard. • The school is well led and managed. • The school cares about the children. • The school has a very positive ethos. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount of detail in home-school diaries for older pupils and for those children who are not able to talk about school. • The arrival time of transport at school in the morning.

The inspection confirms all the positive points raised by the parents. The inspection found that some transport arrives late and this means that some pupils miss out on the start of the school day. Home-school diaries for the older pupils contain information about behaviour and personal and social development. They could contain more information about what the pupils have learnt during the day.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The vast majority of children under five, pupils and students make good progress towards the targets set in the Individual Education Plans (IEPs) and achieve appropriately. Children under five achieve good standards in personal and social development and language and literacy. Their achievements show satisfactory progress in all other areas of learning. Pupils' achievements are good in all areas of English across the school and very good in post-16. In mathematics, pupils' achievements are satisfactory overall, with students in post-16 achieving good standards. Pupils' achievements in science are good overall; pupils aged 5-11 achieve satisfactorily whilst pupils aged 11-16 and students aged 16-19 achieve good standards, adding to and extending their knowledge, understanding and use of the subject. The achievements of the pupils in their personal, social and health education are good overall. Students at post-16 achieve very good standards in this area. Overall, pupils and students achieve well and this is an improvement since the last inspection.
2. Students' achievements in post-16 in art are good and pupils' and students' achievements in French are good. French has been introduced since the last inspection and improvement has been very good, with many pupils enjoying the subject and showing an aptitude for learning new words and phrases and using them in conversation. Achievement is satisfactory in art for pupils aged 5-16 and for all pupils in design and technology, geography, history, information and communications technology, music, physical education and religious education. There has been an improvement in pupils' achievements in design and technology and information and communication technology since the last inspection.
3. Pupils with autism and complex and profound needs make very good progress overall. Pupils with autism demonstrate an increasing capacity to manage and control their behaviour and increase the time spent learning and attending. Pupils with more complex and profound needs develop and improve their capacity to communicate and respond. They demonstrate a good awareness of routines and use their own individual repertoire of responses to show acknowledgement of what is happening around them. This is best seen during registration sessions when they are encouraged to 'answer' their name and to control the music and lights in the room.
4. Pupils for whom English is an additional language make satisfactory progress in learning. The school receives limited external support. However, the school makes effective use of the advice and guidance provided and ensures that the pupils develop and extend their use of communication and language so as to benefit from the curriculum experiences provided.
5. The targets set in the children's, pupils' and students' IEPs are challenging. They are agreed with parents and are set in English, mathematics and personal and social development. For those pupils with behaviour management difficulties, additional programmes are set up to improve behaviour. Pupils make good progress towards the targets set. The targets are regularly reviewed and monitored and are changed if required in order to sustain improvement over time.
6. The school has set targets for improvement that reflect performance in English, mathematics by age 11 and performance in ASDAN accredited courses by age 16. These have been monitored and evaluated by the senior management team and represent a good attempt to introduce target setting for pupils with severe learning difficulties.
7. Since the last inspection, pupils' achievements have improved overall. There has been noticeable improvement in English, science, personal and social development, French and at post-16. Overall, this aspect of the school's performance has improved since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. The children, pupils and students enjoy coming to school and are very enthusiastic about learning. This positive approach enhances their learning quite extensively. Overall, attitudes towards the school are good and are now better than those reported at the last inspection. The pupils are very enthusiastic and the inspection verified the opinions of parents that most of the children cannot wait to get to school in the morning. A prime example of this enthusiasm was seen in one class. Just before going home time the pupils and teacher had been talking about the lesson. As soon as they realized it was time to put their coats on many children began to cry, as they had been so involved in talking about what they had done that they did not want to leave.
9. The pupils' and students' interest and involvement in activities are good and this has a positive effect on their learning. In most lessons they concentrate well, within their capabilities. For example, during a post-16 circuit training lesson students had to time and record personal achievements. Most of them were very accurate and even had enough breath left afterwards to discuss, with the teacher, their individual, preferred activity, after quite a gruelling session.
10. Behaviour in the school and on trips out is very good. This was particularly noticeable during a horse-riding trip. The weather was cold and damp and pupils had experienced a long journey back and forth. Considering all of this, their behaviour was excellent. No examples of oppressive behaviour, including bullying, sexism and racism, were noted during the whole of the inspection. Pupils are aware of the impact of their actions on others. Behaviour is a significant strength at this school and allows teaching and learning to succeed. There have been no exclusions during the past twelve months.
11. Personal development and relationships within the school are also very good and another strength of the school. These compare well with the high standards reported on at the last inspection. The school has quite a high percentage of ethnic minority pupils and students and there is mutual respect between all involved. The children have a satisfactory attitude towards the values and beliefs of others. They have visited the nearby mosque and attended assemblies taken by a local Rabbi. Relationships within the school are good. Pupils and students have their special friends and pupils, students and staff get on well together. During the inspection there were numerous examples of pupils and students showing concern for others and also helping in the day-to-day running of the classroom.
12. The amount of initiative and personal responsibility shown by students is generally good. In the post-16 extended education unit, it is very good. This compares well with the last report. Some pupils stack chairs in the hall; others return attendance registers to the school office or help to push their classmates who are in wheelchairs. In the post-16 extended education unit students occasionally cook their own meals; they also help with the younger children at playtime or help clean up after feeding sessions in the dining hall. During an end of day session seen in a class for pupils aged 7-11 one little boy showed a lot of initiative when he noticed a dangling radio plug. He said, "This must be put away"!
13. Attendance at the school is good and has improved since the last inspection. Figures compare favourably with national data and the school has no unexplained absence trends. Most pupils come to school and into classes on time and most lessons commence promptly thereby, having a good impact on learning.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is good overall. It is very good for students aged 16-19, good for pupils aged 7-14 and satisfactory for children under five and pupils aged 14-16. During the inspection teaching was very good or better in 32 per cent of lessons observed and satisfactory or better in all lessons observed. In 70 per cent of lessons, teaching was good or better. Teaching in the classes for pupils with autism and for pupils with complex and profound needs is very good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when 20 per cent of

lessons were judged to be unsatisfactory or worse and only 3 per cent of lessons were judged very good or better. There has been a ten-fold improvement in very good or better teaching.

15. Teaching for children under five is satisfactory overall. It is good for personal and social development and for language and literacy. In these areas the pupils make good progress and achieve well. The teaching is focused and enables the children to concentrate, for example, on listening to stories and taking turns. Teaching in other areas is satisfactory. These sessions are planned satisfactorily with only an adequate level of detail with regards to what the children are expected to learn. Children are provided with a sound range of opportunities to develop their skills of play. A strength of the teaching is the good quality of relationships between the staff and the children. This helps the children to feel safe and confident in their learning.
16. Literacy is taught well across the school. It is taught effectively to all age groups and is used to support English at post-16. Teachers are aware of how literacy supports learning across the curriculum and this is reinforced through targets set in pupils' IEPs. Numeracy is taught consistently across the school and is used in other subjects to support learning. Teachers ensure that the needs of those pupils and students for whom English is an additional language is planned for and the needs of these pupils and students are met effectively.
17. Teachers and support staff use signing, symbols and other means of communication effectively in all situations to support and develop pupils' understanding. For example, the consistent and appropriate use of the Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Handicaps (TEACCH) approach in the classes for pupils with autism results in the pupils appreciating and responding well to the routines of the day. This enables them to learn more effectively. Teachers also use Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) with some pupils and this helps the pupils to make choices and to indicate what they want to do.
18. A strength of teaching across the school is the effective management of pupils. Teachers employ strategies that enable them to maximise the learning for the pupils. In the classes for pupils with autism, for example, each pupil has a behaviour management programme that is individual, detailed and contains very precise and appropriate guidance on how to minimise inappropriate behaviours and how to manage them when they occur. The same is true in other classes where a pupil exhibits challenging behaviour. In a few individual cases, however, the behaviour management plan needs to be more precise about the desired behaviours so that the teachers and support staff can work towards improving behaviour more effectively.
19. Teachers have a sound command of the subjects they teach. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Teachers also know the pupils and students well and this helps them to understand how the pupils learn and how best to encourage and support their learning. For example, where the teacher is very competent in a subject and has a clear knowledge and understanding of the pupils, teaching is at least very good and, on occasions, excellent. For example, in a science lesson, the teacher uses her knowledge of the subject to very good effect by using methods that enable the pupils to get involved at a practical level to enhance their understanding of how electrical circuits are made. In a mathematics lesson for post-16 students, the teacher uses a mental arithmetic session to challenge and extend the pupils' knowledge and understanding of numbers whilst ensuring that the questions asked are appropriate to the individual student and support and praise are used effectively to motivate and reward.
20. English is taught well across the school. Teachers use the National Literacy Strategy effectively to structure their work and this is enabling them to be precise about what they want pupils to learn and it helps pupils to focus on one aspect of the subject. Books are used well to support reading and many pupils enjoy reading and listening to stories. The needs of the pupils who are not able to communicate verbally are addressed by using signing and symbols of PECS. A more sensory-based approach is used for pupils and students with more profound needs. This enables them to respond and to communicate their feelings.

