

INSPECTION REPORT

SUNFIELD SCHOOL

Clent, Stourbridge.

LEA area: Worcestershire

Unique reference number: 117033

Chief Executive and Principal : Barry Carpenter

Head of Education: Francine Griffith

Reporting inspector: Frances D. Gander
21265

Dates of inspection: 15th – 19th January 2001

Inspection number: [inspection number]

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Special school for severe and complex learning difficulties

School category: Independent Boarding

Age range of pupils: 8-19

Gender of pupils: mixed

School address: Woodmans Lane
Clent
Nr. Stourbridge
Worcestershire

[]

Postcode: []

Telephone number: []

Fax number: []

Appropriate authority: The Trustees

Name of chair of Trustees: Mr G. Brocklebank

Date of previous inspection: []

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. Gander	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	The characteristics of the school How high are standards? How good is teaching? How well is the school led?
9052	Mrs H. Barter	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22620	Mr R. Wall	Team inspector	Mathematics Music Equal opportunities	How good are the learning opportunities?
27429	Mrs M. Smith	Team Inspector	English	
30065	Mrs J. Andrews	Team inspector	Geography History Religious education Special educational needs	
13101	Mr M. Kell	Team inspector	Design and technology Physical education	
21501	Mrs J. Charlesworth	Team inspector	Science Art	

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
East Sussex

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33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sunfield is an independent school that provides, in addition to its specialised education provision, an all year round residential provision. The pupils are between the ages of eight and nineteen and have severe and complex learning difficulties. Many of the pupils have very challenging behaviour and high percentage demonstrate severe autistic behaviour. Due to the nature of their special educational needs all the pupils have attended more than one school before being offered a place at Sunfield, and their attainment levels on entry are well below that expected of pupils of a similar age. There are presently 64 pupils on roll, and they come from a variety of differing home backgrounds. They are placed in the school by local education authorities from all areas of England and Wales. The majority of the pupils are boys with only 16 per cent being girls. In order to meet the pupils' and students' needs the staff to pupil ratio is high. There are a few pupils who require constant supervision for the full twenty-four hours, and in addition, there are a few pupils who are presently being educated on a one-to-one basis, away from other pupils and in their own classroom space. Two pupils are placed in the school for the residential care it offers, and are currently receiving their education provision in other day special schools.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The effectiveness of this school cannot be measured by the standards that the pupils achieve or by their performance in the National Curriculum. This is an effective school that enables its pupils to improve their behaviour, develop relationships, and become members of the community. This is due to the methodology it uses, its specialist expertise in teaching and dealing with its pupils, and the high level of care it provides. The very good leadership and management in all areas of the schools' work enable this high quality of provision. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- It provides a high level of expertise in the teaching and management of pupils with Autism, which enables them to access the curriculum.
- It produces very good Individual Education and Care Plans for pupils, provides a very good twenty-four hour curriculum, and manages the challenging behaviour of pupils very well.
- It has very good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils which results in them responding well and forming very good relationships with other pupils and staff.
- It has developed very effective links with parents that result in them feeling very well informed and supported.
- It uses the community very well in supporting the school and has developed excellent partnerships with other educational establishments and communities.
- It is very well led and managed in all aspects of its provision, and as a result there is an excellent commitment to school improvement and development.

What could be improved

- The long and medium term planning of individual subjects within the curriculum.
- The assessment of pupils' progress in subject areas.
- The roles of the co-ordinators in developing and monitoring each subject area.

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

There has been very good improvement in the school from when it was first inspected in 1996. It was judged to be requiring special measures, as it was failing to give its pupils an adequate standard of education. At that time it was failing in almost all areas of its provision.

By the time the school was monitored by HMI in 1998 it had addressed all the issues of the previous report, and through self-evaluation had identified other issues it needed to address. There were three main areas for development or improvement identified in the report of 1998 and of these the school has achieved two. The behaviour plans for pupils are used well in both the school and the residential provision, and they are consistently applied by all staff. The membership of the Trustees has increased and brought to it differing expertise and experiences. In the area of curriculum development, there has been progress, especially in the development of the specialist 'Access' curriculum. Curriculum development in subject areas has not been sustained due to a large change in staffing, and due to the school waiting for new national developments.

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

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

Pupils achieve very well in their personal targets, and in personal, social and health education. This is due to the school's very good Individual Educational and Care Plans, which contain precise targets that are thoroughly assessed. The 'Access' curriculum that the school promotes and the specialised teaching methods it employs enables pupils to achieve well. However, taking the curriculum as a whole, pupils do not achieve as well in specific subjects and their progress overtime in these areas of the National Curriculum is only satisfactory overall.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to school are good and the majority are enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Despite the challenging behaviour some pupils and students display, their behaviour is generally good. They respond to the behaviour management techniques and their behaviour becomes increasing more socially acceptable as they progress through the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' and students' personal development is very good, both in the school and in the residential houses. Many learn to work together in small groups, so that by the time they leave the school many have been members of the School's Council and have taken part in work experience. The relationships they have with one another and those that

	they develop with the adults that work with them are very good.
Attendance	This is very good.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 8-11	Aged 11-16	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	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.

The methods used in teaching, managing and meeting the needs of the pupils are good and result in pupils making significant progress in their personal and social development. However, the teaching in some subjects is adversely affected by the lack of a curriculum framework for teachers to use when planning the content of lessons. Therefore the overall quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory, and it is good at Post 16. Literacy and communication are well taught, as is information and communication technology, while the teaching of numeracy and science are satisfactory. During the week of the inspection, teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in ninety-two per cent of lessons, good or better in fifty-four per cent, and very good or excellent in eighteen per cent. Unsatisfactory teaching occurred in some lessons where the teachers had been in the school for less than two weeks or where they were taught supply teachers. Here teachers did not know or understand the needs of the pupils, and therefore could not always engage them in activities. There was also some unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons where activities lacked vitality and creativity, and therefore pupils became bored.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school has very good provision for pupils with autism and challenging behaviour. There is a very effective structure between the education and care for the 24-hour curriculum. For Post-16 students a good range of accredited courses enhances their curriculum. Excellent links with other educational establishments have developed, and the school uses the community very well to support its provision. The introduction of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a good effect on pupils' and students' achievements. However, there are still improvements needed to the planning of the other subjects of the National Curriculum.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for promoting this is very good and a strength of the school. It considers that all learning is a spiritual activity and through it everyone can grow and contribute. Moral and social development are closely associated with pupils' spiritual development, and positive inter-personal relationships are central to this. Pupils' cultural development is very good and has a high priority through the development and implementation of the arts.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school is a very safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils and students are valued and respected. The quality of educational and personal support and guidance offered is very good and there are excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting improved behaviour. Pupils' behaviour plans are applied and monitored consistently. However,

	assessment of pupils' progress in subjects of the National Curriculum has still to be developed.
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The school's partnership with parents is very good. The appointment of a family liaison worker and the setting up of a family centre have resulted in parents feeling much more involved in the life of the school and their children's learning and care. The quality of information concerning pupils' progress, personal development and the work and life of the school is very good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The restructuring of the management team to include highly qualified and professional key members of staff for education, care and administration has resulted in the school being very well managed. All key members of the management team have worked together very well and the very good leadership has resulted in a much-improved school. In the schools' overall development, it has not been in the position to allow co-ordinators to develop and monitor their subjects.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The re-organised trustees, supported by the council of management, have provided a clear direction for school improvement. They take, or sanction, effective action when implementing the school action plans or investing in developments. As a result the school has improved, developed, is now meeting its aims, and is financially viable.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very aware of the principles of best value. They compare themselves with schools offering similar provision, provide a detailed breakdown of costs, consult widely on all major expenditure, and monitor the impact of their spending.
The strategic use of resources	The efficiency of the school and its use of all its resources are very good. It makes very efficient use of the new technologies in its administration.

The number, experience and qualifications of the staff are very well matched to the pupils' needs. There is a difficulty in recruiting teachers who are experienced in managing challenging behaviour, and who are also able to provide subject expertise. This has an impact on the quality of subject planning. There is a wide range of well-qualified support and therapy staff who through their good team work make a very positive contribution to the quality of education. The school grounds provide excellent opportunities for providing additional experiences. However, there is a lack of specialist teaching accommodation for some subjects, and the school buildings are spread over a large area, which means that time is spent moving between rooms.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The progress their children make.• The quality of the teaching, and the high expectations of all staff.• The leadership and management, and the amount of information that is provided by them.• How the school deals with problems and difficulties, and its close support and liaison with parents.• The range of activities that the school provides as part of its 24 hour curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework pupils were given.

The inspection findings endorse all the positive comments of the parents. However the inspection team found that pupils experienced a good range of activities in the residential units at the end of the school day. For some pupils these activities constitute homework, while for others the notion of homework is not appropriate.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Due to the nature and severity of the difficulties that the pupils' and students have in accessing learning, their curriculum and targets are very individual. Due to this, their achievements, and the progress they make, are also very individual. It is therefore inappropriate to report collectively on pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills at the end of each key stage. However, overall, pupils' achievements are satisfactory and this is a good improvement from the last inspection. They make very good progress in their personal targets, and in personal, social and health education. This is due to the school's very good Individual Educational and Care Plans, which contain precise targets that are thoroughly assessed. The 'Access' curriculum that the school promotes, and the **specialised teaching methods it employs, enables pupils to achieve well. However, taking the curriculum as a whole, pupils' achievements in specific subjects of the National Curriculum, and their progress overtime in these areas is only satisfactory overall. The school keeps insufficient evidence in the subjects of the National Curriculum to show pupils' and students' progress over time.**

2. In English at each key stage, pupils' achievements and the progress they make in all areas of the subject are satisfactory. Overall, the majority of pupils learning to communicate with others their groups and with the adult who work with them. The rate of learning differs for individuals but by the time they move into the Post 16 provision, the majority are communicating and listening well, and this enables them to take advantage of a wider curriculum, including work experience, serving on the School Council and linking with the community. **In individual lessons, pupils and students achieve well in reading and writing, but because assessment and recording is inconsistent, there is insufficient evidence to show progress over time.**

3. In mathematics pupils' achievements across the school are satisfactory, although they are higher where the quality of teaching is better. It was not possible to make **an overall judgement regarding pupil progress over time due to the lack of assessment information and the fact that many of the pupils are new to the school.** However, where records do exist and pupils have been at the school for an extended period of time progress is at least satisfactory and for a small minority of pupils it is good. **In science, pupils' achievements are not high enough, and this has not improved since the last inspection. This is because there is still not a suitable curriculum in place, and guidelines to help teachers plan appropriate lessons over time. There is very little evidence of the work covered, or pupils' achievements, on which to make judgements about pupils' progress.**

4. Pupils' achievements in art are satisfactory and this has improved since the last inspection. A significant contribution to this is the work carried out in the various arts projects that are on going in the school, and the contribution made by the artists in residence. **In music, pupils' achievements in lessons were satisfactory, but it was not possible to make an overall judgement regarding pupil progress over time due to the lack of assessment information.**

5. In design and technology, analysis of this work shows that pupils' and students' achievements are satisfactory but because much of this evidence is not dated or annotated it is not possible to judge pupils' progress over time. During the **inspection there were a**

number of examples of work in food technology, but no evidence of pupils' experiencing or working with resistant materials. Overall pupils' achievements, and the progress they make in using information and communication technology are satisfactory, and this is a significant improvement from the last inspection. This is the result of the vast amount of development and resourcing of the subject, both in the classrooms and in the houses. As a result the students in Post 16 achieve well and they make good progress.

6. In geography, pupils' achievements and the progress they make has improved since the last inspection. During lessons pupils' progress in Key Stage 2 was good, and in Key Stage 3 it was satisfactory. During the week of the inspection there were no history lessons taught, and there is insufficient evidence available in pupils' files to make a judgement on pupils' progress. However good use is made each day of the opportunity to develop pupils understanding of chronology through individual timetables and work schedules that use symbols. This practice is used consistently in houses and classrooms and is effective in developing pupils understanding of order and pattern in the day.

