

INSPECTION REPORT

GLENWOOD SPECIAL SCHOOL

Beech Road, Dunstable

LEA area: Bedfordshire

Unique reference number: 109746

Headteacher: Mrs S Crosbie

Reporting inspector: Mr J Morris
23696

Dates of inspection: 29th October – 2nd November 2001

Inspection number: 197312

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beech Road Dunstable Bedfordshire
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr R Groves
Date of previous inspection:	14 th April 1997

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19322	Ms J Bedawi	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnerships with parents?
3055	Mr C Tombs	Team inspector	English Equal opportunities	
23412	Mr A Jeffs	Team inspector	Mathematics	
10779	Mr E Craven	Team inspector	Science Physical education	
4989	Mr L Lewis	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Special educational needs	How good are curricular and other opportunities
32055	Mr G Davies	Team inspector	Art and design Design and technology	
22821	Ms L Wolstencroft	Team inspector	Geography History	
23549	Mrs H Eadington	Team inspector	English as an additional language Music Religious education	How high are standards? Attitudes, values and personal development

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Glenwood Special School is in Dunstable, Bedfordshire. There are a total of 122 full-time equivalent children and pupils between two and eleven years of age, including 88 boys and 34 girls. There are 115 full-time children and pupils and 12 part-time children. There are 110 pupils of compulsory school age. Thirty-five per cent of the pupils have severe learning difficulties (SLD), twenty-three per cent have profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and forty-two per cent have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The percentage of pupils with ASD has increased in recent years. Thirty-four per cent of the pupils have English as an additional language (EAL). Nearly all the pupils have a statement of special educational needs and a small number of part-time children are being assessed. The main site is in Beech Road, Dunstable. Children in the nursery and reception, and a small number of pupils in Year 1, attend the school's Early Years Centre in Houghton Regis. This provision will be re-located to Beech Road in April 2002. From September 2001, the school has established a satellite class at Millvale Middle School. This is one element of the school's extensive programme of social and educational inclusion. About 50 pupils attend lessons at mainstream primary schools, involving a large number of schools in South Bedfordshire and Luton, with pupils attending Glenwood from across this area. Another satellite class is planned for after Easter 2002. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below average and, in some cases, very low.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many strengths. All children and pupils make good progress. The teaching is very good in the nursery and reception and good in Years 1 to 6. Leadership and management are very good. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Children in nursery and reception and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is very good in nursery and reception and it is good in Years 1 to 6.
- The headteacher provides excellent leadership to the work of the school. The teachers with key responsibilities and school governors are very effective in their respective roles.
- The arrangements for social and educational inclusion are very good. The school meets the needs of different groups of children and pupils, including those with ASD, SLD, PMLD and EAL, well.
- The children and pupils have very good attitudes to school and their personal development is very good.
- The school provides a good range of learning opportunities, including very good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

What could be improved

- School transport.
- Health and safety procedures are not rigorous enough in a few areas.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was previously inspected in April 1997. Overall improvement has been very good. School transport remains an issue affecting punctuality and pupils' learning at the start of the day. The school addressed the other three issues for action very well. There have been significant improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership and management.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	C	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	B		

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

All children and pupils achieve well overall, in relation to their learning difficulties, educational and personal needs, ethnicity and capabilities. Progress over time is very good in communication, language and literacy and personal and social development in the nursery and reception, and speaking and listening and art in Years 1 to 6. Progress over time is satisfactory in knowledge and understanding of the world in the nursery and reception, and writing, geography and history in Years 1 to 6. Progress is good in all other areas of learning in the nursery and reception, and all other subjects in Years 1 to 6.

Children in the nursery and reception make very good progress, and pupils in Years 1 to 6 make good progress, towards the targets set in their IEPs, including targets for behaviour.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The children and pupils enjoy school and nearly all of them are very keen and enthusiastic.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Some pupils present very challenging behaviours but they respond well to the clear expectations of the staff. Those pupils who attend mainstream schools for some lessons behave exceptionally well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between staff and pupils and amongst the pupils are very good. The pupils respond well when given responsibilities appropriate to their needs and capabilities. Pupils treat resources carefully and many of them demonstrate personal qualities, such as kindness and care for others.
Attendance	Rates of attendance are good for a school of this type and unauthorised absences are at an acceptable level. Punctuality is dependent on school transport and most days the start of the school day is affected by this and this is unsatisfactory.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6
Quality of teaching	Very good	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.