21. Mathematics is taught satisfactorily across the school. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy effectively to guide their planning. This is still in the early stages of development and implementation but there is evidence of teachers becoming more confident in the teaching of number. Science is taught at least satisfactorily across the school. This is because the teachers have a secure knowledge of what they are teaching and use methods that match the needs and interests of the pupils and encourage and motivate the pupils to get involved.
22. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught well in a variety of ways across the school. Much of the teaching is through other subjects, for example, science, physical education, break times and lunchtimes and at the start and end of the day. Teachers address the individual needs of the pupils and students by using the targets set in the pupils' Individual Education Plans (IEPs). There is also a very good policy and curriculum for PSHE that guides the work of the teachers. As a consequence, in most lessons aspects of PSHE emerge. Teachers know their pupils and students well and ensure that they make at least good progress towards the targets set in the IEPs. In other areas not covered by the IEPs, teaching is structured, for example, for older pupils and post-16 students, where some of the work is accredited.
23. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects. Too little teaching was observed in geography, history, music and religious education for overall judgements to be made. However, some good teaching was observed in religious education where the lesson was well planned and the teacher engaged and interested the pupils. In history, the approach adopted in one lesson enabled the pupils to understand and feel what it might have been like during rationing. Teachers are generally confident and competent in their use of information and communication technology (ICT). This includes the use of switches and communication aids as well as computers. In a range of lessons, teachers had planned for ICT to be part of the range of resources available to the pupils. Particularly effective use is made of ICT in the classes for pupils with autism and more complex and profound needs.
24. Teaching in art is satisfactory overall with some good teaching observed in Key Stage 2 and post-16 where skills and techniques were taught very effectively. The teaching of design and technology has improved since the last inspection and teachers are now much more secure in what they are teaching. Lessons are generally well planned. The teaching of a modern foreign language (French) is good. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and plan interesting and exciting activities for the pupils and students. This enables the pupils and students to learn effectively, develop their speaking and listening skills and enhance their knowledge of the language. The subject was not taught at the last inspection: therefore, improvement has been very good. Physical education is taught well across the school with some very challenging physical work seen in post-16 and well structured swimming sessions.
25. Overall, teaching enables the vast majority of children, pupils and students to increase their knowledge, improve their skills and develop their understanding of the world around them. Where appropriate, pupils and students are given work to take home. The higher attaining students in post-16 are expected to complete work at home on a regular basis; younger pupils are given reading books to take home.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

26. The school provides a good range of opportunities for pupils to learn. The quality of the curriculum for post-16 students is very good. The curriculum for under fives is satisfactory and is based on the areas of learning and desirable learning goals. The school prepares the students well for life after school. Overall, the curriculum meets the needs of the pupils and students.
27. The curriculum has improved since the last inspection. Then, only English fully complied with the requirements of the National Curriculum. Planning in many subjects was judged to be weak. Now, planning ensures that all subjects meet requirements of the National Curriculum. The school teaches religious education in accordance with the Locally Agreed Syllabus to all

except one class of post-16 students. Sex education, personal, social and health education and careers advice and guidance, including opportunities for work experience, are all provided.

28. The school has effectively implemented the National Literacy Strategy (NLS) and the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS). Both have a positive impact on teaching and learning. Literacy, in particular, which has had more time to have an impact on pupils' achievement, is proving to be of benefit to all pupils aged 5-11 and also those aged 11-16.
29. The school's provision for pupils with autism and more complex needs is very good. The curriculum is very good and the approaches and methods used to organise and manage learning are effective. Pupils and students with more complex and profound needs are provided for well. The curriculum is tailored to the individual needs of the pupils and students and enables them to make at least good progress in learning.
30. The curriculum for children under five is satisfactory. It is soundly based on the 'areas of learning'. Planning is satisfactory and the range of experiences provided is broad. The strengths of the curriculum are the provision for language and literacy and personal and social development where there is a good range of experiences planned. In the other areas of learning, planning is less detailed and this results in some sessions lacking drive and focus.
31. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils aged 5-11 are good. These include the classes for pupils with autism. All subjects of the National Curriculum are planned for. The emphasis, in terms of time, is on English, mathematics and personal, social and health development. This balance is appropriate and enables the pupils to make good progress across the breadth of the curriculum. The school makes good use of time at the start of each day with individual tasks and activities planned for the children, pupils and students. However, for pupils aged 11-16 this time is not used sufficiently well to ensure that what the pupils are doing is enabling them to make progress.
32. The quality and range of learning opportunities for pupils aged 11-16 are satisfactory. All subjects of the National Curriculum are provided. The curriculum also provides opportunities for pupils to follow accredited courses. The amount of time spent on each subject of the curriculum is satisfactory. However, time at the start of each day is not used as productively as at Key Stages 1 and 2 and at post-16. Activities and tasks related to pupils' IEPs are provided but for some of the pupils the tasks are unduly repetitive and insufficiently challenging. Time at the end of the day is not used efficiently for all pupils and this reduces the amount of time available for teaching, particularly for the older pupils.
33. The quality and range of learning opportunities for post-16 students are very good and are a strength of the school. The curriculum is well planned for both groups and reflects the needs of the students well.
34. The school makes very good use of a nearby college and this extends and deepens the range of experiences offered to the students. Appropriate emphasis is placed on extending the students' skills and knowledge of literacy and numeracy. This is enhanced greatly through work experience, vocational courses, links with local business and a good range of ASDAN accredited courses. Students with complex and profound needs also follow ASDAN modules and this provides them with challenges that are appropriate and relevant to them. The only weakness in the curriculum at post-16 is that it does not include religious education for all the students although moral issues are discussed each week during a group session. The school recognises this as a weakness and is already preparing to rectify it.
35. The school is limited in its capacity to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities. A few parents commented on this when responding to the questionnaire. The constraints of the accommodation limit the space available for clubs and outside activities at lunchtime and transport arrangements at the end of the day restrict the opportunity for after-school clubs. However, the school enriches the curriculum through extensive links with the local community. For example, a local professional football club provides some coaching in physical education, there are extensive business links for the older pupils and the school has a very good range of integration links with local schools. There are also opportunities for residential visits that extend the range of experiences for the older pupils and students.