7. In physical education achievements and progress are satisfactory. This is due to the appropriateness of the activities chosen, which include some aspects of fitness and health, and control and co-ordination.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Throughout the school, pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour are good. They make very good progress in their personal development and they have very good relationships with each other and with staff working in the school and houses. The positive atmosphere that exists across the school is as a result of the implementation, since the inspection of 1996, of consistent and well-structured strategies for managing and improving pupils' behaviour in order to address the previous findings that attitudes and behaviour were often unsatisfactory. Since the monitoring visit in 1998, pupils have continued to have good attitudes in lessons, to behave well and to respond with eagerness to everything that the school provides. Pupils have very good attendance at school and there is no unauthorised absences or exclusions. There was no evidence, during the inspection, of pupils arriving late at lessons – a feature which was noted at the first inspection.

9. In the questionnaires and at the meeting with the registered inspector, most parents agreed that behaviour in the school is good and that their children like school. Nearly all parents feel that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible and that pupils make good progress in their behaviour, communication with others and in their independence. Parents commented that the structured programmes of support for pupils' behaviour and learning have helped their children to overcome some severe behaviour problems and to learn respect for others and their possessions. Some parents commented particularly on the excellence of the TEACCH programme that has really helped their child to improve their behaviour.

10. In lessons, most pupils concentrate well and maintain interest in the activities provided for them. When lessons are well structured to match pupils' abilities and their behaviour is managed consistently, pupils work for extended periods and complete the tasks set for them. In a basketball lesson, pupils were clearly organised and no time was wasted. As a result, pupils remained engaged throughout the lesson and were motivated and keen to play. Pupils who were writing letters home and recalling the events of the past week were interested in what they were doing. The high expectations of the teacher for them to work to the best of their ability, meant that pupils behaved well and worked hard. Very good attitudes and behaviour were seen when pupils took part in a Sherborne movement session. They showed clear enjoyment with smiles and laughter from many of them. Pupils co-operated

and participated very well because they knew what was expected of them. The use of TEACCH to provide a highly structured programme for those pupils with severe learning and behavioural problems is very effective in promoting a calm and orderly atmosphere in which all pupils can work. During a visit to the local parish church, pupils felt secure because they understood the order of events on their schedules.

11. Students who are over 16 also have good attitudes and behaviour. They are expected to work hard towards their accreditations. They take care with the presentation of their written work. They can express their own ideas and make choices in their work. Staff give support when needed but pupils are often able to work independently because they are clear about what they have to do. They are developing in maturity and there is a positive and calm atmosphere in the classroom.

12. Overall, pupils' and students' behaviour is good in school and in the houses. The clear and consistent management of behaviour, together with more structured programmes for those with more severe problems, ensures that there is a calm and positive atmosphere. Teachers, learning support and care staff know the pupils well and know how to deal with their behavioural problems. There is consistent reinforcement of pupils' behaviour targets and, as a result, pupils can learn and socialise well with others. At breakfast, lunch and dinner times there is a positive and sociable atmosphere as pupils, students, and staff sit together in the dining hall or in their houses. Pupils follow the very good role models set for them by staff and most are friendly and welcoming to visitors. There is a strong atmosphere of inclusion in the school and all members of staff working in the school have excellent relationships with the pupils and students. As a result, pupils and students learn to get on with others and to accept each other's difficulties. Although there are occasions when some pupils have difficulty in getting on with others, the majority of pupils have very good relationships with one another.

13. There are a few occasions when pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are less satisfactory. This occurs when the activities provided for them by teachers are uninteresting or are not well matched to their different needs. When lessons lack vitality or purpose and time is wasted, pupils rapidly lose interest and concentration. The lack of motivation often results in deterioration in behaviour so that it becomes the dominant feature of the lesson.

14. Pupils' and students' personal development is very good because they are encouraged and supported very well by teaching and care staff. They learn to listen to others, to take turns in lessons and when taking part in clubs and activities in the houses, and to share resources. Many are able to work together in small groups, for example during literacy lessons, and some pupils and students are able to work independently with little supervision. They carry out their duties, such as tidying up and washing dishes in the houses, sensibly. They are proud of their bedrooms and some enjoy showing visitors round their house or their own rooms. Students are developing maturity and an understanding of their role as senior members of the school. Those who undertake work experience, for example in the school shop or in the office, are proud of their achievements and carry out their duties responsibly. Pupils and students who are part of the School Council carry out their roles seriously and are able to make sensible suggestions about school life and how to make further links with the community.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

15. The quality of teaching and learning are overall satisfactory. During the week of the inspection, teaching and learning was satisfactory or better in ninety-two per cent of lessons, good or better in fifty-four per cent, and very good or excellent in eighteen per cent. This is a

very good improvement from the inspection in 1996 when it was overall poor, and fifty per cent did not reach the satisfactory level. The teaching has improved slightly since the inspection by HMI in 1998, as during this inspection the percentage of good or very good teaching was higher. However, a large number of teaching staff have left the school since 1998, and currently the school has eleven teachers who have been in the school for one year or less. Teaching at Post 16 is overall good. Lessons are characterised by high expectations and effective management of students. Lessons are well planned and prepared, and teaching methods and strategies are effective, with staff using signing well to communicate.

16. **The unsatisfactory teaching occurred in some classes where the teachers had been in the school for less than two weeks or where they were taught supply teachers. Here teachers did not know or understand the needs of the pupils, and therefore could not always engage them in activities. However, they were well supported by the assistants in the classes. There was also some unsatisfactory teaching in the lessons where activities lacked vitality and creativity, and therefore pupils became bored. Teachers also miss opportunities to extend pupils' understanding and knowledge, for example, during a lesson of food technology where there was very little reference made to the recipe being used. In other lessons the resources used to promote and support learning were inappropriate. An example of this was in a lesson at Key Stage 3 on 'Forces' where the toy cars used to demonstrate the concept were too small, and led to the pupils throwing them instead of pushing them.**

17. The methods used for teaching, managing and meeting the needs of all pupils are good and result in pupils making significant progress in their personal and social development. This has improved since the last inspection. There is a very structured approach to the delivery of a 24-hour curriculum through the ACCESS (Approach to the Curriculum through Care and Education for Sunfield Students) Curriculum which is implemented by teaching, support and care staff. Staff consistently teach the targets set for pupils to achieve across both the school and residential settings.

18. The teaching of pupils with additional special educational needs is good. Specialist provision for pupils and students on the autistic spectrum and those with challenging behaviour has been developed and the SIECCA (Sunfield Integrated Education and Care Curriculum Approach) successfully combines three specialist approaches, TEACCH (Treatment and Education of Autistic and Handicapped Children), SCIP (Strategies for Crisis Intervention and Prevention) and AAC (Alternative and Augmentative approaches to Communication). The three SIECCA classes are very successful in providing a teaching and learning structure that enables pupils and students with the severest difficulties access the curriculum.

19. Aspects of the very good practice seen in the SIECCA classes are also seen in other classes and in the care settings. For example, the use of schedules, workstations and visual timetables is evident in the majority of classrooms and in some houses. The school has also worked very hard to ensure that the entire staff team understand the underlying principles of the SIECCA provision. This aspect of the school's work makes a significant contribution to the school's 24-hour curriculum.

20. On the week of the inspection literacy and communication are well taught, as was information and communication technology. The teaching of numeracy was satisfactory, as was the teaching of science during the week of the **inspection. However, in those subjects that could not be seen due to timetabling constraints, there was insufficient work or records to provide evidence on the quality of teaching. In addition, the**

teaching of some aspects of subjects, such as, in design and technology and in science is adversely affected by the lack of a curriculum framework for teachers to use when planning the content of lessons.

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

21. Since the last full inspection the school has made good progress in developing its curriculum. The school now has very good specialist provision for pupils with autism and challenging behaviour, and a very effective structure for the 24-hour curriculum between education and care settings. The curriculum for Post-16 students has been enhanced by the addition of a good range of accredited courses and the schools provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. The school has introduced the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and both are having a good effect on pupils' and students' achievements. **However, there are still weaknesses in the planning of National Curriculum subjects, which means that the quality and range of learning opportunities is only satisfactory** overall.

22. A very good, structured approach to the delivery of a 24-hour curriculum has been developed since the last inspection. Care and education staff have worked hard to write and implement the ACCESS (Approach to the Curriculum through Care and Education for Sunfield Students) Curriculum. The ACCESS curriculum has been very appropriately divided into the five areas identified in the LAC (Looked After Children) regulations. The ACCESS curriculum is used by all staff to identify priority developmental targets for individual pupils and students. These targets form the basis for each pupil's IECP (Individual Care and Education Plan). Pupils and students' IECPs are reviewed at least termly and in many cases pupils and students have targets set on a weekly basis. The development and implementation of the ACCESS curriculum is a strength of the school.

23. The provision for pupils' and students' personal, social and health education is very good. The vast majority of targets in pupils' and students' IECPs relate to personal, social and health education. Staff teach these targets consistently across both the school and residential settings. The ACCESS Curriculum makes a highly significant contribution to the provision for personal, social and health education. The school has an internally approved sexuality and relationships education policy and a drug abuse policy that is fully implemented. Both are improvements since the last inspection.

24. The school's provision for pupils' careers education and vocational experience is very good. The school has appointed a full-time extended education co-ordinator. Provision for vocational experience on the school site is extensive. Pupils and students have opportunities to work in the school's offices, kitchen, and in the school grounds. The support offered to this programme by the non-teaching staff of the school is excellent. The development of a school shop in Clent Village, which is open on two afternoons each week, gives excellent opportunities for students to work with members of the public and practice basic numeracy, literacy and vocational skills. Placements on accredited vocational courses at local further education colleges are also secured where appropriate for individual pupils. The school makes very good use of the local careers service. The careers officer supports individual pupils and teaches groups of Post-16 students. Careers education is well structured with an accredited module for Post-16 students.

25. Pupils and students are given good opportunities to take part in a range of extra-curricular activities. Each of the residential houses has planned activities for the evening that use the many facilities available on school site. In addition a good range of weekend activities is planned. The school has developed a good range of leisure clubs that operate after school

on Wednesday afternoons. These clubs are successful in allowing education and care staff to plan and work together. **However, during the week of the inspection many pupils and students were not motivated by the clubs and staff had to work hard to involve them in activities. The timing and structure of the clubs needs to be reviewed in order to ensure that they are successful for all pupils and students.** The school makes very good use of visiting artists and drama specialists and this makes a significant contribution to extra-curricular activities.

26. **Whole school planning for the delivery of National Curriculum subjects is unsatisfactory. This represents unsatisfactory progress since the monitoring inspection in 1998. The school took a decision last year to stop work on this aspect of curriculum development in response to developments at a national level. Whilst this decision was justified it has left teachers with unsatisfactory information from which to plan their lessons. Staff are currently awaiting further guidance from the Department for Education and Employment on lower attaining pupils before fully implementing National Curriculum 2000.**

27. **The three-year topic cycle adopted by the school does not provide a sufficiently detailed structure for long-term planning.** The school has also developed a series of "I can" statements in each subject, which are referred to in school documentation as a "syllabus", but are simply an assessment tool. The school has devised a detailed and very effective medium-term planning sheet for use in all subjects. However, its use is not yet established in all subjects and across all classes. In addition, without the support of a long-term subject plan, the medium term plans are unsatisfactory.

28. The school needs to move quickly to ensure that long-term plans for each applicable National Curriculum subject are available for Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. The school should also review, and teach where appropriate, the age-appropriate Programmes of Study for each subject rather than plan entirely from the Key Stage 1 Programmes of Study. Finally, the school should implement the detailed medium-term planning format in all subjects to ensure that teachers' short-term planning is fully supported.