A hundred and fifteen lessons were graded during the inspection. The teaching in the nursery and reception was very good overall and it was always at least good. The teaching in Years 1 to 6 was good overall and it was very good or excellent in a significant number of lessons. There were a small number of lessons where the teaching was unsatisfactory.

The teaching of English is good overall and often very good. This is because the school places a particular emphasis on the key skills of communication and literacy in all lessons and at other times during the school day. The teaching of mathematics is good, and the teaching of science is very good. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good overall with some very good features.

Throughout the school staff are very successfully teaching the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy and have very high expectations that all children and pupils will work hard, behave well and learn well. In relation to their varied and often complex learning difficulties, the children and pupils show a very high degree of independence in their learning. The school meets the needs of the different groups of pupils effectively. The extensive arrangements for educational and social inclusion are very effective and there are plans to extend this very good practice.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The school meets the statutory requirements for the foundation stage, National Curriculum and religious education. There is a very good programme of inclusion opportunities with excellent links with many other schools, particularly mainstream primary schools, and support services. There are insufficient extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Staff provide a very good model of English through speech, signing, gesture and the use of symbols. The specific funding and staffing available are used to good effect. There are very good resources.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good in all aspects. The school is very successful in promoting the pupils' personal development. There are good arrangements for collective worship, prayer and reflection. The school has very good procedures to promote good behaviour, positive relationships and respect for the feelings and values of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good educational and personal support for the pupils. The headteacher and governors have been informed of aspects of health and safety which require attention. There are good procedures to assess what the pupils know, understand and can do and this information is used well by teachers in their planning.

The school has a very good partnership with parents. There are very positive links between school and home. The school provides very good information for parents about the school's provision and how their child is getting on. The home-school diaries are used to very good effect.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher is an extremely effective leader. There is an excellent educational direction to the work of the school and its aims and values are fully reflected in its day-to-day practice. Key staff are very effective in carrying out their responsibilities and there is a very strong sense of teamwork.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governors are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities and duties and fulfil them well. They make a very significant contribution to the work and life of the school and have a very good understanding of what it does well and what needs to be done next.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school carefully analyses its performance using all available data and, as far as possible, compares how well it is doing with other schools.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Specific grants such as Standards Funds and funding for pupils with EAL are used very well. The use of modern technology is good and improving.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all good overall. The school applies the principles of best value well.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • They feel comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem • The school is well led and managed • The teaching is good • Their child is making good progress 	There were no aspects of the school's work which a significant number of parents expressed concerns about

The inspection team agrees with the parents' very positive views of the school. They are surprised that only one parent raised the matter of school transport, which she described as, 'A massive problem. I do it myself. It's the only solution.'

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. All children and pupils achieve well overall, in relation to their learning difficulties, educational and personal needs and capabilities. This judgement applies equally to children and pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), autistic spectrum disorders (ASD) and English as an additional language (EAL). Attainment on entry to the school, whether this is into the nursery or later, is well below average for most children, and in some cases, particularly pupils with PMLD, it is very low. Pupils' attainments remain well below average at seven and eleven years of age.
2. Children in the nursery and reception make very good progress over time in communication, language and literacy, personal and social development and towards the targets set in their IEPs, including targets for behaviour. The children make good progress in mathematical development, creative development and physical development, and satisfactory progress in knowledge and understanding of the world. These different rates of progress reflect the different priority given to the different areas of learning. The provision at the Early Years Centre gives particularly high priority to basic communication skills, developing personal and social skills and improving behaviour. This is judged to be highly appropriate given due consideration to the nature of the children's learning difficulties and inspection evidence is that the school is very effectively meeting the needs of these young children. For example, the use of signs, symbols and photographs and individual workstations enables children with ASD to understand routines, group activities and individual tasks. Very clear explanations, physical prompts and effective use of specialised resources maximise the participation of children with PMLD in classroom activities. All of the children mix together in one of the classrooms and the outside areas during play times and this is particularly effective in promoting social development and provides good opportunities for physical development.
3. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 make very good progress in speaking and listening, personal, social and health education and art and design. They also make very good progress towards the targets set in their IEPs, including targets for behaviour. They make satisfactory progress in writing, geography and history. Progress is good in all other subjects.
4. Pupils with English as an additional language (EAL) work to the speaking and listening targets in their individual education plans. These targets are specific to their needs and they are reviewed regularly. All pupils with EAL make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous learning. By the time they have been in school for a year most pupils' proficiency in English is at a similar level to their understanding and use of their mother tongue.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5. Pupils' attitudes to school and learning are very good. The school has high expectations of pupils' behaviour and involvement, and all staff are quick to praise and celebrate their success. Parents report that their children enjoy coming to school. On arrival, pupils settle happily into their classroom routines and usually join

enthusiastically in a wide range of activities. Photographs, for example in their Records of Achievement, show the pleasure pupils gain from the many learning opportunities they are given.