36. The school addresses the needs of pupils with additional special educational needs well. This enables these pupils to achieve good standards in their work. Their additional needs and targets are included on IEPs and visiting specialists share in setting targets at annual reviews and monitoring progress. Visiting specialists provide teaching for pupils with visual impairment or auditory impairment and they also monitor the progress of the pupils and provide advice to the teachers. Classroom assistants check hearing aids daily. A large number of pupils receive weekly sessions from a speech and language therapist. Her collaboration with teachers in introducing the PECS has had a good effect in improving communication. She is involved in formulating feeding programmes that have a good effect in developing pupils' speaking skills. Two physiotherapists work effectively in class addressing a range of physical needs. Links between these specialists and teachers and classroom assistants are good. The work of the speech and language therapist and the physiotherapists in class promotes an easier transfer of skills and knowledge to teachers and classroom assistants.
37. A few pupils have challenging behaviours as an additional special educational need. There are behaviour management plans in place for pupils who need them. For a few pupils these plans do not provide clear and explicit targets for desired behaviours although there are clear procedures in place and strategies used to manage unwanted behaviours. The lack of targets for desired behaviours means that too much energy and work is put into managing the unwanted behaviour and progress towards improved behaviour is slowed down. When teachers do insist on appropriate behaviour, most of these pupils respond positively and behaviour improves.
38. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils and students is good overall. It is strengthened by the very good provision for the pupils' and students' moral and social development. In these areas the school is very effective. The adults provide very good role models for the pupils and students. The school has a clear set of values and expects the pupils and students to behave well. Some pupils have difficulty in managing their own behaviour and the school is generally effective in helping them to overcome this.
39. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for the pupils and students to develop and improve their social skills. Within the school there is a wide range of opportunities for pupils and students to carry out meaningful tasks that help the staff and other pupils. The staff manage these effectively so that as the pupils move through the school they have the opportunity to extend their social skills. For example, younger pupils take the registers to each class in the morning; older pupils and students are able to operate the photocopier.
40. The school provides a good range of opportunities for the pupils to develop their cultural appreciation and understanding. There is a good range of books from different cultures. There are a number of good displays around the school that demonstrate the pupils work on, for example, Chinese New Year. Assemblies ensure that different religions and cultures are celebrated.
41. The school's planned provision for the pupils' and students' spiritual development is unsatisfactory. Assemblies are held at the end of each day. Although there is a clear plan for each assembly, the pupils arrive in the hall ready to go home. This is not conducive to creating an atmosphere for quiet reflection. On occasions, during the inspection, the time available for the assembly meant that there was very little time for genuine reflection and little opportunity to provide collective worship. In many classes, the time at the end of the day is functional rather than creating opportunities for the pupils and students to develop their spiritual awareness and self-knowledge. During the inspection there were a few lessons where the pupils experienced planned opportunities to develop a sense of self-knowledge. For example, in a science lesson at Key Stage 2 the pupils showed a sense of wonder at the lights and sounds created by toys. In another lesson, students with more complex and profound needs were provided with opportunities to respond to music and light in a session based on a journey home.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. The overall support given by the school to its children, pupils and students is good and compares very well with the judgement given at the last inspection. The school's procedures for the monitoring of both the pupils' academic performances and personal development are good. The school records each pupil's academic and pastoral progress in detail. All documentation is looked at and evaluated at regular intervals. Educational and personal support is particularly good in post-16 where it is a significant strength of the school. The school uses ASDAN to accredit students' achievements and work experience to very good effect indeed.
43. Procedures for child protection and for ensuring pupils' welfare in the school are good with some very good features. These aspects are judged to be even better than at the last inspection. Child protection is very good and a significant strength of the school. The head teacher is the trained protection officer and she has ensured that all staff have been made well aware of their relevant responsibilities. There is very good liaison with the local social services. All relevant documentation is securely locked away. Although the school does not complete an official risk assessment, the greatest care is taken by all staff to ensure that there are no health and safety risks to the children. The school was informed by inspectors of, for example, trailing electrical leads within some of the classrooms and the benefit of carrying out risk assessments of locations they visit outside of school. The school has a very conscientious health and safety representative. Procedures for dealing with accidents and the administration of medicines are very good. The school has a comfortable and adequate medical room and well-trained first-aiders. Very good use is made of outside professional help. School meals are well cooked, served and consumed on the premises in very hygienic conditions.
44. The school has good procedures for monitoring and improving attendance and these have now improved since the last inspection. Registers are taken for both morning and afternoon sessions and then returned to the school office for perusal and safekeeping. The school has a good system for contacting parents with reference to absence and lateness and efficient use is made of the local Educational Welfare Officer. However, although the school has made great efforts to overcome lateness this is still a problem due to the current transport system and this can affect the education of certain pupils.
45. The monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and the school's procedures for dealing with oppressive behaviour are very good and are strengths of the school. This compares well with the last inspection. Behaviour management plans, for all pupils requiring them, and IEPs are very detailed, specifically relevant and well adhered to by most staff. These procedures allow most children to learn well. However, the behaviour policy statement contains insufficient information on how the school would deal with sexual and racial incidents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS

46. The parents' view of the school is that this is a very good school. This was very evident from the comments made at the meeting with the Registered Inspector and from the questionnaires returned. The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is very good and a strength of the school. This compares well with the previous inspection.
47. The quality of information provided for parents, particularly about pupils' progress, is very good and a strength. Parents receive regular and informative newsletters, a regularly updated prospectus, an annual governors' report and yearly pupil academic reports. The prospectus and governors' report have a few minor omissions, of which the school is now aware. Each pupil has a home-school book which parents find very useful for communicating with the school. However, some parents state that they would like to have more information included in these books, for example, on what the pupils have covered during the day. Perusal of these books, during the inspection, would substantiate these views. Parents have welcomed the recent implementation of home-school agreements. Parents are always welcome to contact the school at any time and it was obvious during the inspection that many take full advantage of this facility.

48. The impact of parents ' involvement on the work of the school is very good and another strength of the school. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was judged satisfactory. As a consequence the contribution of parents helps considerably towards their children's learning. The school encourages parents to help at home and within the school and even arranges training to this end. The school has a core of trained parents who come in and help with swimming, visits, the library and with horse riding. Parents are so keen that the school currently has a waiting list of those asking to be trained. All parents are very involved in their child's annual reviews and take great interest in Individual Education Plans, providing significant input. At home, parents help with any homework set and, particularly for the older pupils, with projects and topics relating to their further education. The school's very energetic Friends of Dysart Association arranges numerous social events from which they raise substantial funds towards the pupils' education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

49. The leadership and management of the headteacher, deputy and senior staff are good. The school's response to the key issues raised by the last inspection has been thorough and effective. The attention to detail is impressive and this has ensured that the school has made very good improvement since the last inspection. For example, the provision for staff development is very good and ensures that all staff are able to access appropriate and relevant training. The school has also worked very hard to improve the accommodation, which was judged to be inadequate at the last inspection. In collaboration and co-operation with the local education authority, new premises are currently being built and it is planned for the school to move into them in the very near future. The School Development Plan is comprehensive and identifies the appropriate priorities for the school. The action planned is precise and the success of the actions is often related to the impact they have on pupils' learning. This is a strength of the plan.
50. The headteacher and deputy work very effectively together as a team. Together they provide very clear direction for the work of the school and, with the rest of staff, ensure that the aims of the school are witnessed in the day-to-day work of the school. They monitor teaching, planning and pupils' work regularly. They provide support for teachers and in this way the quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. As a consequence, standards have risen since the last inspection with the vast majority of pupils and students achieving well in most subjects. However, there are too few opportunities provided for the best teaching in the school to be shared and used as means of improving practice further.
51. Subject co-ordinators have a clear role in developing their subject. Some are new to the school. They have been effective in ensuring that the schemes of work are in place and that all subjects, with the exception of religious education for some post-16 students, comply with statutory requirements. However, they do not take a sufficiently strong enough lead in monitoring teaching, a point that the school recognises.
52. The governors take a keen and active interest in the work of the school and are very supportive of the staff. Since the last inspection they have been very proactive in securing new accommodation for the school and in this respect they have been very successful. They also keep a close eye on the finances and the school budget and manage it effectively. They know a lot about the school and the wide range of professional and personal experiences they bring to the governing body is an asset. They are provided with a termly report from the headteacher at a meeting dedicated to this single item. They recognise that the strength of the school lies in the quality of the leadership and the quality of the teachers and support staff. An area for improvement for the governors is in increasing and developing their knowledge and understanding of the achievements of the pupils and how these compare to other similar schools.
53. The headteacher and senior management take an active and purposeful interest in monitoring the overall performance of the school. They look at comparative data in terms of quality, standards and finance. The headteacher in particular is very well informed about the provision made by other special schools and local authorities in the area and uses this to compare the

performance of the school with others. The school was very well prepared for the inspection and this is an example of the thoroughness of the monitoring and evaluation carried out by senior management. The school has made a good start in collecting information that it uses to compare its own performance with other schools. For example, it monitors inspection reports of similar schools and collects, collates and analyses financial information pertaining to levels of funding.

54. The school plans and uses its budget effectively. For example, funds for staff development are targeted closely to the needs of the individual teacher or classroom assistant and to the overall needs of the school. Over the last few years a significant amount of staff development has taken place that has resulted in improvements in the overall quality of teaching and provision. For example, the provision for pupils with autism has benefited from in-service training. Subject specialist training has resulted in the quality of the curriculum in subjects being improved. The School Development Plan is the driving force behind staff development and ensures that money is used wisely to promote higher standards and quality. The budget is well monitored and the bursar and secretary provide very good day-to-day management and administration.
55. The school has an effective equal opportunities policy in place. On some occasions the girls are brought together for aspects of the curriculum that are particularly relevant to them. Structured play activities that promote the more caring aspect of play are created to enable all pupils to play with softer, more feminine toys. The staff are aware of gender issues in curriculum materials and promote equal opportunities. The school staff ensure that all students have equal access to college facilities.
56. The governor with responsibility for special educational needs is well informed and brings her professional expertise in visiting the school and observing pupils with additional SEN. However the school fails to meet with the statutory requirement to report annually in the report of the governors to parents on the success of the SEN policy in achieving its objectives. Parents are involved effectively through annual reviews and home-school contact books. Contacts between specialist staff and parents are at least satisfactory. The school does not meet the statutory requirement to provide religious education to all of its pupils and students.
57. The staff are well qualified and experienced. Many have additional qualifications in special educational needs. The support staff are very experienced and are regularly involved in staff development and further training. The resources for learning are satisfactory overall with, for example, a well catalogued range of resources in mathematics. In many lessons teachers have made and use good quality resources for the pupils. However, the stock of books in English is a little low, the range of science practical equipment is unsatisfactory and the range of instruments of music is limited.
58. The accommodation is very poor. It was judged as 'limited' at the last inspection and as not meeting the guidance provided by the Department of Education and Science Building Bulletin 77 in a number of aspects. The accommodation is still limited and is very poor and remains a key issue for the school until the school has moved to its new premises. It is planned for the school to move to new premises in the very near future and building work is well under way. On the current site there is inadequate outdoor play space for children under five, one of the classrooms for pupils with autism is unsuitable and the hall is used for lunchtimes, assemblies physical education and storage. The classrooms for pupils aged 11-16 are entirely inappropriate and do not provide adequate space for teaching or learning. The post-16 students are taught either in a class in the main building or in a demountable, which presents the same difficulties as recognised by the last inspection. There is very little grassed area and insufficient space for outdoor games. The corridors are narrow and have to be used for storing some of the pupils' equipment. The library is located in a corridor just inside one of the entrances to the school. The headteacher and deputy share the same office and there is very little space for meetings and for parents and visiting specialists. The entrance to the school presents difficulties for the school transport although the school manages this very well indeed and minimises any potential health and safety matters. For example, bus drivers are not allowed to switch their engines on until all the pupils and students are loaded. Accommodation for additional special educational needs, for example, physiotherapy, properly soundproofed rooms and an adequate darkroom, is limited.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