29. Whilst the school works hard to ensure that all pupils and students have equal opportunities, overall provision is only satisfactory. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils and students have access to all activities. For example, students with severe autistic needs were encouraged to join a Post-16 assembly and some were able to take an active part, walking to the front of the hall to receive merit awards. **However, unsatisfactory planning for National Curriculum subjects results in pupils and students having unequal access to the curriculum. For example, restricting access to Programmes of Study for Key Stage 1 results in some more able pupils not receiving a full and appropriate curriculum entitlement. Other inequalities are seen, for example, in music where the very good work of the music director with individual pupils and students is not available to all.**

30. The school's links with the community have developed rapidly since the last inspection and are now highly beneficial to the pupils. A visitor to the school said to members of the inspection team that over the past three years, it had turned from a children's home where few people visited into a residential school where everyone is made to feel welcome.

31. Links have been made on several levels, but staff are particularly aware of the benefits of joint working for Sunfield's pupils. The school has hosted many events and projects that have brought different members of the community in to the school to use its facilities and join in with the pupils' activities. For example, the school hall has been used as

a rehearsal venue for Clent village productions, and pupils are to be included in them in the near future. All the children living within the Clent parish were invited to Sunfield's millennium celebrations last May Day. Activities included music, dance and visual art workshops in the morning, and a pageant and procession of more than 200 children, including Sunfield's pupils, in the afternoon.

32. The school has become an established part of the local community, which supports pupils' social development and prepares them for life outside the school. Its successes feature in the Parish magazine, and the Clent Hills Arts Trust is supporting music by providing volunteer helpers and fund raising. The Clent Historical Society is involving the pupils and students, along with those from other schools, in compiling its history of the area, and is focusing on the history of Sunfield itself. Members of the School Council said expressly that they wanted to help the village, and have begun to plan to develop a small area of the village green.

33. Opportunities have been created for some pupils to have work experience. For some, this takes place within the school itself. For example, during the inspection, one young man started his work experience in the school kitchen and had looked forward to this job all week. A few others have the opportunity of serving in the Sunfield shop at the bottom of the school's drive. This shop is open to the public on two afternoons a week and gives pupils who work there an excellent real-life experience.

34. Very strong links have been made with various other educational establishments, all of which support the pupils' educational and social development. Some of the students attend the local college, and college staff would like other students to come to Sunfield to benefit from the facilities. The local careers service now meets with every older pupil in the school and contributes to discussions about their future. The local secondary school is including Sunfield in its bid to gain technology college status and is beginning to develop joint working in information and communication technology. Primary schools in the area bring groups of their pupils to use the school grounds, and link with Sunfield pupils on various arts projects. Staff attend Sunfield's professional development centre, along with Sunfield's own staff, for specialist training in special educational needs. Through links with University College Worcester, these now lead to accreditation.

35. The provision for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and vastly improved since the previous inspection. This improvement was recognized in a visit by Her Majesty's Inspectors in 1998, and has developed even further since then. The school considers that all learning is a spiritual activity and a means by which everyone can grow and contribute; and that it is promoted by providing an ordered, respectful community where relationships have prime importance. Inspection findings show that the work of the school fully reflects this ideology.

36. The school grounds are beautiful and are used to the full in all curriculum subjects, such as, science and art, and also to promote pupils' spiritual development. For example, a small corner of the main building has windows from floor to ceiling overlooking an enclosed wooded garden area. Seats have been arranged to overlook the garden, and the windows are hung with delicate web-like artwork, which enhances the beauty of the outlook. The previous inspection noted that art was insufficiently used to promote pupils' spiritual development, and this has clearly improved. Staff talk to pupils about beauty, and they obviously appreciate it. For example, pupils in Year 9 went to visit a church to see its mosaics. The pupils were keen to visit the church, encouraged by the positive attitudes of the staff. They stilled when they entered the building, sensing the spiritual atmosphere, and showed pleasure and wonder when the lights were put on to illuminate the mosaics – reaching out to touch them.

37. Several other occasions were observed when pupils, often restless and noisy, stilled to silence as they felt the special atmosphere of certain activities. On one occasion, staff sang a song for their group, and pupils were silent and relaxed by the end of it. Parents reported that when they attended the "living nativity" put on in the farm buildings at Christmas, their children stood and watched the animals and scene quietly for an unusually long period of time.

38. Striking examples of how the school promotes good relationships and supports the pupils' developing sense of spiritual awareness were observed in two movement sessions. In these each pupil worked with an adult, whose aim was to develop the pupil's trust in them whilst they jointly participated in the physical activities. By the end of each session, when the pupils were being rocked gently as their final activity, each pupil was fully relaxed. Many had their eyes closed and all were entrusting themselves completely in their adult worker and feeling the benefit of such positive relationships.

39. The promotion of pupils' moral and social development is closely associated with their spiritual development. Positive inter-personal relationships are at the centre of this, which indicates a great improvement since the previous inspection when pupils' relationships and socially acceptable behaviour were found to be weaknesses.

40. Staff provide very good support for pupils' understanding of what it means to live and work within society. "Circle time" at the start of the day is now used effectively to help pupils over the transition between home and school, to set the scene for the day and to support their relationships with one another. Staff continually prompt pupils to behave, say sorry, conform and look after one another, animals and plants. Visits to the farm to see, hold and feed the animals support the development of pupils' social and moral awareness. Pupils who may have been excitable and challenging on the walk down to the farm nevertheless treat the animals gently and with respect. Staff rarely raise their voices. They praise pupils meaningfully when appropriate, but tell them clearly what is not acceptable. This helps pupils stay calm and learn how to relate better to one another and contribute to their community. The whole school comes together during achievement assemblies where pupils celebrate each other's successes. They show clear pleasure in this ceremony, applauding their peers. Each pupil responds immediately to their name being called to go to the front of the hall - even if at the time, they may appear to be thinking of something else, or find the process rather daunting.

41. All school activities promote choice, autonomy and independence, and it is from this starting point that pupils make decisions about what to do, and how to relate to others which equips them for life outside of Sunfield. Pupils raise money for other people in need, and the School Council has taken on a small conservation project in the village to contribute to the wider community in which they live. Mealtimes in pupils' houses, and in the dining room, are generally very pleasant, social occasions where staff continue to support pupils' social skills unobtrusively.

42. Pupils' cultural development now has a much higher priority than at the time of the previous inspection. A great deal has been done to develop their understanding of the arts. For example, visiting artists have worked with pupils in dance, drama and art itself. The school buildings are hung with examples of work produced such as batik hangings, and the grounds contain interesting sculptures made from wood and willow weaving. These allow the pupils to move them, or run balls through them, which helps them remain interested in the items. Music is used particularly well on an individual basis and supports pupils' communication, social and spiritual development. The implementation of the literacy strategy and better focused English work at Post-16 since the last inspection has introduced the

pupils to a wider range of texts; for example work based on Shakespeare was seen displayed in the Post-16 department.

43. Pupils learn about a range of faiths and cultures through religious education. The school is committed to celebrating various faith festivals, and always starts with those most relevant to the pupils themselves. Parents are involved wherever possible, for example a parent leads the annual celebration of Diwali. At the time of the inspection, the older pupils were preparing for the celebration of the Chinese New Year and had done a considerable amount of work on Chinese culture. These celebrations involve the whole school and the houses, and the kitchen provides food in keeping with the relevant culture. This does much to promote pupils overall spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

44. The school provides a very safe, caring and supportive environment in which pupils and students are valued and respected. This is a very good improvement since the inspection of 1996 when it was found that there was insufficient emphasis on the quality of health, safety and welfare procedures. The quality of educational and personal support and guidance offered to pupils and students is very good because staff have a clear understanding of pupils' needs and difficulties and provide sensitive and caring support and guidance. There are excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting improved behaviour and for dealing with pupils who have severe and complex learning and behavioural difficulties. Since the monitoring visit of 1998, the school has made good progress in ensuring that pupils' behaviour plans are applied and monitored consistently.

45. Parents value highly the support that the school gives to their children to enable them to make progress in behaviour, communication and independence. They are very positive about the targets that are set to help their children to make improvements and the support that is given to their children and to the families by the key worker. Parents are pleased with the improvements made in the quality of the pupils' and students' houses. They appreciate the provision of a Family Centre, which enables them to visit their children frequently and to be with them if they are unwell or require hospital treatment.

46. The school offers pupils and students very good standards of pastoral care. Residential accommodation in houses is of good standard and pupils and students have access to pleasant bedroom and communal living areas. Care staff provide very good levels of care and support for pupils in houses. They set good role models for pupils to follow, while creating positive and homely environments in which pupils and students feel safe. Daily routines in houses are well structured so that pupils and students are clear about what to do during each part of the day when they are not in school. The school has made very good improvement in its care structure since the last inspection. Staff have clear roles and responsibilities in houses while working together with teaching staff to ensure that there is an integrated and consistent approach to pupils' care and education across the 24-hour curriculum. They ensure that pupils and students are in school and on time whenever possible. The school has good procedures to promote regular attendance at school for all pupils and students.

47. Throughout the school, all staff show very good care and concern for pupils. They have a very good understanding of pupils' backgrounds and any difficulties that they may have. They are clear about the correct procedures for reporting any concerns about pupils' and students' welfare. Staff have very good awareness of the requirement to record concerns and incidents and there are regular training opportunities for staff in matters relating to child protection. Pupils and students have good access to independent advocacy through the 'Voice of the Child in Care' scheme. Medical staff look after pupils very well when they

are unwell or they hurt themselves. The school's sickbay facilities are very good and there are well-qualified and caring staff to look after pupils' and students' health needs. Night care staff offer very good levels of care and a continuation of education and care plans to ensure that there is a calm and settled atmosphere in houses. Catering staff provide high quality and nutritious meals and are fully involved in the daily life of the school. Maintenance staff ensure that any potential hazards are dealt with quickly and ensure that the school, houses and large site are kept clean and well maintained. There are very good procedures in place to monitor and assess all aspects of health and safety across the school site.

48. The school's approach to the monitoring and improvement of pupils' and students' behaviour is excellent. Since the inspection of 1996, the school has changed its approach so that behaviour management is a fundamental part of pupils' and students' educational and personal support and guidance. Very good improvement has been made in the quality of pupils' behaviour plans so that clear targets for improved behaviour are set and are regularly monitored and changed where necessary. Frequent monitoring and analysis of incident forms takes place to assess where changes to the management of pupils' behaviour and the approach of staff may be necessary and to ensure that there is consistency in practice between teaching and care staff. The quality of relationships between staff and pupils has a very significant impact on pupils' behaviour. Pupils and students are treated with respect and care within clear boundaries and there are high expectations that improvement will be made. Through the structured approach of TEACCH for those pupils and students with complex difficulties, they learn the skills of self-control and a clear understanding of the boundaries for their behaviour. There are precise guidelines for the use of any physical control. Staff are well trained in its use and have offered guidance to parents where control may be necessary at home. The school's policy for special educational needs has recently been reviewed and updated. All pupils in the school now have a statement of educational need. The policy now in place is working effectively and shows improvement since the previous inspection.

49. The school has created the Post of Review Officer who convenes and co-ordinates annual reviews. Clear guidelines are in place for all staff on the range of information to be written for the annual review reports and this ensures continuity across the school, which was not satisfactory at the previous inspection. Annual Reviews are well run and follow the correct procedures. Reports from education and care staff are included along with reports from other professionals, and parents receive their copy before the meeting. At the review, the pupils' statement of educational need is updated and objectives are set for the next year. The objectives set at the review are used by education and care staff in drawing up the pupils' individual education care plan (IECP). The school is experimenting with the use of video at the reviews, in order to show parents what their children can do.

50. At the time of the last inspection and follow-up visit by HMI, there were weaknesses in assessment. These included inconsistencies in the quality of information about pupils' progress and reporting procedures. The assessment and monitoring of pupils' performance is overall still unsatisfactory, although there are some areas of good practice, particularly with the introduction of the individual education care plan (IECP).