6. Pupils' behaviour is good. Staff manage challenging behaviour well, through anticipating and defusing the majority of potentially volatile situations. On occasions when lessons are disturbed by pupils' behaviour, staff use a range of appropriate strategies effectively and consistently to make sure that all pupils and staff are safe. There is a good school policy on restraint with which all staff are familiar. IEPs include very precise attainable targets for pupils who have behaviour management programmes, and these are used well in monitoring and recording their progress. The management and monitoring of pupils' behaviour have improved well since the previous inspection. Pupils participating in lessons in mainstream classes, as part of the extensive inclusion programme, behave exceptionally well. There were no exclusions in the previous school year and there have been none in the current school year.
7. There are very good relationships between the staff and pupils, based on warmth and mutual respect. Pupils are given responsibilities that are appropriate to their needs and abilities, and they are eager to do jobs such as returning registers to the office and helping at snack times. They respond very well to the many opportunities they are given for making choices. This is clearly seen at lunchtimes when, if possible, they choose their meals from a selection at the kitchen servery, and clear away their plates afterwards. Pupils are taken on a variety of visits including residential trips, which enhance their social skills and personal development. They benefit significantly from the inclusion opportunities they have in mainstream schools, particularly in terms of their social development.
8. Pupils listen respectfully to their teachers and are willing to take turns in discussions and when using equipment. Nearly all pupils treat resources with care and share them amicably. Pupils work well together, for example when joining in role-play about the miracle of the 'Loaves and Fishes'. Many are kind and helpful to friends who need assistance, as was seen during a music lesson, when one girl went out of her way to dance with another pupil who was in a wheelchair.
9. Attendance is good and the majority of pupils attend regularly. In the week before half term seven classes had one hundred per cent attendance. Most absence is due to illness or medical treatments. A few holidays are taken in term time, but only in exceptional circumstances. Unauthorised absence is in line with that recorded by most mainstream primary schools. Registers meet requirements. However, punctuality is unsatisfactory, due to unresolved long-term difficulties with the transport systems. This was an issue at the time of the last inspection. This has a negative impact on pupils' well being and on their learning and this is unsatisfactory. Buses are frequently late causing concern to pupils and parents. The start of lessons is disrupted. When buses arrive early this causes congestion in the school car park and pupils have to sit waiting until the staff are ready to receive them at the start of the school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. A hundred and fifteen lessons were graded during the inspection. The quality of teaching overall was good with many very good features. It was satisfactory or

better in 97 per cent of the lessons, good or better in 82 per cent and very good or better in 42 per cent.

11. The teaching in the nursery and reception was very good overall and it was always at least good. It was very good or excellent in 62 per cent of the observations. There are many strengths in the quality of teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage. Teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the Foundation Stage curriculum and the needs of the children. The teaching of the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy is very good. Teachers' have very high expectations that the children will learn well and they manage uncooperative and challenging behaviour very effectively. The teachers use different methods and strategies very well to help the different groups of pupils learn.
12. The teaching in Years 1 to 6 was good overall and it was very good or excellent in a significant number of lessons. Throughout the school, staff are very successfully teaching the basic skills of communication, literacy and numeracy and have very high expectations that all children and pupils will work hard, behave well and learn well. In relation to their varied and often complex learning difficulties, the pupils show a very high degree of independence in their learning. This is a major success given that many of the pupils have very significant difficulties communicating and socialising with others.
13. The teaching of English is good overall and often very good. This is because the school places a particular emphasis on the key skills of communication and literacy in all lessons and at other times during the school day. The teaching of mathematics is good, and the teaching of science is very good. The teaching of personal, social and health education is good overall with some very good features. Information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education are taught well.
14. The school meets the needs of the different groups of pupils effectively with many strong features. The school has adopted the particular method known as TEACCH for pupils with ASD. This is effective in meeting these pupils' particular needs and, as more staff become more skilled and competent in the method, it is being delivered more consistently. Pupils with PMLD are taught very well by the classroom staff and other professionals make a particularly strong contribution to the learning of these pupils. The high level of staffing, skill and sensitivity in adult-pupil interactions and use of specialised resources all contribute to the pupils' learning and well-being.
15. Pupils with EAL are taught well. All teachers ensure that they are given opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills. Demonstrations, explanations and signing are used well to give pupils clear models of what is required. The part-time specialist teacher and learning support assistant liaise effectively with class teachers, and, when necessary, pupils are withdrawn from class for short periods, to focus on aspects of language and literacy. Very good quality multicultural resources are used to support pupils' learning in a number of subject areas.
16. The extensive arrangements for educational and social inclusion are very effective and there are plans to extend this very good practice. About 50 pupils, with SLD or ASD, attend lessons at mainstream primary schools and these experiences significantly extend their learning skills.