59. In order to raise standards further the governors, headteacher and staff should:
- Improve the planning for the pupils' and students' spiritual development by:
 - ensuring that all subjects consider and include any opportunities for developing the pupils' and students' self-knowledge and spiritual awareness;
 - reviewing the timing of assemblies in order that they can be carried out in a manner which enables an act of collective worship to be afforded appropriate time and that the assembly is regarded as an event with its own sense of purpose. (Paragraph 41)
 - Ensure that religious education is provided for all students aged 16-19. (Paragraphs 56, 147)
 - Review the use of time at the start of the day in order to ensure that it is used efficiently to promote learning for pupils aged 14-16 and at the end of day, where appropriate, to promote the spiritual development of all pupils; (Paragraphs 33, 41)
 - Ensure that the plans to move to new premises are carried out or that the current premises are improved. (Paragraph 58)
60. The governors, when drawing up their action plan, may wish to take into consideration the following minor weaknesses identified in the report:
- The management of a few pupils with challenging behaviours; (Paragraph 38)
 - Risk assessments; (Paragraph 43)
 - The behaviour policy; (Paragraph 45)
 - Sharing good practice and increasing subject co-ordinators' role in monitoring; (Paragraph 51)
 - Use of ICT in mathematics and science; (Paragraphs 92, 102)
 - Resources in English, science and music; (Paragraphs 82, 102, 137)
 - Governors' knowledge of standards and achievement and school performance; (Paragraph 52)
 - Ensuring that the annual governors' report to parents includes reference to the school policy on special educational needs. (Paragraph 56)

INTEGRATION

61. The school makes very good provision for the integration of pupils and students into local schools and college. The school is very keen to promote inclusion and works very hard with a number of schools to create the right conditions for inclusion. The school prepares the ground well with mainstream schools, providing disability awareness sessions for staff and pupils, working with teachers and support staff and providing staff development as appropriate. Work also goes on in the community, for example, with local groups and businesses. The school also monitors the integration very closely in order to ensure that it is working for the pupils and for the host school. Pupils are integrated into their local primary school and this enables them to integrate effectively with other children who live in their local area.
62. During the inspection it was possible to visit a college and three primary schools. In all cases the quality of integration was very good. The pupils and students benefit academically, socially and personally from the experiences. The pupils in the mainstream schools also benefit from integration through learning about disability and working with pupils from Dysart school. One local primary school has visited Dysart and pupils have worked alongside Dysart pupils. Some of the pupils wrote letters about their visit to the school and these are displayed in the corridors near the entrance to the school. The frankness and honesty of what they have written is testament to the openness shown by both schools and the pragmatic approach adopted by them.

63. The school promotes inclusion very effectively. The time spent in preparation and supporting pupils and staff is used very efficiently.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	90
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.4	29.4	38.8	29.4	0	0	0

The table gives the percentage of teaching observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons.

* Five of the lessons observed were not taught by teachers of the school. They were either taken by a visiting specialist to the school or by a teacher or lecturer at a local school or college. The figures in the table above are based on the lessons taught by teachers at the school.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	66
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	16

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	4

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	6.6	School data	1.0

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment by the end of Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and post-16

It is inappropriate to report on attainment as measured against national standards at the end of Key Stages 1, 2, 3 and 4 and post-16 because of the small number of pupils and the nature of their special educational needs.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	2
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	44
Any other minority ethnic group	8

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

This table gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: N– Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.6
Average class size	7.3

Education support staff: YN – Y13

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	535

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
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	£
Total income	697,278
Total expenditure	698,411
Expenditure per pupil	11,086
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,020
Balance carried forward to next year	5,887

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	66
Number of questionnaires returned	41

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	66	32	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	49	0	5	10
Behaviour in the school is good.	37	51	0	2	10
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15	46	7	0	32
The teaching is good.	83	17	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	24	0	0	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	12	0	0	5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61	32	0	0	7
The school works closely with parents.	71	24	0	0	5
The school is well led and managed.	83	15	0	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	54	29	0	0	17
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	29	24	15	0	32

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concern over the late arrival of transport in the morning. A few parents expressed concern about the lack information provided to them about what their children had done during the day, particularly parents of older children in the school and those whose children were unable to communicate.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

64. A very few children under five were attending the school at the time of the inspection and are taught in the nursery/ reception class and in one of the classes for autistic pupils. All but one attends full-time. Children either already have a statement of special needs or are under assessment.

Personal, social and emotional development

65. Children make good progress in this area and achieve well. They quickly begin to demonstrate recognition of the class routines, respond to "Hello" and "Goodbye" songs and indicate choices of drink or toys. They usually play happily alongside each other and sometimes show interest in each other's play. Relationships and the quality of interaction with all staff are good and children develop confidence and trust. Some children have a regular experience of integration in a mainstream nursery and this further promotes their social development. Teaching is good and all staff observe children's progress carefully, demonstrate good teamwork and share information well.

Language and literacy

66. Achievement and progress are good in language and literacy. Children listen well to the spoken word and to songs and begin to associate language with symbols and signs. They listen to stories and begin to know how to handle books. Where appropriate they use communication devices, such as a "Big Mac", to make a spoken response for them during group times. More able children use speech effectively to communicate and listen well. Teaching is good. Staff give each child a regular experience of communication, making very good eye contact and being very responsive to subtle responses made by children. Technology is well used to support language and communication; signing is consistent and there is good use of symbols.

Mathematical development

67. Children's achievement is satisfactory in mathematics and they make sound progress. They listen to, and some join in, rhymes and songs which use numbers up to 5. They experience different shapes and they become familiar with the names and written form of numbers and with groups of objects. Teaching is satisfactory. Resources are sometimes well chosen and promote interest and therefore attention in the children. However, the activities chosen do not always address precisely the learning objectives planned and occasionally individual children do not have a good enough view of the lesson, due to their seating position.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

68. Achievement and progress are satisfactory in this area. Children have opportunities to play with sand and water and to handle materials with different textures and properties. They talk about the days of the week and the weather in daily group sessions and begin to be aware of time and routines through the association of symbols with regular activities. Simple computer games are available and children learn about cause and effect by pressing a switch that changes the display on the screen. Children learn about plants through looking at flowers and they see the squirrel and the birds that visit the area outside the classroom. Teaching is satisfactory but too few opportunities are provided to learn about the world outside the classroom. This is partly because of the unsuitability of the outdoor play area but also because visits which could be made, using the school minibus, present staffing-level difficulties with the current group of quite dependent pupils.

Physical development

69. While achievement in children's physical development is broadly satisfactory, their progress is adversely affected by the unsatisfactory accommodation both indoors and out. The classroom is cramped for the number of children in the class, partly because of the large equipment they need, for example, wheelchairs with trays. Because some children are physically quite vulnerable activities have to be restricted. Heating in the soft play and wet play area is inadequate and the room is too cold at times for pupils to be comfortable. The outdoor area allocated to the nursery and reception class is entirely unsuitable and lacks any equipment to help children learn to balance, swing, climb and develop their mobility. The surfaces within the area are also completely unsuitable. There is no apparatus to encourage climbing, crawling through small spaces or hiding. This significantly narrows the range of experiences to which they should have access. Pupils do, however, benefit from access to the school's good swimming pool. Within the constraints of the accommodation, teaching is satisfactory, with good team- work between staff and physiotherapist.

Creative development

70. Children's achievement and progress in creative development is satisfactory. They have opportunities to explore paint with different textures, to track the fall of paint on to paper and to make marks with hands, feet and brushes. Children become aware of colour in their toys and in the displays around the school. In music they listen to songs and have experience of handling instruments, often responding with spontaneous movements to the rhythm of the songs. In the home corner, they have the opportunity to use their imagination and follow up stories they have read together. Teaching is satisfactory overall and there are good features, for example the continuing of the story theme into the home corner, currently set up to illustrate the book "Peace at Last!" Children could benefit from more frequent and more varied opportunities for imaginative play.
71. The curriculum is satisfactory overall and is planned appropriately using the "areas of learning for children under five". In this respect there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. All staff work well together, share information and make accurate and useful observations of the children that promote satisfactory progress and development. Planning for lessons is sound but sometimes activities and learning objectives need to be more carefully matched to individual children. Staff try to overcome the limitations of the accommodation but it continues to be a limiting factor in the experiences children can be offered, particularly in physical and creative development. There is a very high level of physical and emotional care for all children under five.