51. The individual education care plan (IECP) for each pupil is now the core tool for assessing pupils' needs and monitoring progress. This is well done and provides a consistent framework across the school. Teaching staff and care staff write the pupils' targets together each term. These targets are consistently displayed in classrooms and houses and each week there is a joint focus, for each pupil, on one target. Detailed records are kept by education and care staff on pupils' progress and evidence of achievement is in the form of photographs and staff comments. Photographic evidence and staff comments

are not always dated but overall the development of this joint approach between education and care staff to assessing pupils' needs and setting of targets is a strength.

52. All pupils now have literacy and numeracy targets. Where practice is good, these targets are linked to the National Curriculum levels and preliminary levels ('P' levels) and it is possible to begin to see the progress pupils are making in these areas. **This good practice is not yet consistent across the school.**

53. **Assessment of pupils' progress in other curriculum areas is unsatisfactory. Curriculum statements, which are used throughout the school to assess and record pupil progress, are used inconsistently. In some pupil files statements of what pupils had achieved were highlighted but they were not dated. In the best example seen, these statements had been regularly checked, dated and a different colour used to highlight statements which pupils had achieved. In Key Stages 2 and 3 there were insufficient examples of pupils work to provide evidence of progress and the examples that were available were not consistently dated or annotated by the teacher. The exception is the good practice in Key Stage 4 and Post-16 where evidence of pupils' achievement and work is kept for purposes of external accreditation. This work is dated and includes pupils' writing and drawing, staff comments, videos, photographs and school internal certificates.**

54. **The amount of different assessment information held on each pupil is too unwieldy to be useful in making a judgement on the progress an individual pupil has made over a period of time.** The quality and consistency of target setting and recording, with the exception of the individual education care plan (IECP), varies too much across the school. There are examples of good and unsatisfactory practice. Improvement in the school's procedures for assessment and monitoring pupil progress are linked to the school's overall plan for curriculum development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Since the inspection in 1996, the school has made very good improvement in its partnership with parents. Following the monitoring visit in 1998, the school identified that there was more work to be done in improving communication and liaison with parents. The initiatives, which included the appointment of a family liaison worker and the setting up of a family centre, have resulted in parents feeling much more involved in the life of the school and their children's learning and care.

56. In the questionnaires completed before the inspection and at the meeting with the registered inspector, parents were almost unanimous in expressing very good support for the school. They are very pleased with the significant improvements that the school has made, particularly in the last two years. Parents feel that the school is committed to providing the highest standards for their children to help them reach their potential. They appreciate the hard work and commitment of staff to educate their children in a safe and caring community. They say that the school sees their children as individuals and some say that, at last, their child is being provided with an education that is well structured and suits their complex learning needs. Parents feel that their children become settled and experience happiness, independence and a sense of security while at the school. They appreciate the work of the school to develop more positive links with families through the family liaison worker, the 'Siblings Weekends' and increased opportunities for training. Although there are occasional lapses when information is not passed between staff changing duty, parents say that it is very easy to communicate with all the staff on site and that they are provided with very good information about their child's academic progress, behaviour and care.

57. The quality of information that is provided for parents about their children's academic progress and personal development and the work and life of the school is very good. At the time of the first inspection in 1996, parents did not receive regular information on pupils' progress, what they were learning and what was happening in school. Parents felt that they received too little notice of review dates and that they had to instigate telephone contact. The school has made very good improvement in this area. Parents receive regular newsletters from the school and from houses and are informed about what pupils will be learning in their beginning of term reports. Pupils' and students' end of term reports are consistent in format and help parents to see where pupils have made progress against their targets for literacy, numeracy and 'I can' statements. Annual review meetings are properly conducted and parents receive very good written and oral information from all staff who are teaching and caring for their children. There is very good information for parents of children who are new to the school through the prospectus and the Family Directory. A planned programme of induction where parents can stay in the Family Centre and help their children to settle in their houses and in school is a very good feature and is greatly appreciated by parents who may feel apprehensive about their child's placement at residential school. All staff ensure that there is regular telephone contact with families so that they are fully involved in their child's life at the school and hear when progress is being made or where there are any difficulties. Parents say that this regular contact is a 'lifeline' and ensures that they do not feel isolated from their child.

58. The school has made significant improvement in the effectiveness of its links with parents to involve them more fully in their children's learning. The role of the Family Liaison Worker is highly valued as a source of information and contact between home, school and the houses and in the developmental work that is being done to improve the quality of parental links, communication, support and training. Parents are very positive about the training courses that have been provided, particularly on behaviour management at home and the TEACCH strategies. As a result of some of the criticisms raised at the first inspection, the school has developed a regular training course, attended by over 200 staff altogether, which raises staff awareness of how to 'listen' to families and their concerns. These strategies have helped parents to understand that Sunfield is a 'learning community' and has raised their expectations for their children. The 'keyworker' system is now well established and ensures that parents know who to go to when they have any concerns. The school is aware that there are occasional lapses in communication and continues to seek ways to ensure that messages are passed between staff as they finish their duties.

59. The school recognises the importance of its work with families and the impact that this has on pupils' and students' learning. The Family Centre is a very good resource that enables families and friends to visit pupils and students and to be more closely involved with their lives at school. Plans are in place to further develop the Centre to provide more accommodation for families who live at some distance from the school. Much of the developmental work with families has taken place as a result of surveying parental opinion about the work of the school and the care provision. The initiative to involve 'siblings' in special weekends has been very successful in helping brothers and sisters to more fully understand the nature of their families' difficulties while giving them the opportunity to have a 'fun' experience of their own in the school environment.

60. While most parents are unable to be actively involved in school life, open days are well attended by families and give them the opportunity to be part of their child's learning. There are regular invitations to school performances and fundraising events. Parents are encouraged to offer mutual support through the 'link family' system and to volunteer to help with special events in school or in the school shop. Surveys show that there has been a marked increase in parental satisfaction with the school over the past four years. Parents

express very positive views about their contacts with staff, the improvements to the system for Annual Reviews and written communications and the quality of the Family Centre. Parents write that the caring staff, the quality of the school environment, the strategies for TEACCH and the 24-hour curriculum are very successful in ensuring that their children make good progress in their learning during their time at the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

61. There has been a very good improvement in the leadership and management of the school since the first inspection. The good report that the school had in 1998 has been further built on. The restructuring of the management team to include highly qualified and professional key members of staff for education, care and administration, has resulted in the school being very well managed. All key members of the management team have worked together very well and has resulted in a much-improved school, in which there is a clear long term planning and focus. **However, a change of staff has resulted in changes to co-ordinators' responsibilities in curriculum development. In addition, in the schools' overall development, it has not ready to allow curriculum co-ordinators full to develop and monitor their subjects. This in conjunction with waiting for new national initiatives in curriculum development for special educational needs has resulted in a loss of momentum in overall curriculum development and assessment.**

62. The trustees have acted on the advice of the last inspection and now have more members with a wider background. There has also been the formation of an advisory management council, and together they have provided a clear direction for school improvement. They take, or sanction, effective action when implementing the school action plans or investing in developments. As a result the school has improved, developed, is now meeting its aims, and is financially viable.

63. Teacher performance is monitored and evaluated on a regular basis through classroom observations carried out by senior staff, and this has led to an annual performance and development review. Parallel arrangements have been in place for all other site staff. This represents good progress since the previous inspection, but **the school does not yet have an embedded system for teacher appraisal based on detailed performance management criteria.**

64. The trustees and advisory management council took effective decisions to implement the action plan. A substantial investment was made, and fees were increased so that the costs realistically covered the costs of the provision. Following a financial review, a bursar was appointed and accounts computerised. Budget holders roles and responsibilities were defined, and performance monitoring information provided monthly, for all budget holders and trustees. The school has moved from a very large deficit to a small surplus in a very short time, as a result of very efficient financial management. The business manager, to ensure the stability of the school, very carefully monitors all financial planning and spending. The trustees, advisory council of management, and the senior management team, agree priorities for the care and education of the pupils and students.

65. The appointment of an appeals manager has proved to be very cost effective, and has led to improvements in facilities for the care and education of pupils and students. Funds are raised for specific projects, and the appeals manager initiates contacts, provides promotional materials, keeps donors informed, and works to establish and maintain good relationships with the contributors. One project, the provision of networked computers, printers, scanners and digital cameras for the school, has had a significant impact on the education of pupils and students. Next year, the houses will be added to the network. The current project is an adventure playground, and impressive promotional material is ready to

send out. There is school wide consultation about fund-raising projects, including pupil and student input through the school council. The appeals manager is involved in the projects beyond the raising of funds, following them through to completion, and is very much part of the life of the school. For example, students from the council pop in to ask about progress towards the adventure playground.

66. The school development plan is detailed, balanced, costed, and based on education and care priorities, monitored, and reviewed quarterly. Careful financial planning is essential as the school recovers from the large deficit of 1988/89. The Head of Education manages the delegated budget in consultation with senior staff. **Though consultation is ongoing, co-ordinators do not yet have their own budgets. This is appropriate at present since the role of co-ordinators is not yet fully developed. After more training, and clearer guidelines on the roles and responsibilities** of co-ordinators, it is planned that they will manage their own budgets. The Head of Education works very closely with the business manager and senior staff to ensure that educational priorities are supported through careful financial management.

67. The efficiency of the school is now very good, and shows very good improvement since the inspection of 1996, and continued improvement since the monitoring in 1998. The school makes very efficient use of the new technologies for accounting, email, internet research, data storage, recording, and the production of resources and promotional materials. The school is very aware of the principles of best value and follow the guidance well. They compare themselves with schools offering similar provision, provide a detailed breakdown of costs to Local Authorities, consult widely on all major expenditure, and monitor the impact of their spending.

68. Overall, the range, experience, and qualifications of the staff are very well matched to the pupils' needs within the context of the twenty-four curriculum. A sufficient number of teachers are appropriately trained to teach the school and Post-16 curriculum and there is a good mix of experience. A number have significant teaching experience, although more than a third have only one year's experience or less within the school. Difficulties arise when the school tries to recruit teachers who are appropriately qualified and experienced to work with children with severe and complex difficulties, and who are also able to provide subject expertise. **As a result, the school does not have teachers who are specialists in a number of subject areas including science, geography, information and communication technology, physical education, and mathematics. This lack of specialist expertise has an impact on the curriculum in terms of the quality of subject planning, and assessment and its recording.**

69. A wide range of well-qualified support staff makes a very positive contribution to the quality of education provided. A full-time consultant psychologist and team of psychology assistants, speech and language and occupational therapists, learning support assistants, and residential child care officers all contribute significantly to different facets of the twenty four curriculum offered by the school. Pupils' benefit greatly from this managed and integrated approach to their education and care.

70. The school has made very good progress in addressing the key issue of staff training identified in the 1996 report. The school's investment in training that was identified during the 1998 inspection has been maintained so that it has recently had its Investors in People Award extended following a successful review. The school is now rightly proud of its commitment to the induction of staff and their subsequent training and development. A director of continuing professional development manages the school's professional development centre, which provides a very valuable on-site resource for training the school's own staff as well as offering a termly programme of events for which staff from other schools may apply.

71. Induction days for all newly appointed staff are held at the beginning of each term and staff are then required to complete their foundation training within twelve months. **This period is too long given that the contents of this initial training include the ACCESS curriculum, behaviour management, and individual education and care plans. Staff need to have a fuller understanding of these issues sooner if consistency of approach is to be maintained.** Arrangements for continuing professional development are very effective as the co-ordinators for professional development (education and care) oversee procedures that enable the organisation to respond to both school-driven development areas and individual training needs. In addition, the school has been creative in providing a range of professional courses for all staff in conjunction with a number of higher education establishments. This includes offering the opportunity for graduates to obtain qualified teacher status through an initial teacher-training programme.