17. There were a small number of lessons where the teaching was unsatisfactory. These were lessons in ICT and music in classes with Year 2 and Year 3 pupils, and lessons in physical education in classes with Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The shortcomings in these lessons were to do with teachers' planning and the management of pupils. There is some variability in the use and contribution of support staff which amounts to a minor weakness in the teaching in Years 1 to 6. At best, the role of all adults in the classroom is clearly defined and this important resource is used very effectively to help the pupils learn. In a few lessons, it was not clear exactly what the role of the support staff was. In one lesson, it appeared that the role was to manage difficult behaviours but the behaviour was good so the learning support assistant wasn't clear what her role was.

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

18. The quality and range of the learning and development opportunities is good. The provision for children in the foundation stage is very good and the provision for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is good, including those with PMLD, SLD, ASD and EAL. The requirements of the National Curriculum and for religious education are met in full. There is a very clear whole curriculum policy which embraces the academic side of school life as well as those additional aspects of medical and therapy care, which enable pupils to access the full range of learning opportunities. Communication skills and personal autonomy are given particular priority. Pupils of all abilities benefit from the content and organisation of the curriculum, to which all have equal access. It provides relevant and effective learning opportunities that fully meet their social, intellectual, physical and personal needs.
19. The nationally recognised TEACCH method has been successfully adapted and implemented as the school's approach to the organisation of the curriculum and teaching for pupils with ASD. The headteacher and other senior staff have close links with the University of North Carolina, U.S.A. and have given a presentation, to leading professionals in this particular field of education, on using the method to deliver the National Curriculum.
20. There is considerable disruption to learning at the beginning of the school day when the irregular arrival of the transport frequently results in the late arrival of the pupils. There are times when pupils miss the first 20 minutes of teaching time and some are not settled by the time the 9.30 a.m. lesson begins. This is most significant in the classes for pupils with ASD because these pupils require regular routines and time to settle and prepare themselves for learning. Transport was a key issue in the last inspection and it remains a serious concern because it has a negative impact on equality of opportunity and the length of the school day.
21. The provision for personal, social and health education is very good and this has a very positive impact on the pupils' learning. There have been significant improvements in the last year and the school is still developing this provision. There is a sex education policy, with a clear rationale stating the school's aims and the areas of the curriculum where it will be taught. All pupils experience the sex education programme at a level commensurate with their age, and physical and cognitive development. The school's medical staff offer further discrete advice at the onset of puberty. The misuse of drugs is covered in a similar way and is raised at an appropriate point in time through the science schemes of work.