ENGLISH

72. Pupils' achievements in English and literacy by ages 7,11,14 and 16 are good and at post-16 students' achievements are very good. Pupils at all ages achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The achievement of post-16 students in these areas is very good. In each key stage pupils generally make good progress towards their specific targets in literacy and communication set out in their IEPs. Post-16 students make very good progress in these areas.
73. By 7, pupils achieve well and their progress is good. The use of PECS provides a powerful focus to language development in speaking, listening and reading, enabling clear communication about daily routines. The use of singing routines, for example at registration, familiarises pupils with questions and enables them to make simple, appropriate responses to questions such as what makes them happy. They listen to stories together in the Literacy Hour and answer simple questions about the story and at the end of the hour recall how far the story has proceeded. The most able pupils in the autistic spectrum comment on their satisfaction at good progress, one, for example, saying to an inspector "I don't mind if I don't get an award today". The least able pupils distinguish between illustration and text, handle books appropriately and respond to PECS symbols. Most can anticipate an easier "next word" in a familiar story. The more able can recall title and author and a small minority read familiar

illustrated texts with a reading level of around six years, in one case using good expression. While writing skills are good, given pupils' prior attainment, they are less fully developed than speaking and listening or reading skills. All pupils have sufficient pre-writing skills to approximate a simple shape, at least on some occasions, and fit large foam letters to a template. Several trace letters and form them independently and indicate names or, less often, sounds. A few copy short words. With computers pupils arrange items in sequence. A few pupils in the autistic spectrum show isolated higher skills, one, for example, producing a recognisable spelling of "electricity" with an appropriate picture.

74. By 11, pupils achievements remain good in the three aspects of English with the greatest strength in speaking and listening, followed by reading and then writing. In speaking and listening, for example, an able pupil comments favourably and appropriately in clear sentences about the success of one of his classmates while a less able pupil indicates his preferences through the use of switches. Pupils respond appropriately in dialogues with the teacher, for example when they are welcomed at the start of the day or when they select and name and describe aspects of items beginning with a letter "w" They show clear recall of a story read before and become involved together in saying the repeated parts of the story with the teacher. They link a variety of letters with their sounds and read their names or in some cases short words. One able pupil spontaneously reads most of an inspector's name card correctly. While some pre-writing skills are only at the level of roughly colouring in, others copy short sentences about their science work in legible writing. They arrange Makaton style symbols on the computer screen to form a short meaningful phrase or sentence that the computer also writes in English.
75. By 14, pupils sustain and extend good achievement in speaking and listening skills. They develop a greater range of responses to social questions, for example expressing their tastes and appreciating humour, and many can listen to and follow a teacher talking about a topic for an extended period. Their ability to follow signs and sign themselves continues to develop with, for example, several able to make some of the signs for individual letters. The good reading achievement is consolidated and extended. While the least able pupils are still at the level of matching letters to templates most have a far wider awareness of letter sounds with the most able pupils to write the alphabet independently as well as say it. Pupils read short sentences illustrating a particular word using a combination of print and signs. Writing develops well though somewhat less than reading. Pupils dictate events for their diaries and then copy the sentences achieving increasing length, clarity and detail of sentences over the term.
76. By 16, pupils good achievement in speaking and listening is shown by their ability to help each other, for example in work with computers or where the more able explain the experience of a friend, for example at the swimming pool. In reading they improve their ability to pick out rhyming words and the more able incorporate rhyme knowledge in word building skills. Their ability to write their own news from a combination of words around the class, dictated sentences and sentences formed from a word bank continues to grow. Some help others with their spelling and pupils become more able to read what they have written. Literacy skills are developed in work in other lessons, for example in drawing and labelling, writing and talking about what they have learned.
77. At post-16 the small number of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make good progress on the targets in their IEPs towards developing and sustaining functions. They show appropriate responses in drama lessons, being able to show enjoyment and a range of emotions when involved in the drama of Odysseus and the Cyclops. They make choices about their role through vocalising or the use of switches and some show a limited control of computer displays with head or hand operated switches.
78. Post-16 pupils in the Extended Education Unit (EEU) make very good progress in speaking and listening. They co-operate and help one another in their work, talk to visitors about their preferences, answer open ended questions and in some cases initiate and sustain appropriate sociable dialogues with visitors to the school. Reading attainment is very good. They use phonic skills to find items they want to buy from a catalogue and use the index effectively and identify price, catalogue number and page number. Out of school at the local Further Education college they find their way to the library, return, change and take out new books and explain what they are doing. They read what they have written themselves. Achievement in

writing is very good. They write for a range of purposes and fill in simple forms, for example assessing their own work and progress on the ASDAN modules that provide them with a series of skills to apply in everyday life.

79. Teaching is good for pupils aged 5-14, satisfactory for pupils aged 14-16 and very good in the post-16. Teaching is good or better in 80 per cent of lessons and very good in 27 per cent. The Literacy Hour is well established for pupils aged 5-11 and the co-ordinators are in the introductory phase of establishing for pupils aged 11-16 where they appropriately recognise the need for further training. Teachers almost always manage pupils well with the support of clear behaviour management programmes where necessary. This enables the pupils to develop effective routines that help them learn, for example, to take turns, show interest, have good relations with the staff and help one another increasingly with age. However, a few pupils are sometimes preoccupied by their own needs and thoughts and are unaware of how this may disadvantage others.
80. Speech and communications therapy skills are appropriately developed between specialist teachers, classroom teachers and assistants and make a good contribution to pupils' speaking and reading skills. Teachers are skilled in a range of signing methods and support their communications of, for example, a story with a good range of practical resources, such as sign cards and items relating to the story. They show a good repertoire of ideas, for example songs and movements to establish a point.
81. Teachers have a good awareness of additional special educational needs, such as hearing and visual impairment and benefit from the support of specialist teachers. All this enables pupils with these additional needs to make the same progress as their classmates. Classroom assistants show good skills and they are well deployed by teachers who, where appropriate, arrange for them to take the lead in delivering parts of the lesson. Planning for the range of pupils in the class is generally good. It is normally well linked to targets in Individual Education Plans with progress being assessed regularly and thoroughly. Teaching is sometimes less effective because of too much time between activities and pupils have to wait too long to be involved. While some teachers and classroom assistants show good skills in teaching phonics the school recognises that there is scope to further develop staff knowledge about promoting pupils' phonological awareness, such as rhyming skills. Overall, the school uses literacy to good effect across a range of subjects.
82. The school has made good progress since the last inspection in raising both pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching. The quality of assessment is good, particularly through the links made in assessing progress on IEPs. Progress is reviewed regularly and changes are made to targets or activities as appropriate. Just occasionally there is scope for more precise targets, for example in phonic development. The school's use of the "Small Steps" assessment system, which is linked to the National Curriculum, has enabled it to set and monitor its progress towards targets and appropriately identify scope for development, for example in writing. Assessment and its use are strongest for pupils aged 5-11 and students aged 16-19; not all the best practice is fully established with the new staff for pupils aged 11-16. While there are many good well-used resources the stock of books is low. The two co-ordinators have a good impact in raising standards through training and monitoring of planning and teaching. This gives them an effective overview of priorities for subject development.