72. The school's accommodation is satisfactory overall. The estate is very large and the grounds provide some excellent opportunities to develop pupils' spirituality and additional experiences. This potential is being increasingly exploited. The farm is regularly used to give pupils the experience of handling and caring for animals, and some simple orienteering courses have been established recently. An adventure playground provides a range of large equipment that pupils use to develop confidence and control of their bodies, and although this is rarely used at the present time the school is well advanced with plans to replace it with a more extensive and safer facility.

73. **The school buildings are dispersed over a very wide area. Pupils and staff have to cover great distances when moving from one area of the school to another, such as, when using the small library area or the soft playroom. This movement across the school, while it supports the personal development of some pupils, it upsets those pupils who cannot cope with change, and whose behaviour becomes difficult as a result of this change. In these situations pupils take a great deal of time to become calm and access the curriculum. The Post 16 department is located in a separate accommodation, which allows students to feel they are transferring into different educational provision, but these are demountable units and have limited space and life.**

74. **The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection in making available small areas available for specialist activities like speech and language and occupational therapy, but it still lacks specialist accommodation for the teaching of some subjects, such as, science, design and technology, and art. The library accommodation is unsatisfactory as it is located away from the main teaching block and is therefore rarely used. The school's long term objective is to have a new school building.**

75. The school has made good progress in refurbishing and improving the quality of its accommodation, since the last inspection. Most of the residential houses are purpose built and have a high standard so that the facilities can be used effectively to support many areas of pupil development in independent living skills and personal and social development. There is now privacy and dignity for pupils and students.

76. The school's resources are satisfactory overall as satisfactory progress has been made since the previous inspection in providing a range of resources that enables the twenty-four hour curriculum to be delivered effectively. However, the quality of the learning resources is variable. They are very good in information and **communication technology, as the school has invested in range of new hardware, and good in mathematics,**

English, music and religious education. Resources in design and technology, history and geography are poor and do not allow the subject curricula to be delivered effectively. Resources in the residential houses are good, and so care staff are able to use these to provide opportunities that make a significant contribution to pupils' personal and social development.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. The Trustees, the management of the school and the staff need to raise the achievements of pupils in the subjects of the National Curriculum, and increase the quality of teaching by:

- formulating and implementing long and medium planning in the subjects of the National Curriculum so that schemes of work provide a framework for teachers to plan the content of lessons;
(Paragraphs:1, 2,3,4,5, 21, 26,27, 29, 97, 98, 107,150, 125, 131,134,138,144, 160).
- linking and using assessment to evaluate pupils' progress against the learning objectives in each subject;
(Paragraphs: 3, 50, 52, 53, 54, 91, 108, 125, 128, 131, 134,138, 141,143, 144, 146, 147, 156, 160).
- providing in-service training for subject co-ordinators so that they are able to plan, develop, monitor and evaluate their subject responsibilities;
(Paragraphs: 61,66, 68, 117, 126,131,134,139, 150, 156, 161).
- increasing the resources available for teaching and learning in design and technology, history and geography.
(Paragraphs : 78, 127,131,135,139

In addition the following minor areas for improvement should be included in the overall improvement of the school:

- The age appropriateness of the resources for older pupils. (Paragraphs : 90, 92, 93, 94, 98,)
- Provision of specialist rooms for the teaching of art, design and technology and science. (Paragraphs : 74, 127).

THE PROVISION FOR STUDENTS AT POST 16

78. This provision is overall good and there is a good quality and range of learning opportunities for its students. The provision for students with additional special educational needs is very good. The Post-16 curriculum had only recently been devised at the time of the last inspection so that secure judgements could not be made about its effectiveness. Therefore, improvement since that time cannot be assessed.

79. The aims of the further education department are well met, as students experience a range of age-appropriate activities and staff take maximum advantage of opportunities that

encourage students' independence, self-worth, positive attitudes and assertiveness. Detailed individual education and care plans translate these aims into individual targets. These plans are fully understood by staff in both the education and care environments and they ensure consistency of approach.

80. There are two main aspects to the curriculum. Mornings are devoted to the core skills of literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology, and religious education as students are taught in their tutor groups. Basic skills are well taught as students work with age-appropriate material in both literacy and numeracy lessons, but the books for leisure reading that are available in classrooms are not appropriate to the age of the students.

81. There are five strands to the afternoon curriculum – independent living skills, citizenship, community/leisure, the arts, and environmental education. All students experience all these curriculum areas and different members of staff teach strands. Work undertaken in these different strands is used to provide evidence in modules submitted for externally accredited courses. These courses include ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network), ALL (Accreditation for Life and Living Skills), the National Skills Profile, and vocational modules of the National Proficiency Tests Council. The curriculum is enriched and extended through carefully managed and supported work experience and links with local colleges for vocational courses.

82. Whilst the Post-16 curriculum is relevant to the students, it lacks some breadth and balance. The Post-16 co-ordinator recognises the need to review the curriculum and to place more emphasis on key skills. In addition, there are occasions when classroom activities suggest that the curriculum is being driven by the need to provide evidence for accreditation rather than work that is tightly linked to students' achievements and needs. On these occasions planned lesson activities are not followed, and students do mechanical activities that are used to provide this evidence rather than tasks that follow logically from the teaching activity.

83. Lessons in the department are generally characterised by high teacher expectations and effective student management. Lessons are well planned and prepared and teaching methods and strategies are effective, with staff using signing well to communicate. Under these circumstances, students are treated as young adults and are required to make informed choices in many situations in both the classroom and residential houses.

84. The further education department is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of further education and experience of students with special needs and has therefore been able to identify appropriate priorities for development within the department. These include increasing links with local colleges, developing work experience opportunities, and monitoring lesson planning more closely. When the relevant procedures and activities are in place they will make this good provision even more effective.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	[]

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	36	38	7	1	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	64
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

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

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Attainment

Due to severe and complex difficulties of the pupils and students it is not appropriate to report on levels of attainment

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	3
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	58
Any other minority ethnic group	0

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: Y4 – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4
Average class size	5

Education support staff: Y4 – Y14

Total number of education support staff	34
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1050

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	5314733
Total expenditure	5193323
Expenditure per pupil	71141
Balance brought forward from previous year	2036220
Balance carried forward to next year	2157630

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	64
Number of questionnaires returned	36

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	51	40	0	6	3
My child is making good progress in school.	53	38	0	6	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	47	36	8	6	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	46	13	29	13	0
The teaching is good.	66	26	6	3	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	81	14	0	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	19	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	68	32	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	75	22	0	0	3
The school is well led and managed.	81	14	3	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	63	29	3	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	67	28	3	3	0

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

ENGLISH

85. Since the last inspection, there has been good improvement in teaching and learning. The Literacy Strategy has been adapted to meet the needs of the pupils. Teachers have good understanding of the National Curriculum and aim to cover programmes of study over a three-year period. Pupils and students respond with more sustained interest and concentration, as a result of better behaviour management. Punctuality has improved with the greater co-operation between staff in the school and the houses. This has also made the individual education plans more effective. The provision and use of information and communication technology has improved.

86. In lessons, pupils and students achieve well, but because assessment and recording is inconsistent, there is insufficient evidence of progress over time. Therefore overall, progress in English is satisfactory.

87. In Key stage 2, when planning, assessment and recording are detailed and systematic, pupils make good progress. However, this is not consistent throughout the key stage, and is due to changes in staff. Some teachers, at the time of the inspection were very new to the school. Pupils are encouraged to listen, and to communicate by the use of Makaton signing, and symbols, to support speech. One pupil, in a lesson observed, was able to listen, respond verbally, and follow verbal instructions. Others indicated symbols to express themselves, and the remainder showed understanding by responding with smiles and gestures.

88. Pupils in this key stage experience shared enjoyment when listening to stories. Teachers make every effort to enable all pupils to participate in the story telling. They do this with the very good provision and use of resources, which are produced in school, to meet the individual needs of these pupils. Pupils enjoy the Big Book, or Big Box sessions and are learning language, such as, 'author', 'illustrator' and 'title'. Ability ranges from looking at books, sharing books, reading supported by symbols, to one boy who reads fluently with expression. This pupil recorded, on to a Big Mac switch, a much repeated phrase in the story, so that pupils who could not speak, could join in. Pupils learn to make marks on paper, to overwrite and to copy, according to their ability. One pupil was able to sequence symbols; another wrote a list of words, from the story, on the computer, using the concept keyboard.

89. At Key Stage 3, 'Circle Time' promotes listening and communication skills very effectively. Pupils greet, and respond to greeting, with speech, song, sign, or symbol, as appropriate. Due to the sensitive and skilful behaviour management of all staff, the participation of pupils is good, and even for pupils who find social interaction difficult, The needs of pupils are understood, and teachers and support staff work well as a team. The inclusion of care staff, from the houses, at the beginning and end of the day, makes a significant contribution to the promotion of effective communication in 'Circle Time'. Relationships are excellent.

90. Three pupils in this key stage read simple text, and a significant minority read symbol schedules and simple symbol sentences. The rest are working towards this, through recognising and matching symbols. The lowest attaining pupils use objects of reference, in preparation for the move, through pictures, to symbols. During 'Big Book' or other story activities, signing is used to support reading. **However, use is inconsistent and needs to be further developed.** Some knowledge of book language is introduced in Literacy lessons.

Pupils use the library, and some are able to choose appropriate books. **However, books chosen are often too easy, and some pupils have difficulty in making a choice. There was not enough guidance offered to pupils in some lessons observed. Many books, in the library and in the classrooms, are not age appropriate. In one class, pupils read from symbol books, illustrated with photographs, which were extremely relevant and appropriate.** TEACCH is very effective in this class, enabling pupils to access learning.

91. Evidence of writing skills varies across the key stage. Some pupils' files include **pieces of work, and "I can" statements which were dated, annotated, giving context, and linked to skill levels. Others gave no indication of when and how levels were attained. Where recording is efficient, evidence suggests that pupils are making good progress. In lessons, tasks are well matched to ability, and short term planning is good, mainly because of the teachers' very good knowledge of pupils.**

92. Pupils in Key Stage 4 are working towards ASDAN accreditation and their speaking and listening skills are very well promoted, with very good use of symbols and signing, by staff and pupils. Learning support staff play a significant role in enabling all pupils to participate fully in the lesson. Pupils respond well to visitors, and are happy to enter into conversation. Relationships are very good, and the use of humour was very effective in one lesson observed. Events of the week were recalled, and good communication was observed. The range of ability is similar to that in Key Stage 3, with one pupil reading confidently from a simple book of his choice. Other pupils use picture clues to help them with discussion about the story line. Some pupils read symbol schedules, and follow them to meet their targets. **Books in the classrooms are not age appropriate, but material used in lessons is usually more relevant, and is often made by staff to meet individual needs.** The purchase of age appropriate books increasingly difficult due to the difficulties of the pupils.

93. In this key stage, there is a wide range of ability in writing skills. The higher attaining pupils write independently, while the majority build symbol sentences, overwrite or copy write. Occasionally pupils are given inappropriate tasks, for example, one pupil **who writes with small, well formed letters, and can read without symbol support, has many examples of cutting and pasting symbol sentences in his writing book.**

94. At Post 16, the planning in English is overall good, with specific individual learning outcomes. Students work towards accreditation in ALL and ASDAN and writing is linked to the accreditation requirements. They listen to each other, and to staff, and respond appropriately. High attaining students read and write independently while lower attaining students use symbol support. The timetable provides regular **opportunity for reading with a purpose. Though most books are not age appropriate, staff are very aware of the problem and sensitive in the use of books. In one lesson observed, the book, which was written for much younger children, was used as a resource to initiate discovery and communication about winter, which was the theme for the week. However, more effort should be made to acquire more suitable resources.**

95. The overall teaching and learning in English is good across the school. In The practised teamwork and very skilled behaviour management, ensure that when individual pupils' difficulties become a barrier to learning, the rest of the class continue to achieve. In eight out of ten lessons, the teaching of English is good or better, and no unsatisfactory lessons were observed. Short term planning is good because teachers know pupils and students very well, and have good understanding of their needs and abilities. All pupils have individual targets for literacy, which are specific and relevant. Good teaching of basic skills was observed. Praise and encouragement is used to promote self-esteem, and motivate pupils to work well. As a result pupils show interest and pride in their work. Drama is used

well to improve communication skills, particularly those of attention and imitation. Expectations in terms of participation and behaviour are high.