22. There is a very good and effective strategy for planning and teaching literacy skills. The school has introduced 'communication passports', which present a clearer indication of where a pupil is in the development of language skills, including for those who use them, the use of signs and symbols. Many pupils are encouraged to take home their reading books and a few have requested that written homework be given. There is a good and improving strategy for planning and teaching numeracy skills. Pupils are given good opportunities to use their number skills in other subject areas.
23. All pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Most of them have a statement of special educational needs, but there are a small number of very young children in the nursery and reception who attend school part-time and are being assessed. All statements are reviewed annually, except for children in the Foundation Stage who are reviewed every six months,. Parents are fully involved in the review procedures, as are the appropriate professionals who advise on specialist input and any modifications which might be required. Pupils' needs are complex and varied and very high quality support is provided, by a wide range of supporting professionals, particularly for those pupils with PMLD and SLD. This includes input by physiotherapists, occupational therapists, speech therapists, the school nurses and other medical staff, educational psychologists and music therapists. They work directly with pupils and support and advise classroom staff very effectively to ensure that the pupils' complex needs do not prevent them accessing the full range of learning opportunities.
24. Many pupils are included in the school's excellent and wide-ranging learning opportunities to develop social and educational inclusion. From September this year, a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils with SLD has been established in their own classroom at a middle school. A carefully planned programme of participation in lessons, assemblies and lunchtimes with mainstream peers is being implemented. A second inclusion class, for pupils in Years 2 and 3 with ASD, will start at a different primary school immediately after Easter 2002. Two further inclusion classes are planned in the near future.
25. The school's inclusion programme provides extensive opportunities for a considerable number of pupils to participate in lessons on a part-time basis in mainstream schools and this significantly enriches their learning. This has only been possible through the development of positive links with a large number of mainstream schools in South Bedfordshire and Luton. The school has excellent relationships with these partner institutions. Headteachers, at the host schools, are enthusiastic and speak very highly of the collaborative working and the high quality of the professional support given to the pupils by the Glenwood staff. Inspectors visited several of these schools when Glenwood pupils were joining in lessons. There is substantial evidence that these experiences contribute significantly to the pupils' social development and extend their learning in the skills of key communication, literacy and numeracy. The pupils' attendance at mainstream settings is carefully monitored against their learning opportunities at Glenwood in terms of curricular breadth, balance and relevance. These inclusion opportunities are most successful when pupils attend a mainstream school that is situated close to their home and has a population reflecting their own cultural background. In this respect, equality of access and opportunity for all pupils, irrespective of their particular special needs, is very good indeed.
26. The curricular provision for pupils with EAL is recognised as an important issue by the school because of the multi-cultural nature of its catchment area, and the particular concerns about pupils with ASD developing emerging communication skills in two different languages. Staffing provision has been made, using special funding available to the school, and efforts are continuing to extend this to cover the

- first language of all pupils with EAL. Procedures, such as the good individual targets set for all pupils and the good quality of teaching, show that pupils' needs are identified and resolved in the same way as those of others with additional needs.
27. Extra-curricular activities are satisfactory. A lunchtime music club is provided but was not running at the time of the inspection when no activities were offered. Many other schools of this type offer organised lunchtime clubs and activities, for example for sports, art, music and computers. It is unusual for this to happen after school because of transport arrangements and the large geographical areas they cover. There are good opportunities for pupils to participate in residential experiences, which significantly contribute to their social and moral development. The contribution of the community to pupils' learning is very good with local businesses and services such as fire and police being helpful and consistent in their support. The local zoo welcomes pupils and works closely with teaching staff on projects, which include zoo staff visiting the school.
 28. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual development. The school is fulfilling its statutory obligation in respect of collective worship. All pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship and reflection in the classroom and, on a weekly basis, pupils in Years 1 and 2 on Thursday afternoons and pupils in Years 3 to 6 on Friday afternoons. These activities aim to bring the pupils together and develop a sense of belonging and sharing of values. Spiritual issues feature in religious education lessons. There is a strong sense of purpose in the school. A coherent set of values and principles are promoted consistently by staff and accepted by pupils. Routines and relationships are based on mutual care and trust. The school pays due regard to the multicultural and multi-faith community and the concept of God is taught through looking at aspects of different celebrations, for example, Christmas, Easter and Diwali. The celebration of these religious celebrations and others give pupils an opportunity to experience spiritual awareness.
 29. A prominent display of the main places of worship for the main world religions in the school reinforces the pupils' knowledge of different forms of worship. This is supplemented by educational visits. The weekly assemblies have a spiritual theme, for example pupils read and acted out the story of the 'Five Dinosaurs' to demonstrate the concept of friendship, and despite the wide range of the pupils' learning difficulties, this made a significant contribution to their spiritual development. Subjects other than religious education make a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development. In mathematics, for example, the principles of sharing and appreciating the work of others are taught.
 30. Arrangements for developing pupils' moral awareness are extensive and very effective. The weekly assemblies have a moral theme that is reinforced in the classroom, using pictures and symbols to help pupils with severe communication difficulties. In many cases, staff carry a set of cards around the school with them in case a pupil needs correction or help at play or lunch. Pupils are expected to develop a sense of personal responsibility and respect for others. These concepts are taught as part of the whole-school policy on behaviour, involving every member of the staff in lessons and at other times. Pupils are encouraged to be polite, respectful and considerate to their peers and adults. Staff take every opportunity to remind pupils of the consequences of any unacceptable behaviour and establish the difference between right and wrong.
 31. The school's very good provision for the pupils' social development is comprehensive and closely linked to the exemplary relationships within the school community. Pupils respond well to the positive atmosphere that successfully promotes increased self-confidence and self-worth. Pupils genuinely care and show

real concern for each other, for example if one is unwell or sad by holding their hands. The school's extensive arrangements for pupils to participate in lessons at mainstream schools, and for mainstream pupils to visit Beech Road, make a major contribution to the pupils' social development.