MATHEMATICS

83. The pupils' achievements in mathematics are satisfactory throughout the school, with some good achievement by the students aged 16-19. Teachers are implementing the National Numeracy Strategy (NNS) and this is leading to a consistency of teaching across the subject.
84. By the age of 7, higher attaining pupils count to twenty by rote, construct a repeating pattern using three elements and do addition sums up to 5. The lower attaining pupils recognise the concept of oneness and twoness, achieve 1 to 1 correspondence up to 5, match objects and can draw round a square. By the age of 11, higher attaining pupils complete sums involving thousands, hundreds, tens and units. They do addition sums using correct place notation up to hundreds, tens and units. They classify circles, squares and rectangles, know the difference between them and complete complex three-dimensional puzzles. They use the mathematical terms like quadrilateral to describe shapes. In the majority of lessons, songs and rhyming games with a numerical basis maintain the pupils' interest and contribute to a satisfactory and sometimes a very good pace of working.
85. Pupils aged 11-16 make satisfactory progress. By the time pupils are 14, they are able to count to 20. In a group they are able to count by rote to 100. The higher attaining pupils draw lines of a set measurement using a ruler. The lower attainers use hand spans as a unit of measurement and use mathematical terms like 'tallest' and 'smallest'. At Key Stage 4 the higher attaining pupils know how many birthdays they have had and can do simple addition sums up to ten. They are beginning to use simple histograms and pie charts.
86. Post-16 students recognise coins and complete simple mental calculations. The maths work is related to their everyday experience and the business enterprise project provides opportunities for practical mathematical experiences. Most are quite quick in adding and subtracting simple numbers mentally; higher attainers recognise repeating patterns, can make up sums of money using different coins and can exchange coins. They handle money with confidence, for example, in the café and restaurant of the nearby college.
87. Since the last inspection standards have improved. The school has worked hard to implement the NNS. There is a consistency in planning across the school, which leads to a consistency in delivery of the curriculum.
88. Pupils' numeracy skills are practised in other curriculum areas, for example encouraging a pupil to speak after 'One, two, three, go' and also in swimming sessions where numeracy and right/ left direction was practised in the pool. However, greater use of counting could be used in other curriculum areas, for example counting jumps in the gymnastics sessions in physical education.
89. The quality of teaching and pupils' learning is never less than satisfactory; on occasions it is very good and is satisfactory overall. The teachers have a sound knowledge of mathematics and numeracy. Planning is thorough and leads to a consistency of teaching across the key stages. Teachers match the work well to the needs of the individual pupils and students and this helps them concentrate and to stay on task for considerable periods of time. For example, students aged 16-19 work on individual tasks planned by the teacher for up to 30 minutes and are able to explain what they are doing. Teachers build good relationships with the pupils and students and this helps them to become confident in learning.
90. There is satisfactory management of the pupils' behaviour. Occasionally, pupils are unable to learn because their behaviour distracts them from the task in hand. These incidents are dealt with effectively by good teamwork between the class teacher and the classroom assistants. The standards of behaviour displayed by the pupils can vary depending upon which member of staff is teaching.
91. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. Where assessment is good, the targets set in the pupils' IEPs are reviewed regularly and are well matched to both support and challenge the pupil. The majority of the teachers know the pupils well and work is set according to what the pupils have experienced previously and their level of understanding.

92. The subject is managed effectively. The co-ordinator provides enthusiastic leadership for the implementation of the numeracy strategy. The co-ordination of the subject has in part been managed by the co-ordinator teaching across the first three key stages. Monitoring of lessons is carried out by the co-ordinator. The resources produced by the school are well catalogued and provide for efficient teaching. Targets in mathematics are set for every pupil and are monitored. In most classrooms there is sufficient space for separate groups to work; however, the accommodation for pupils aged 11-16 is not conducive to good teaching and learning. There are insufficient opportunities for the use of computers to support the learning of the pupils in this curriculum area. The subject has made good improvement since the previous inspection. The weaknesses in teaching have been resolved and the subject now has more time and planning is better.

SCIENCE

93. Achievement in science is good overall in the school but there are variations between pupils of different ages. These variations are associated with differences in the quality of teaching.
94. Pupils' achievement by age 7 is satisfactory. Pupils know through water play about things that float and sink; they experience, through their play, the characteristics of everyday materials, finding out whether they are hard or soft, strong or weak, smooth or rough. They plant seeds and learn about how plants grow. Pupils know that some things use electricity and that electricity can come from batteries and from electrical plugs and they are beginning to know that electricity has dangers and must be treated with respect. The achievement of some pupils with more complex needs is good – for example, some have good knowledge of vocabulary associated with their work about electricity.
95. Achievement by age 11 is at least satisfactory and for some pupils very good. Many pupils extend their knowledge and understanding of electricity and are able, for example, to connect up an electrical circuit with wires, bulbs and batteries. Higher attaining pupils understand that the circle must be complete and that it is not enough that the wire brings electricity to the bulb – it also has to return through a wire to the battery.
96. By age 14 pupils' achievement is good. Pupils have built on their earlier experience of materials and are able to progress towards knowing that some materials can be wet on the outside and keep things dry underneath. They can make observations and begin to make generalised statements and predictions. However, in a lesson seen with a group of 14-16 pupils, similar work on materials indicates less secure achievement; some concepts – soft and hard, for example - do not appear to be completely developed, limiting the pupils' further progress. Achievement is satisfactory by age 16. Pupils have some knowledge of what plants need to grow, and which foods promote healthy living; and have experienced "pushing" and "pulling" forces and the effects of magnetism.
97. Pupils in the post-16 extended education unit achieve very well in practical science that is linked to skills needed for everyday life, work and leisure. They have knowledge of personal hygiene, safety in food preparation and the effects of exercise, medicine and drugs on their bodies. They know about growth and reproduction in plants, animals and humans. Photography studies at Richmond College have given them practical experience of the effects of light on photosensitive paper and the process of developing and fixing photographs. Pupils over 16 with more significant learning difficulties have the opportunity to experience living things, such as worms, dogs and rabbits, and have seen how their own nails and hair grow. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good.
98. Teaching in science is at least satisfactory and there are examples of very good and excellent teaching in science for pupils aged 7-14. While no science teaching was directly observed for the post-16 class, there is clear evidence of good teaching in the achievement of the pupils. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and sometimes very good. The characteristics of outstanding teaching seen include the excellent choice of teaching methods. For example, in a lesson for pupils aged 7-11, the use of "discovery" methods maintains pupils' interest, enthusiasm and concentration. The work challenges all pupils and enables them all to be involved in a practical and experimental way. The limited accommodation is used well to

achieve maximum effect, for example the use of a small darkroom to enhance the effect of switching on a light. Most lessons proceed at a good pace and teachers communicate the excitement of science. All these contribute to good and very good progress. Good planning is seen in all lessons.

99. In very good teaching there is use of particularly vivid demonstrations to support new concepts – such as the joining of hands in a circle to illustrate the making and breaking of an electrical circuit. This helps pupils experience, understand and remember. Teachers generally use assessment well during the lessons, observing which pupils have grasped new concepts and which need further help. Occasionally, however, a teacher does not notice gaps in knowledge. Because there are very few science targets on IEPs, the tracking of science progress is not so detailed or systematic as it could be. However, scrutiny of reports indicates progress that is always at least sound and usually good. Information technology is not yet fully used to support science.
100. There is a scheme of work, currently being revised, which links well to the National Curriculum and is a good basis for planning. Staff hold “brainstorming” meetings in which they plan how to deliver particular aspects of the subject. This planning is very useful. However, although similar lessons take place within the same week, they are not all equally successful. There is a need to share the best practice so that all teaching comes up to the level of the best. This would require teachers to have the opportunity to see demonstrations or, better still, actual lessons taught by other teachers.
101. Co-ordination of science is satisfactory and improving. The co-ordinator has made an excellent start on revising schemes of work and bringing a specialist science perspective to the school. This improvement has recently been interrupted by the co-ordinator’s illness but is likely to make further good progress on her return.
102. Resources, including the use of ICT, and accommodation are currently unsatisfactory. There is no specialist accommodation for secondary aged students. Resources for primary science are unsatisfactory. Equipment for making electric circuits is difficult for some pupils to manipulate and needs to be larger and easier to connect. A variety of different kinds of electric beaters are used, some fall over too easily and some present difficulties in the form of trailing wires. Appropriate and safe equipment needs to be identified for science, rather than teachers improvising with what is available from home or from the school’s kitchens. Although staff take steps to ensure the health and safety of their pupils in science, risk assessments are not part of the planning of every lesson and need to be incorporated for all planned activities.
103. There has been good improvement in standards in science since the last inspection when much of the progress made by pupils was judged less than satisfactory and the subject did not fully comply with the requirements of the National Curriculum.

ART

104. Achievement in art is satisfactory for pupils aged 5-16 and good for students over 16. By the age of 7 pupils are beginning to experience art activities through feeling the texture of paint mixed with sand and flour and making marks on paper with hands or feet. They print “day” and “night” pictures using star shapes and different shades of blue. By age 11, pupils apply paint to create patterns using a variety of objects taken from kitchens and bathrooms: sponges, bath plugs and chains, loofahs and massage rollers. They choose the colour of the paint, use brushing, rolling, dabbing and smearing techniques to form their designs and use a variety of materials to contribute to class pictures and collages.
105. Art is used to support other subject areas, including science, history and mathematics. Some higher attaining pupils make representational drawings of people or animals, using pencils or pens. Pupils aged 11-16 look at paintings by established artists, for example, Lowry and Klee. The pupils use similar techniques in their own work, for example, creating an industrial scene, a repeating pattern or a study using the technique of scratching through black paint to a previously coloured surface. Some pupils use drawing instead of writing to record what they learn in lessons.