96. The overall teaching of English at Post 16 is good. TEACCH is very effective at Post 16, facilitating learning for students with a history of failure in response to more traditional teaching methods. Students are enabled, by the TEACCH strategies, to access the curriculum, in spite of their severe learning and behavioural difficulties. The transition from a TEACCH class to a class that uses some TEACCH techniques is well managed and two students were observed to be coping very well with the change of routine. In one lesson, good use was made of recorded sounds, to assist students' better understanding of the environment. Everything in the lesson was related to the individual student's experience. Behaviour was good because the work was relevant and interesting. There is an emphasis on meaningful communication, rather than the repetition of learned phrases.

97. **Evaluation, assessment, recording, and medium and long term planning in some classes are very good but are inconsistent throughout the school.** The good practice should be standardised across the school. A more consistent approach to reading, through a reading scheme would benefit those pupils who are making progress in reading. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good in the TEACCH classes. Across the school, teachers ensure the inclusion of all pupils in group activities, by good staff deployment, and by the imaginative use of resources.

98. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, has good subject knowledge, and has provided a good model of long, medium and short term planning. In order to ensure good individual progress over time, and good progression within and between the key **stages, assessment procedures should be standardised, and used to inform planning. A range of fiction and non-fiction, age appropriate books, for classroom use, and for the library should be provided.**

MATHEMATICS

99. There has been a good improvement in the provision for mathematics since the last inspection. The school has increased the amount of time spent on teaching mathematics. Every child now has individual mathematics targets as part of their IECF. The quality of teaching has been substantially improved and the provision of learning resources to support mathematics is now good. The school has sensitively introduced a modified numeracy framework across the school, which has been adapted well to meet the special educational needs of the school's pupils and students.

100. Standards of achievement across the school are satisfactory, although they are higher where the quality of teaching is better. It was not possible to make an overall judgement regarding pupils' progress over time due to the lack of assessment information and the fact that many of the pupils are new to the school. However, where records do exist and pupils have been at the school for an extended period of time progress is at least satisfactory and for a small minority of pupils it is good.

101. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 count accurately up to 10, recognise different colours and classify everyday objects by their shape. In a very well structured whole-class section of a numeracy lesson these pupils explored objects and sorted them into different shapes. The highest attaining pupils identified how many sides each shape had, including identifying that a circle only had one side. Later in the same lesson, the highest attaining pupil was able to identify and type a missing number from 1 to 30 grid of numbers on the computer. Lower attaining pupils operate simple cause and effect computer

programmes independently, match basic shapes and sort small and large items appropriately.

102. At the end of Key Stage 3 the pupils' achievements are satisfactory. The highest attaining pupils recognise numbers up to 50, write numbers up to 30 and understand number bonds up to 10. In a numeracy lesson focussing on the theme of time, all pupils knew when they go to bed in the evening and get up in the morning. The higher attaining pupils were able record times from a television guide, whilst the lower attaining pupils match activities to a "day" or "night" symbol. Less able pupils within the SIECCA classes find coloured cards that match the colour of a bead and thread beads in a simple colour sequence.

103. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have developed their skills further. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to use a calculator to undertake 3-digit addition. Pupils of all abilities use money in practical settings. There was little other evidence of attainment in pupils' work. The majority of work examples consisted of simple "cutting and sticking" activities which were inappropriate to the abilities of the pupils. For example, one year 11 pupil had cut out and stuck 27 Christmas tree shapes in his workbook under the number 27.

104. Students at Post-16 continue to develop their mathematical knowledge and a considerable proportion of the timetable is devoted to the development of numeracy skills. Pupils use time and money in practical situations. For example, in the school shop students check sell-by dates on produce, count and check the "float" money and give customers change with help from a member of the support staff. In the school office students count, order and staple photocopies. In the classroom, lower attaining pupils order numbers to 5, count by rote backwards and forwards to 10 and complete simple addition where the total is 5 or less.

105. Overall the quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory across the school. It is occasionally very good. Out of eight lessons observed, five were satisfactory, one was good and two were very good. Teaching is good at Key Stage 2 and at Post-16. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3. No lessons were observed at Key Stage 4. The strengths of mathematics teaching are the staffs' detailed knowledge of pupils and students and the consistent use of classroom and behaviour management strategies, notably using TEACCH techniques. In the best lessons this results in high expectations and learning opportunities are maximised. For example, in one numeracy lesson with a SIECCA class, pupils were brought together for a short group session introducing colour matching and sequencing. Pupils then returned to their workstations with support staff to practice these skills. The lesson included very good individual objectives and activities for each pupil drawn from their individual numeracy targets.

106. Pupils respond very well to the structured and calm atmosphere in the majority of lessons. Relationships are always very good and sometimes excellent and this further enhances the learning opportunities. Support staff make a very positive contribution and are especially effective in those classes where teachers are new to the school. Information and communication technology is used well to support pupils' learning in mathematics. In the best lessons, computer programmes are selected that directly relate to the pupils' and students' mathematical abilities and allow them to both consolidate learnt skills and undertake new learning.

107. The co-ordinator for mathematics was away from the school at the time of the inspection. The school has very appropriately allocated two co-ordinators to the subject, as the existing co-ordinator is due to retire at the end of the current academic year. This should result in a good transfer of information to the newly **appointed second co-ordinator.**

However, the role of the curriculum co-ordinator is currently underdeveloped and has not lead directly to improvements in the subject. Some satisfactory staff training has been undertaken to implement the National Numeracy Strategy.

108. The school's scheme of work for mathematics consists of a list of "I can" statements that are cross-referenced to the "P Scales" published by the Qualifications and **Curriculum Authority. Whilst these provide a satisfactory assessment structure they do not provide a Scheme of Work for the subject.** In addition, assessment carried out against the "I can" statements is neither dated nor annotated. It is therefore impossible to evaluate pupils' and students' progress over time in mathematics. The school should move quickly to develop a Scheme of Work for mathematics which identifies long-term and medium-term coverage for the subject across Key Stages 2, 3 and 4.

109. A strength of the curriculum provision in mathematics is the priority numeracy targets devised for each pupil. These identify appropriate individual termly learning objectives in mathematics for pupils and students. Where these are used well they provide evidence of good progress over time. The resources for mathematics has improved since the last inspection and is now good. An adequate range of commercial resources has been enhanced by the addition of some very good staff-produced resources. These are often tailored to individual pupils and the use of support staff to manufacture resources is a strength of mathematics provision. There is a satisfactory use of numeracy skills to support work in a range of other subjects. Students in Post-16 used sorting skills to classify food that they liked and didn't like within an environmental education lesson. Older pupils used time and money skills whilst taking part in vocational experience in the school shop.

SCIENCE

110. The provision for science has not improved sufficiently since the last inspection. At that time, standards were judged to be very poor and progress unsatisfactory. This was largely due to poor teaching, the lack of a suitably scientific curriculum and a **lack of challenging work for pupils. There have been definite improvements, but overall, the standards pupils attain are still not high enough because there is still not a suitable curriculum and guidelines to help teachers plan appropriate lessons over time.**

111. There was very little evidence of work covered, or pupils' achievements, on which to make judgments about teaching and pupils' progress. Consequently, most judgments have been made only on what was directly observed in lessons. At Key Stage 2, pupils are learning about the effect of forces on their bodies. They use their bodies in different ways, for example to slide down a slope, and rock backwards and forwards. They understand that they can make a wheeled toy follow them round the playground if they pull it behind them with a piece of string, and that plasticene will change shape if one pushes or pulls at it. The most able pupil clearly described the difference between pushing and pulling, and explained that the harder one pushed a toy car, the further it would go. At Key Stage 3, pupils have been learning about the planets. They recognise and name the earth, moon, sun and stars, and evidence of past work shows that they had also learned about teeth, light and heavy objects, and floating and sinking.

112. At Key Stage 4, pupils are working towards the Transition Challenge Award, of which science is a component. These pupils can name and identify a range of common farm animals from photographs, line drawings and in real life. Most knew what foods they preferred, and how to present it to the animals. With support, the pupils were able to record their observations on the animals. For example, with help, they used a paper tape measure to tear off to the length of their chosen animal, and recorded the length on their chart. As part

of their award work, the oldest pupils had completed work on personal hygiene and body parts, and on improving the environment by digging over and planting out a flower bed.

113. The teaching observed was satisfactory overall, although some unsatisfactory teaching was observed at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. The lesson observed at Key Stage 4 was good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. In all lessons, the management of pupils' behaviour and staff teamwork were very good. The effectiveness of the good lesson was largely due to good planning which clearly built upon the work of the previous lesson to develop pupils' understanding. The lesson was properly scientific in content, whilst at the same time taking full account of the pupils' special needs. The resources were motivating to the pupils – for example using the digital camera – and the lesson used photographs taken the previous week that reminded pupils of what they had done. The teacher gave pupils responsibility for assembling their own equipment – a simple work sheet, paper tape measure and picture of an animal of their choice. This kept them fully involved in the preparation for the task to come. They remained calm and developed their independent working skills. The teacher constantly prompted pupils to behave in a socially acceptable manner, but without putting undue pressure on them, and used signing competently to support the pupils' understanding.

114. Characteristics of less effective and unsatisfactory lessons include, in particular, the lack of appropriate resources, the lack of a suitable science focus, and teachers' lack of sufficient subject knowledge. On one occasion, pupils were asked to experiment with wheeled toys, to find out the difference between pulling them on a piece of string, and pushing them. This took place in a large playground. The cars provided were much too small and needed no force at all. Consequently, the pupils, who understood immediately what to do with them started to run fast, round the playground pulling the cars behind them. The cars were so light that they "took off" at times and bounced along the ground; the string broke as a result. The cars to be pushed were equally small, and were thrown. This activity taught the pupils nothing about forces, and provoked unacceptable behaviour as they became over-excited.

115. Lessons are rarely introduced by a recap of previous work, or a demonstration, so pupils are unprepared for what is to come. Often, lessons do not have enough scientific content. For example the last half an hour of a lesson on the planets became a cutting and sticking activity. At other times, teachers struggle to combine the structured behaviour management methodology of TEACCH with scientific content. On one occasion, an able boy was given four push/pull tasks to complete independently. He did this quickly and competently, but with no increase in his understanding of the concepts. This same boy then worked with the teacher on racing rolling cars, but the purpose of this activity was not clear. As the investigation was not conducted scientifically, and the teacher did not ask the right questions, there was no real conclusion to the session, or gains in the pupil's knowledge and understanding.

116. Development of the science curriculum stopped about one year ago, and this has presented problems for the staff. There is no scheme of work upon which they can base their lesson plans over time, and so pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding are not built up systematically. Statutory requirements are not met. Consequently, they do not make enough progress, and this aspect has not improved sufficiently since the previous inspection. There are no records of planned work to indicate what pupils have covered in the past, and no records to identify what they know, understand and can do now, or over time. A system to record pupils' achievements had been introduced, but this is not used and nothing has been put in its place.

117. The curriculum co-ordinator is working hard to develop the science curriculum in line with new government guidelines, but this is not yet ready for use. At the same time, a system for recording pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is also being created, but it is in danger of being unnecessarily detailed and difficult to use. The **co-ordinator's other responsibilities, such as, supporting and monitoring teaching and learning, are very under-developed which contributes to the patchy science provision in the school.** Whilst the grounds and farm provide a rich learning environment and are very well used, resources for use in the classroom are unsatisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

118. The standards of achievement attained by pupils, and the progress they make is satisfactory, and overall, art provision has improved since the last inspection. A significant contribution to this improvement is the work carried out in the various arts projects that are on going in the school, and the contribution made by the artists in residence.

119. At Key Stage 2, pupils use their hands and sponges to print – for example making snowflakes using white paint on black paper. They use mixed media such as wax crayons, watery paint, cellophane and silver paper to create water scenes, and make patterns in “mud paint” to create warm, textured paintings. Pupils use the computer to support their art work, which they find motivating. For example, one able pupil said “Look, it does spots” and then “It’s a fountain! How do you draw water?”

120. At Key Stage 3, pupils continue their work inspired by the natural environment, for example, including paint and leaves together in their art. They select the materials they prefer, such as the colours they think suited to painting the features of a face, or glittering materials to add to their collage work. Some pupils can draw and paint to represent items, such as a person or a dog, whereas others' work remains abstract, often done with the fingers. At Key Stage 4, with support, pupils with severe autism shape and mark clay, and select paint and sequins to decorate their model. Higher attaining pupils name colours, and choose from a wider selection.

121. At Post-16, students produce a wide range of work and show knowledge and understanding of some of the processes in art, and of other artists' work. They compare different media, such as, spray, chalk and oil pastels, and the properties of different types of paper, to help them select the most suitable for their work. They understand how to mix colours to make a new one, and how to make paint colours lighter by adding increasing amounts of white. Students observe everyday objects, such as plants in the classroom, or items they have made on visits and draw what they see. They use the digital camera as a starting point for their art, for example using photographs to create some very good oil pastel drawings of the interactive sculptures in the grounds. Some students understand the difference between hot and cold colours, and can associate them with the elements fire and water. Computer art is used to enhance displays, for example, of Chinese culture.

122. Teaching is good overall. Teaching in the Post-16 department is very good. Teaching by the visiting artist who works with pupils individually in several classes in the school is also very good. Teaching elsewhere in the school is satisfactory overall although one very good lesson was observed at Key Stage 3. Without the input of the visiting artist, teaching would be satisfactory overall. Behaviour management and staff teamwork in all lessons were very good.

123. Characteristics of the very good teaching include the use of very good resources that the pupils find motivating. For example, the visiting teacher provided very attractive pearlised paint and sequins for pupils with severe autism to decorate their model fish with. They found

these materials very motivating and concentrated hard and with pleasure which helped them learn and make progress. Another strength of the most effective teaching is an approach to suit the pupils' particular needs. In the lesson in the Post-16 department, where the pupils are more able, the teacher used humour, anticipation and a brisk pace throughout the lesson which kept the pupils motivated and concentrating. She continually reinforced the concept of hot and cold colours, and provided stimulating resources for the pupils to sort through and discuss. This was a very lively, interesting and productive lesson that lasted well over an hour. By the end of the lesson, all pupils in the group had made very good progress. In another class, where the pupils have very severe autism and challenging behaviour, the teacher remained calm and quiet, but persevered with the task that was set to be completed in a short time. She encouraged each pupil gently, prompting him or her to look, choose and "do". She was very successful in gaining their full co-operation. In both lessons, the teachers introduced the work of the day – in one case to the whole class and in the other to each individual, so that they were all prepared for the work and could build upon their previous learning..

124. A particular weakness in teaching is the lack of sufficient art focus. One lesson observed on the theme of "self-image" had its focus on personal, social and health education. Pupils' art skills, knowledge and understanding were not sufficiently addressed. In another lesson, pupils were expected to stick circles of tissue paper onto a large drawing of a butterfly that they did not find interesting. This is an activity often seen around the school in all subjects. Pupils are not motivated by it, and even when carried out in an art lesson, it does little to develop their art skills. At times, artwork for older pupils is more appropriate for younger pupils. For example, a cotton wool collage of snowmen is an activity usually associated with Key Stage 1 pupils.

125. **The art curriculum that had been put into place after the last inspection has fallen by the wayside, and this presents some problems for the staff. There is no scheme of work upon which they can base their lesson plans over time, to build up pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding** systematically, and ensure they have a sufficiently broad range of experiences. Timetabled art activities are sometimes limited but are considerably enhanced by the work of the visiting artists and projects such as "Sunmoves." Together, therefore, they enable pupils to work with a wide range of media, and develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of art and its processes. Nevertheless, other than in the Post-16 department, art provision without the input of the visiting artists would not be enough to help the pupils learn effectively and make sufficient progress.

126. **There are no records of planned work to indicate what pupils have covered in the past, and no records to identify what they know, understand and can do now, or over time. The curriculum co-ordinator is working hard to develop the art curriculum in line with new government guidelines, but this is not yet ready for use. At the same time, a system for recording pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding is also being created, but it is in danger of being unnecessarily** detailed and difficult to use. The co-ordinator's other responsibilities, such as supporting and monitoring teaching and learning, are under-developed which contributes to the patchy science provision in the school. Resources in the Post-16 department are good, but they are more limited in other parts of the school. For example, there are few materials for three-dimensional work, although the visiting artists often provide them, but this restricts the development of pupils' creativity.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. Design and technology has not improved since the last inspection. During the inspection there were a number of examples of work in food technology, but no **evidence of pupils' experiencing or working with resistant materials. In addition, additional resources have not been provided, there is no suitable accommodation for teaching resistant materials,** and management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

128. **Some samples of pupils' work provided sufficient evidence to assess pupils' achievements, but because much of this evidence is not dated or annotated it is not possible to judge pupils' progress over time. Analysis of this work shows that pupils' and students' achievements are satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils respond to their environment by handling different** objects and materials and some can identify them. They grasp and release tools and copy simple shapes, with some able to build simple structures by assembling bricks. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils know some of the qualities of different building materials, such as shape, texture and patterns, as they investigate buildings on the school site. Pupils, on request, collect materials from the refrigerator, and indicate their choice of sandwich fillings, although they are not able to spread it. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils pour liquids carefully and peel and slice fruit such as bananas. These pupils, as well as those at Post-16, use simple kitchen measures, follow simple recipes and use these activities to demonstrate living skills as part of their portfolio of evidence for ASDAN accreditation.

129. Overall teaching is satisfactory, and in one lesson seen at Key Stage 2 on the week of the inspection it was good. However, the majority of lessons during the week focussed on food technology and this, in conjunction with the lack of evidence of what pupils can achieve, does not provide evidence of the quality of teaching in other aspects of the subject. During the week there was one lesson at Key Stage 3 and a lesson at Post 16 where teaching was unsatisfactory. On these occasions, pupils' achievements suffer because lessons have unsatisfactory features. These include inadequate planning, ineffective lesson introductions that fail to identify activities clearly, and work that is not suited to pupils' abilities. Opportunities to reinforce other aspects of pupils' learning were also missed. For example, recipes were not available in both text or symbol formats, and so opportunities to consolidate literacy skills and the concepts of sequencing were missed.

130. Where teaching is good pupils make good progress, such as, in the class of Post-16 students who achieved well in a food technology lesson. They were able to increase their understanding of a recipe, develop practical skills such as measuring, and extend their competence in using kitchen equipment. This activity was well suited to students' needs and the strategies used extended their learning. Good relationships and student management produced a calm working atmosphere, and learning support assistants used their initiative to make a significant contribution.

131. **Facilities for design and technology are unsatisfactory. There is not suitable accommodation or resources and tools for pupils to experience and experiment with a range of materials such as wood, plastic and textiles. Although relatively new in Post, the subject co-ordinator is a specialist and has previous experience of co-ordinating a subject. Unfortunately, he has a number of other responsibilities and does not have sufficient allocated time to address effectively all these roles. Consequently, the subject policy has not been updated, there is no scheme of work and assessment procedures are unsatisfactory. As a result, the lack of long-term plans and a scheme of work means that resistant materials are not studied. Pupils**

and students do not have experiences that extend their knowledge and understanding of a variety of materials, and nor do they have the opportunity to develop and extend design skills. Assessment and recording procedures that give a clear indication of the context in which pupils demonstrate their newly acquired abilities need to be devised and implemented throughout the school.

GEOGRAPHY

132. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 is good and in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. In Key Stage 2 pupils can sort pictures of clothes into sets and match the sets to weather symbols. Higher attaining pupils can read a plan to find the way around the school grounds. In Key Stage 3, pupils can match weather symbols to weather words. Higher attaining pupils can print out information from the weather centre web site and interpret symbols to say something about the weather. Pupils are interested in the activities and particularly enjoy and respond to activities that, for example, involved the teaching dressing up in the classroom in cold weather clothes.

133. Teaching is satisfactory overall and in Key Stage 2 it is good. Where teaching is good there is a detailed lesson plan with individual targets for each pupil. For example, one pupil places weather symbols on a map of Britain. Another pupil tries on different hats and looks at himself in the mirror. Two other pupils match weather words and weather symbols. Good use is made of resources, for example the Internet and television, to provide pupils with first hand information about the weather. Where teaching is satisfactory activities lack interest and there is an over-reliance on pupils and staff cutting out pictures and symbols and sticking them in books. Good use is made of learning support assistants to support pupils. Pupils behave well and have good support from staff. They are able to concentrate well and complete tasks when working in groups as well as individually with an adult. Where pupils are able to work independently they are given the opportunity to do so and respond well, for example, one pupil produced weather words for the class on the computer. Good use is made of the work schedules that support pupils and they make a major contribution to the good behaviour observed.

134. **There is no scheme of work for geography to support teachers planning. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection. The school has developed a series of statements related to the development of geographical knowledge and skills that are used as a framework for assessing pupils' progress. These are not consistently completed by all teachers and are an unsatisfactory means of assessing and recording pupil progress.**

135. **The co-ordinator has been in Post for one term and the role of subject co-ordinator in the school is not yet developed. A policy for teaching geography is in place but this has recently been re-written as a humanities policy (including history). There is no separate budget for resources and the co-ordinator does not have a role in developing or monitoring the curriculum. This is unsatisfactory. Resources are inadequate.**

HISTORY

136. During the week of the inspection no history teaching was observed because history and geography are taught in alternate terms. **There is insufficient evidence available in pupils' files to make a judgement on pupil progress and the quality of teaching.**

137. Good use is made each day of the opportunity to develop pupils understanding of chronology through individual timetables and work schedules that use symbols. This practice is used consistently in houses and classrooms and is effective in developing pupils understanding of order and pattern in the day.

138. **There is no scheme of work for history to support teachers planning. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection. The school has developed a series of statements related to the development of historical knowledge and skills that is used as a framework for assessing pupils' progress. These are not consistently completed by all teachers and are an unsatisfactory means of assessing and recording pupil progress.**

139. **The co-ordinator has been in post for two terms and recognises the need to develop a scheme of work. A policy for teaching history is in place but this has recently been re-written as a humanities policy (including geography). There is no separate budget for resources. The co-ordinator does not yet have a role in developing or monitoring the curriculum. This is unsatisfactory. Resources are inadequate.**

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

140. The improvement the school has made in this area since the last inspection is very good. At the time of the last inspection the standards that pupils achieved were poor as they only used computers at the end of lessons, and many did not know what was required of them. Resources at that time were old and unreliable, and staff had poor skills. The school now has up to date resources, in the main school as well as the residential houses. Staff are all trained and competent and as a result, the overall achievements of pupils seen in lessons is satisfactory. At Key Stages 4 and Post 16, as a result of good quality teaching, both by teachers and learning support assistants, pupils' achievements and the progress they make are good.