106. Students over the age of 16 achieve well in both two- and three-dimensional art. They are able to plan sculptures and carry out small versions with very good finish. Their work is original and of good quality. They go on to carry out full sized versions of selected sculpture using wire mesh and "ModRock" plaster bandages. Their designs for flower gardens in horticulture are illustrated with coloured drawings and they often record work through drawing. At college, they learn to use photographic techniques to create original art and in their business enterprise they use a variety of printing and collage techniques to produce items for sale, for example, greetings cards and bookplates. Pupils throughout the school are generally positive about their experiences of art and behave well in art lessons.
107. Long term planning is satisfactorily linked to the National Curriculum and in this respect art has improved since the last inspection, although there is still a relative lack of three-dimensional art to be seen in the school.
108. Teaching in art is generally satisfactory throughout the school with some examples of good teaching in post-16 classes and for pupils aged 7-11. Teachers' knowledge of art is satisfactory and some teachers have good knowledge and skills, which they could make available to their colleagues. In lessons where the best practice is seen pupils are enabled to use skills and techniques to produce original work and are encouraged to discuss it and to look at it carefully. In less effective although still satisfactory lessons, adult input is too intrusive so that a pupil's finished work shows where the adult wanted to put the paint rather than where the pupil wanted it. For a few pupils with particular physical difficulties, appropriate equipment to allow good positioning of the work, for example, an easel or an adjustable height table, is not provided and the school needs to seek better access to occupational therapy advice for certain children. Illustrations of artists' work are often too small and not striking enough so that pupils begin tasks in a mechanical way, without having really looked at the pictures on which they are basing their work.
109. Although the subject co-ordinator has good knowledge and specialist training in art, co-ordination of the subject is not fully developed, with the co-ordinator having little input to the teaching of the subject for pupils aged 11-16. This is an area in which good practice and skills could be better shared. A lack of specialist accommodation currently limits the progress that can be made, especially by the older pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

110. During the inspection it was possible to observe only one lesson of food technology and two lessons of design and technology. However, there was significant photographic evidence that showed that different projects have been undertaken, for example, the making of puppets.
111. Pupils' achievement by the age of 11 is satisfactory. Design and technology is used to support learning in other subjects, for example, geography where the pupils used their making skills when looking at houses. In science, they use their design skills when looking at circuits and how toys work. In a discrete design and technology lesson, pupils look at the properties of different materials and, more importantly, the design of the houses of the 'Three Little Pigs'. They learn about what kinds of structures are more secure, stable and strong. By ages 14 and 16, pupils' achievements are satisfactory. They develop their skills and knowledge in food technology. The post-16 students also plan and prepare their own lunches on certain days of the week.
112. Lessons are planned satisfactorily and teaching is good overall. Teachers are secure in what they are teaching and prepare activities and tasks that interest and motivate the pupils. As a consequence, pupils enjoy their work, use the materials sensibly and behave well. Teachers use other subjects effectively to broaden the range of experience, for example, using children's literature as a basis for some of the work. Teaching has improved since the last inspection and teachers are now more competent and confident in teaching the subject. Planning for pupils aged 5-11 shows that a more balanced and broad curriculum is now in place. This is an improvement on the last inspection.

113. The school has continued to develop the curriculum. The recently appointed co-ordinator is a specialist in the subject and has used her experience and expertise to broaden and develop the curriculum. The school has introduced construction, electronics, and work on resistant materials as well as continuing to develop food technology and modelling. The co-ordinator was aware that textiles was not being taught. The co-ordinator has attended relevant courses and exhibitions and this has led to the introduction of new initiatives, for example, using the QCA schemes of work.
114. The subject is taught by a number of teachers and support staff and the co-ordinator has no time available to visit and directly monitor lessons. Staff meet regularly to attempt to ensure progression and continuity.
115. The school is clear about the time spent on teaching technology and ensures that design and technology is taught in other areas of the curriculum. The quality and range of resources have improved. However, there is no dedicated accommodation for the subject at Key Stages 3 and 4. The kitchen area is small and is, on occasions, somewhat overcrowded. It is also used as a corridor to boys' toilets and this limits its use overall. The school works hard to overcome the limitations. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

116. During the inspection it was only possible to observe two lessons, both for pupils aged 7-11. This is because the subject is taught mainly on one day of the week. However, there are daily references to the weather in all classes and trips out of school are used effectively to promote the pupils' knowledge and understanding of places. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, review of reports and the IEPs show satisfactory levels of achievement by pupils at ages 11,14 and 16. Pupils demonstrated a good understanding of how houses are constructed and of different types of houses. They extend their knowledge and understanding of 'Where we live' by watching a video recording and through following up this with some practical work. The quality of teaching observed was very good with very good plans and clear objectives.
117. The school teaches geography as a discrete subject and has increased resources since the last inspection. There are now schemes of work in place and the school allocates an appropriate amount of time to the subject. The school now ensures that the subject is taught in a systematic way. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection. The co-ordinator intends to review the curriculum and is currently tracking two pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 to evaluate continuity and progression.

HISTORY

118. During the inspection it was only possible to observe one lesson for pupils aged 11-14 during the inspection. For pupils aged 5-11 the subject is taught on a half termly basis and was not being taught during the inspection week. Evidence from the scrutiny of pupils' work, school reports and records shows that the achievements of pupils are satisfactory. In the single lesson observed, pupils were learning about rationing. They showed a sound understanding of what the term meant and demonstrated this by selecting and placing a picture of their chosen food on a poster. The teacher then took some of the food away and the pupils responded, indicating their appreciation of what it meant not to have sufficient food or a variety of food. The lesson was well planned and the activities were designed to ensure that pupils learnt about sharing and what it meant to share a little food between lots of people. Pupils enjoyed the lesson and behaved well. They responded well to the ideas that rationing was not an enjoyable experience.
119. The school has a new co-ordinator, who is a specialist teacher. The co-ordinator has started to review and evaluate the curriculum. The schemes of work follow National Curriculum guidelines. Since the last inspection the school has introduced schemes of work and increased resources and the subject is now taught as a discrete subject. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

120. Information and communication technology is taught as a discrete subject on only a few occasions across the school. Judgements were formed on evidence gathered from lessons where information and communication technology was used as part of another lesson from scrutiny of work, records, displays and from discussion with the co-ordinator. Overall, the achievements of the pupils and students are satisfactory.
121. By the age of 7, higher attaining pupils access simple word processing packages. They use the cursor or mouse as a pointer and activator. They use control technology, for example the 'Roamer', and can use programs like 'Pingu' to support their numeracy work. They access 'My Amazing Dictionary' to assist their language work. Lower attaining pupils understand that touching the 'touch screen' will show some 'cause and effect' actions to occur. Pupils are able to match pictures and patterns. Some pupils use the 'Big Mac' switch very appropriately for the 'Good Morning' sessions.
122. By the age of 11, higher attaining pupils open an appropriate software program, find and open a file, edit their work, print and close down the program. They share an activity with another child. They add hair, a beard and ears to a face using the 'Colour Magic' program and using 'My World' with some help the pupils can draw a house and add an appropriate caption. Some lower attaining pupils are able to use the 'Big Mac' communication aids at registration time.
123. By the age of 14, some pupils can use the 'My World' art package. Pupils use word processing programs, tape recorders and compact disc players. Other pupils can use Eclipse communication aids and telephones.
124. Post-16 pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties are able to use pressure switches to control music and bubble tubes. Post-16 pupils in the extended education unit are competent at loading and exiting programs. They can open files, copy type, edit and print their work and close the program. They also use the computers for their leisure activities.
125. Teaching throughout the school, where it was seen, ranges from satisfactory to good. The adults in the school are confident in their use of computers and pass on their enthusiasm to the pupils. Teachers teach pupils to use the mouse to access menus and to scroll through lists and the appropriate vocabulary is used. The pupils are keen to use computers and other items of information and communication technology. Their attitude towards computers is excellent and they are aware that computers control several everyday appliances. The opportunity to use computers to support curriculum work is enjoyed by the pupils and pupils learn to share the limited facilities that are available.

126. The monitoring of the pupils' achievements is very effective with clear targets and records showing that pupils have achieved particular targets. The monitoring of teaching is more complex because of the lack of non-contact time. The co-ordinator has recently come to the school to a designated post. The staff in the school are keen on information and communication technology and there is opportunity to make it a more central part of the life of the school. The delivery of the curriculum is frustrated by the paucity of hardware available. There are 6 Acorn Computers and 4 PCs, which is inadequate for the range of pupils in the school. The Acorn computers occasionally cause frustration. This is because the programs can easily be tampered with, very often inadvertently.
127. Overall, the subject has made good improvement since the last inspection when it was not possible to report on pupils' progress because of the limited range of experiences provided.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES (French)

128. Pupils are taught French in mixed-age groups between ages 11 and 19. Achievement across the whole of this age range is good. Pupils listen well to the teacher and to each other and they speak the French that they know confidently, and often with very good accents. Pupils recall, understand and use greetings, numbers, everyday words such as "Oui", "Non", "Oh là là!" with very French intonation and gesture. They have quite an extensive vocabulary, for example, of words connected with food and café life.
129. Teaching in French is good. Teachers are not French specialists but have, between them, satisfactory knowledge of the language and they co-operate well; for example, the teachers with the best accents record target pronunciation on tape-recorded cards for use by all the groups. Teachers plan well, make good use of varied teaching methods and resources, including signing and technological aids, and manage pupils very well indeed. The general ethos of these groups, one of respect for individual abilities, high expectations and mutual support, promotes very good learning and progress and excellent attitudes. Pupils are lively and responsive and their behaviour is excellent. The major focus is on speaking, listening and responding and this is entirely appropriate. All pupils and students gain in communication skills during French sessions, even those who still have difficulty communicating in English, due to skilful use of questioning and communication aids.
130. Sound foundations have been laid down by the co-ordinator and the subject is being taken forward very well through the co-operation of all teachers involved in teaching the subject. Resources are simple but adequate and teachers use them to very good effect. Pupils enjoy the subject and take great pride in their achievement. French makes a very good contribution to pupils' personal and social development.
131. There has been very good improvement since the last inspection when the subject was not taught.