141. From analysis of the records and baseline assessment of pupils' skills in this subject it can be seen that higher attaining pupils at Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress. They are able to use a variety of pointing devices, such as, a mouse and a tracker ball. Records show that these pupils' progress from 'P' levels onto level 1 of the National Curriculum. They use the keys on a keyboard or a touch screen to access programs. They can use the enter key, delete key and space bar accurately, **but there are insufficient pieces of annotated pieces of work kept as evidence of pupils' progress over time.** At Key Stage 3, pupils' progress is also satisfactory. Assessment records show that lower attaining pupils are working on the 'P' levels statements. Through the use of 'First Keys' program they are learning the position of the letters on the keyboard. They also can control a mouse. The higher attain pupils use matching programs, and are able to understand cause and effect. These pupils are able to use a tape recorder independently.

142. At Key Stage 4 and Post 16, all pupils and students including those with the most complex difficulties are making good progress. They use a variety of programs in to support their learning in other subjects, and records show that they use symbol programs in their writing, art and drawing programs and applications, which help them, develop an understanding of number. In these key stages there are pieces of work kept to demonstrate the achievements of pupils. For example, there are fine line drawings showing the control of the mouse and eye-hand co-ordination, patterns showing pupils selection and use of colour, and the samples of work from the higher attaining pupils shows that pupils can access the internet, import clip art into a piece of work, and are beginning to use simple data bases.

Pupils' skills are developing well, and they are able to open files, print, use print preview, and save their work. At Post 16, students have written a self-evaluation using symbols software. The majority of students use tape recorders, CD players and calculators in their work and in their leisure time.

143. The quality of teaching and learning is overall satisfactory. In the few lessons seen during the inspection it was overall good, and in one lesson at Key Stage 4 which was taught by learning support assistants it was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching during the week of the inspection, but not all teachers were seen teaching this subject. **In order to be secure that teaching and learning is consistently good across the school, the school needs to keep more evidence of what pupils know, understand and can do. The characteristics of good and very good teaching,** include giving pupils clear explanations of what they are expected to do, coupled with questioning about how pupils might proceed. This helps pupils to understand what is required and to recall what they have previously learnt. In the Key Stage 4 lesson that was taught by learning support assistants, it was obvious that they have a very good knowledge of the application the pupils are using, and how the computers and printers work. They are patient when pupils insist on printing their work in a certain sequence. They wait and then coaxing ask; "Shall we try it my way now?" This tactfully diverts any potentially poor behaviour. Other teachers use praise well so that pupils become more confident and are reassured that their work is right. This results in pupils feeling proud of their work. Teachers' assess well by observation and through the use of questioning. Achievements are communicated well to the care staff in the houses, and these skills are built on in the 24-hour curriculum.

144. The curriculum has developed well since the last inspection, and is now good. It is still being developed and refined to meet the needs of all the pupils and students, **but at the moment the current planning does not provide teachers with a framework to use in planning lessons. However, the assessment and recording of achievements has yet to be fully adopted and used by all teachers, but the school recognises this. A new co-ordinator has been appointed and good start has been** made on identifying the staff training needs, and by providing school based in-service training. The role of the co-ordinator has not yet developed in to a whole school responsibility for developing the subject and managing the resources. There has been a substantial investment in resources in the last three years. The school is very well resourced with networked computers, and the next development is to link the houses with the school network so as to further pupils' achievements. The school is also fortunate in that they have a further resource – an information and communication technology manager who advises on developments.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

145. All pupils are disapplying from undertaking a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3 and 4. Since the last inspection, the school has provided French either as a planned integrated activity across the curriculum or as a discrete week in the summer term where pupils and students experience French life through a range of activities such as cooking, music and art. A new subject co-ordinator has recently been appointed and plans are now being put in place to hold another French week in the summer term. There is currently no planned assessment or accreditation for the subject. There are very few resources available for the subject other than those made by staff specifically for the French week.

MUSIC

146. There has been an unsatisfactory improvement in the provision for music since the last inspection. The quality of teaching in the subject has decreased. There is still no scheme of work for the subject, and pupils' and students' work is not adequately assessed. However, the school has improved resources for the delivery of the subject and the continued employment of a music specialist as a part-time Director of Music for the school remains a strength of curriculum provision in this area.

147. Too few lessons were observed to judge the quality of teaching and learning overall but in individual lessons the quality of both was satisfactory. Little further evidence of pupils' achievements was available from looking at pupil records, teacher planning or talking to staff. It was not possible to make an overall judgement **regarding pupil progress over time due to the lack of assessment information and the fact that many of the pupils are new to the school. Achievement in lessons was satisfactory.**

148. At Key Stage 2 pupils have a range of musical experiences related to the termly whole-school topic. Pupils can investigate instruments and respond in a variety of ways to musical stimuli. At Key Stage 3 pupils can copy sounds and make a range of sounds using different instruments. Lower attaining pupils are able to blow instruments when shown a symbol for "blow", and can control their breathing to make a sound from a recorder. Higher attaining pupils can copy a simple rhythm and use simple untuned percussion instruments. The highest attaining pupils are able to indicate which member of the class is vocalising on a pre-recorded tape of the class group and play individual keys on the piano in ascending and descending order.

149. The quality of teaching of the observed lessons was satisfactory. High expectations of both pupils' behaviour and attention, linked with consistently calm approaches, are key features of the teaching of music at the school. Relationships between staff and pupils are very good and this results in pupils who trust their teacher and are willing to experiment with new equipment in unfamiliar surroundings. For example, pupils were increasingly able to use a loud microphone in the music room as a lesson progressed. Weaknesses in the teaching of music include low expectations of pupil attainment. For example, a pupil who found blowing a recorder very easy was asked to undertake the same activity as a pupil who could not control his breath and barely made a sound. A further weakness of music provision is the use of songs that are not age-appropriate, such as nursery action rhymes.

150. **The co-ordination of the music curriculum is unsatisfactory. The subject co-ordinator for music is not a subject specialist, or a trained musician. She also has responsibility for co-ordination of a core subject of the National Curriculum and a full-time teaching responsibility. In addition, the role of the curriculum co-ordinator is currently underdeveloped and has not lead to improvements in the subject.**

151. **The provision of music as a curriculum subject at the school is restricted to Key Stage 2 and 3. The school syllabus for music consists of a list of "I can" statements. Whilst some teachers use these when planning music lessons, they do not provide a Scheme of Work for the subject. In addition, very few pupil records contain assessment carried out against the "I can" statements. It is therefore impossible to judge pupils' progress over time in music. The school should move quickly to develop a Scheme of Work for music and agree a system for assessment in the subject.**

152. A strength of music provision at the school is the employment of a part-time Director of Music. The occupant of this post is a musician with excellent skills who has a very thorough knowledge of both music and pupils with special educational needs. He undertakes individual music therapy style sessions. Pupils and students make very good progress within these sessions and this progress is recorded and evaluated using video and written reports. These sessions make a significant contribution to the spiritual development of pupils and students. The development of pupils' and students' language skills is enhanced by the consistent use of signing throughout these individual sessions. The fact that not all pupils and students have an opportunity to take part in these sessions is a matter of concern and one that the school should review in light of its equal opportunities policy.

153. The Director of Music is co-ordinating the school's involvement in the Sunfield and Community Arts Trust. The Trust is in its early stages of development but, if successful, will make a very significant contribution to both the school's music curriculum and the school's provision of extra-curricular activities. Good improvement has been made to the learning resources for music. A well-equipped specialist room is now available for music lessons and for individual therapy style sessions. However, little improvement has been made to the range of recorded music available for pupils to listen to and appraise. Resources for music are satisfactory overall.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. This subject has not improved since the last inspection. Whilst the quality and range of resources have improved, opportunities for outdoor education have reduced. A sufficient range of activities was seen during the course of the inspection to show that pupils' achievements and progress are satisfactory. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall due to the appropriateness of the activities chosen, which include some aspects of fitness and health, and control and co-ordination. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 4 as they acquire and practise new skills in ball games. By the end of Key Stage 2, the most responsive or higher attaining pupils follow simple instructions as they take part in gentle physical exercises. They tap different parts of the body on request, move their arms in different directions, and move around the hall walking quietly. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils increase their ability to follow instructions and demonstrate that they move in different ways, and at different speeds. The higher attaining pupils link together simple movements into a short sequence. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils who have been in the school the longest have overcome their anxieties and are able to climb wall bars. They throw and kick a ball accurately, use large play apparatus, and paddle in a canoe.

155. Lessons were observed in all key stages but none at Post-16, and the standard of teaching is satisfactory overall. Teaching is good at Key Stage 4, as was demonstrated in a lesson when pupils achieved well in improving their basketball skills. The teacher picked up the coaching needs of individual pupils and organised the session well, moving briskly from one activity to another. Clear demonstrations, encouragement and praise, and the use of activities with different levels of difficulty, enabled all pupils to succeed. As a result, they were interested and focused and worked hard and were able to evaluate their own progress and that of others at the end of the session. Other lessons provided examples of good teaching enabling pupils to develop a range of skills. Basic literacy skills were encouraged in a dance lesson as the teacher reinforced language associated with shape and movement, and the teacher and learning support assistants used an orienteering session well to develop pupils' speaking, listening and observational skills. On the other hand, pupils' achievements suffered on other occasions because the pace of teaching was too pedestrian. At these times, teachers do not demonstrate clearly what is required, are insecure in their knowledge of the subject and activities tend to go on for too long. As a result, pupils become disinterested and their attention and behaviour deteriorate.

156. Facilities for physical education are satisfactory, with a grassed games area and tarmac games court, although this is in need of maintenance. Indoor accommodation is satisfactory with a small, but sufficient, games room/gym and **adequate storage areas for a satisfactory range of resources. The newly appointed subject leader is not a specialist in physical education and is inexperienced in co-ordinating a subject. The subject policy is out-of-date, there is no scheme of work and assessment procedures are inadequate. As a result there are no long term plans to ensure that all aspects of the subject are taught and that pupils have experiences that enable them to make progress in improving their knowledge of the subject and associated skills. Assessment and recording procedures do not give any indication of the context in which pupils demonstrate their newly acquired abilities.**

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

157. The overall progress of pupils is good in Key Stage 3, Key Stage 4 and Post-16. This is an improvement on the previous inspection. No lessons were observed in Key Stage 2 during the week of the inspection.

158. Pupils in Key Stage 3 can recognise objects and symbols that represent Christianity, for example, a cross, a church and a picture of Jesus. They know what a church is and can recall having visited other churches, and a mosque. In Key Stage 4, pupils can express what makes them feel calm and can show this in a sensible way in role-play. Post-16 pupils can share things that are important about themselves with others in their group. Pupils' responses are good in class activities and in discussion. In a visit to a church they took photographs to use in a later lesson and showed great pleasure when the lights in the church were turned on to illuminate a mosaic. Pupils take a pride in the presentation of their work, for example, Post-16 pupils drew their own shield with illustrations to represent what is important to them. Very good use is made of the work schedules that support pupils and they make a major contribution to the good behaviour observed. Pupils respond well to each other, listening carefully and showing an interest in the activities. Pupils' responses are very good when experiences are first-hand.

159. The quality of teaching is good. The teaching is supported by detailed lessons plans with activities carefully chosen to match the interest and needs of the pupils. Good use is made of artefacts and visits to develop pupils' understanding. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution that adds to the quality of teaching and learning for pupils.

160. **There is no scheme of work for religious education to support teachers planning. This was the situation at the time of the last inspection. The school has developed a series of statements related to the development of religious education that are used as a framework for assessing pupils' progress. These are not consistently completed by all teachers and are an unsatisfactory means of assessing and recording pupil progress.**

161. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short time but has made a good start in identifying areas for development. The co-ordinator refers to the agreed syllabus to guide planning. A policy for teaching of religious education is in place. Major faith festivals are recognised and celebrated and the co-ordinator liaises with catering and care staff to arrange for pupils to taste food in the school dining room and the houses, associated with special faith celebrations. **There is no separate budget for religious education and the role of subject co-ordinator in the school is not yet developed.**

162. Resources are satisfactory and there is, for example, a good collection of artefacts representing all major faith groups. This is an improvement since the last inspection.