MUSIC

132. It was only possible to observe one lesson solely devoted to music outside of the Nursery. However, there is considerable use of music in a range of lessons. Judgements are also drawn from the use of music in assembly, during pupils' lunch breaks, conversation with pupils and teachers and from pupil records.
133. Achievement in music is satisfactory for pupils aged 5,11,14 and 16 and for post-16 students. By 11, pupils follow the teacher in singing some of the words, clapping and moving to traditional songs such as the "Hokey Cokey", "There was a princess long ago" and "The farmer's in his den". Pupils beat or play percussion instruments in simple time to the music, listen to music from different cultures, for example traditional Jewish music, and learn to recognise basic features. The highest attainers, with adult help, use or arrange symbol notation to play.

134. By 16, pupils experience a range of classical music. For example, some distinguish between the music of Haydn, Handel and Mozart. They also distinguish twentieth century popular music such as Glen Miller, Bill Hailey and the Beach Boys. During one lesson a pupil spontaneously mimed trumpet playing in time when listening to it as part of a Big Band sound. Pupils beat 4:4 time with the more able doing variations such as the last two beats of each bar or two crotchets followed by three quavers to each bar.
135. Post-16 students identify musical structures such as verse and chorus and 'A-B-A' structures. They copy rhythm sequences, provide them for others and do simple conducting. Assembly performances include singing and signing and dancing to Gerry Halliwell's "Lift me up". One pupil who learns the violin outside of school time has played it in school. Pupils do some bell ringing. They bring in CDs to play at lunchtime, name their individual preferences and complete the "Music and Leisure" strand of their ASDAN profile. One pupil hums a theme from Vivaldi's 'Four Seasons' after it is played at the end of assembly.
136. Too little pure music teaching was seen to make a judgement, although what was seen was good with an effective choice of motivating examples, well linked with the objectives of beating and following particular rhythms and with good explanation at the level of pupils' understanding to help them to understand how long ago the music was first popular. Pupils show good attitudes to learning music joining in with pleasure and sometimes singing spontaneously in the playground. Teachers use it in the background to effectively create a calming or working mood.
137. The school has experienced pressure on the music curriculum with the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and is compensating with an increase in the amount of music and singing in assembly and by bringing in outside performers such as a brass quintet and the band "Rock to Baroque". The new co-ordinator has not yet had time to make a full impact on the subject but has appropriately identified the need to review the music policy document in September after the introduction of the new National Curriculum guidelines. The school recognises the need for a wider range and number of good quality instruments.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

138. Pupils' and students' achievements in physical education vary from satisfactory to good. Pupils make good progress in physical education as they progress through the school.
139. By the age of 7 pupils can do a simple circuit in gymnastics using different ways of travelling along, over, through and under apparatus. Using PECS symbols on a large die, they identify different ways of moving, for example, rolling, hopping, skipping and jumping, and can perform those actions. They can jump off a box and land safely on a mattress. In swimming, pupils are taught by the Halliwick method. There is one-to-one support for pupils in the water. Some pupils push off from the side in the supine position and kick in the prone position. Time spent waiting for teaching is well used to develop language skills and numeracy.
140. By the age of 11, pupils can participate in swimming sessions and move with confidence in the water, they can participate in music and movement sessions and can use their imagination to interpret the movement of different animals, for example a snake and a penguin.
141. By the age of 14, some pupils can swim unaided and retrieve objects from the bottom of the pool. Other pupils, who are less confident, make progress with assistance from the staff. Pupils are able to participate in games in the pool, for example "Okey-Cokey".
142. By the age of 16, pupils can participate in horse riding sessions. Some pupils develop confidence and have sufficient concentration so that they are able to ride with their hands on their heads.
143. By the age of 19, students are able to explain the need to 'warm up' before physical exercise and to carry out a range of "warm up" exercises. They also appreciate the need to cool down afterwards. They know the functions and limitations of each piece of equipment on the circuit. Students know how to use the exercise-timing device and can fill in activity sheets. Students

with profound and multiple learning difficulties participate in swimming and have very detailed, planned targets. They enjoy the sessions in the water, are relaxed and vocalise their pleasure.

144. Teaching varies from satisfactory to very good. The long-term and short-term plans are good and are based on the needs of the pupils. However, the level of staffing often dictates the pace of some lessons. Pupils in the swimming pool need adequate staffing, which sometimes means that pupils may spend a considerable amount of time waiting on the side. This time, however, is very often put to very good use. All the pupils and students enjoy their physical education and swimming sessions and they work hard. The level of co-operation increases as the pupils mature. At post 16 the pupils work well together as a very effective team and enjoy their physical education session.
145. The subject is satisfactorily managed and co-ordinated. The co-ordinator does not yet have sufficient non-contact time to monitor colleagues. The curriculum is enriched by visits from members of the Wimbledon United football team. These visits help the pupils' football skills and their appreciation of teamwork. Last year the entire school took part in a sponsored "Jump Off" for the British Heart Foundation. The accommodation is unsatisfactory. There is no outdoor play area for the under fives and no equipment to enable the pupils aged under five to learn to balance, swing, jump and slide. There is no grassed area for team games. The lack of this facility affects the whole school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

146. Only two religious education lessons were observed during the inspection. Additional evidence was collected from looking at pupils' work, records and talking to staff and pupils.
147. The achievements of pupils by ages 7, 11, 14 and 16 are satisfactory. However, the school does not fulfil the statutory requirement to teach religious education to all students post-16. For pupils aged 5 to 16 the school follows a balanced selection from the Locally Agreed Syllabus for religious education with pupils learning about religion and learning from religion.
148. By 7, pupils have experienced some aspects of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. There is a focus on festivals and respect for others. They are aware that candles and music may be used at religious festivals such as Christmas and Pessar and link this with the idea of celebrations such as birth or birthdays. By 11, they have added experiences of Sikhism and Hinduism and handle Sikh artefacts and learn about holy books. They make patterns related to a particular religion, for example for a prayer mat. They illustrate simple stories, for example the parable of the man who built his house on sand and the man who built his house on rock.
149. By 14, Buddhism is added to the cycle of religions studied and pupils learn about key figures in each religion and visit a synagogue. By 16, some pupils recall parts of the story of Rama and Sita, they appropriately colour and sometimes label drawings of Biblical figures and answer simple choice questions about Bible stories and questions about weddings.
150. Post-16 the small number of students with profound and multiple learning difficulties handle Sikh and Hindu artefacts with appropriate gentleness and pupils show pleasure at musical chanting from a different culture to their own and enjoy religious videos. However, the religious education of the majority of post-16 pupils is limited to the celebration of major festivals and reflecting on their behaviour at the end of the week.
151. It is not possible to judge teaching overall because of the very few lessons observed. However, one of the two lessons observed was very good and the other was excellent. A very good combination of introductory talk then music and moving slides or fibre optics was used at the start and finish in a darkened room. This created a focus on pupils' feelings and an atmosphere of exceptional calm. This was achieved both for pupils in the autistic spectrum and those broadly in the category of severe learning difficulties. Practical tasks, for example making paper candles, were very effectively linked with pupils' knowledge of the use of candles at celebrations to anchor their experiences of wonder. Pupils show positive attitudes in religious education and treat artefacts appropriately. They pray together at the start of lunchtime and in assembly and express enjoyment of Christmas. While opportunities for spiritual development

are limited in most subjects there were effective moments of calm and quiet listening, contemplation and attention to feelings in the two lessons observed.

152. There has been good progress in the subject since the last inspection with substantial levels of teacher training and development of the curriculum. Resources for religious education, for example books and artefacts, are not yet fully adequate, although the school is able to borrow items and receives visits from representatives of different religions. The former co-ordinator left last July and the head has taken care of the role while looking for a new co-ordinator. The school is awaiting confirmation from the SACRE that its new curriculum is appropriately in line with the Agreed Syllabus.