32. The opportunities to promote the pupils' cultural development are very good and they pervade the school curriculum. Pupil's cultural awareness is enhanced through the study of the different religious celebrations. The week's visit to school by the 'Osagyefo African Ensemble' gave the pupils enriching experiences of dance, musical instruments, costumes and art activities. Cultural diversity is valued, for example pupils dress in the costumes of other countries and they learn about different food eaten around the world. A multi-cultural day in March 2001 included workshops in pizza making, Afro-Caribbean story telling, Mendhi hand painting and Asian dance. Two staff training sessions raised their awareness and understanding of the cultural background and religious beliefs of the families of the pupils. The school has an extensive programme of visits to places of interest to develop the pupils' understanding of the world around them and their appreciation of the rich cultural inheritance of the area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

33. The quality of educational guidance and personal support provided to all children and pupils is very good, reflecting the extremely happy and positive learning environment. Procedures for promoting behaviour and preventing bullying are very good, as is the monitoring of pupil's personal development. There has been significant improvement in assessment procedures and academic monitoring since the last inspection, and these are now good. The monitoring of attendance is good. A few areas related to health and safety procedures are unsatisfactory and were discussed with the senior management team and school governors during the inspection. Child protection arrangements are good.
34. The support staff are well aware of the often complex needs and nature of disability experienced by their pupils. They work hard, with teachers and other professionals, such as physiotherapists, to support and encourage pupils from all backgrounds and cultures, so that they achieve as much as possible. Even the smallest achievement is celebrated and shared. Pupils have positive relationships with learning support staff and can often be seen together, happily singing songs as they move around the school.
35. The monitoring of behaviour and the prevention of bullying are very good. The staff remind pupils informally about acceptable behaviour, using their positive relationships with pupils to very good effect. Staff use consistent strategies following the good quality behaviour policy, for example, saying 'No' firmly together with signing if needed, explaining why the behaviour is unacceptable. The introduction of the TEACCH method with ASD pupils is successfully improving behaviour. This consistency is having a very positive impact on the vast majority of pupils, so that they are, for example, increasingly able to work and relate well together in small groups. Class teachers keep detailed records of pupils who do not respond as quickly. This system is to be reviewed to closely match school policy. There are individual behaviour plans for the few pupils with significant difficulties. Behaviour targets are agreed, made known to pupils and shared with parents who reinforce them at home. Parents greatly appreciate this involvement. The school's inclusion programme provides extensive opportunities for a considerable number of pupils to

participate in lessons in mainstream schools. The school is a happy community, with any incidents dealt with very quickly. No bullying was observed. There have been no exclusions.

36. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is very good. The building of pupils' self-esteem, confidence, independence and sense of value is given the highest priority at all times. Staff use praise very well indeed to reward good work and desired behaviour. This is very successfully increasing pupils' confidence, independence and awareness of their own achievements. For example, a pupil with ASD proudly showing the written work completed during a literacy lesson at a mainstream school, or the effort and perseverance of young children with PMLD, listening and looking towards a computer, or pushing a button to control different light effects in the sensory area. Independence is carefully fostered, through duties such as returning registers or clearing dinner plates. The inclusion programme provides many good examples, such as pupils showing their friends, visiting from a mainstream school, where to wash their hands. Pupils attending mainstream schools often only need minimal reassurance from their learning support assistant, when working or playing with mainstream pupils. Very detailed written records of personal development are kept and shared with parents in termly evaluations and by the excellent use of the daily home school diaries.
37. The monitoring of attendance is good. The school is vigilant in seeking answers to any unexplained absences, using home school diaries, or sending letters if there is no response. The educational welfare officer is available to offer support to families experiencing difficulties. Punctuality is a concern because the current transport system is unsatisfactory.
38. Daily procedures to ensure pupils' welfare are managed well. Pupils receive regular medical attention from the two on-site nurses. Accident books are properly kept. There are good toileting facilities and staff are sensitive to pupil privacy and dignity. All staff have been trained well in feeding and assisting pupils at lunchtimes, and many pupils have formalised individual feeding programmes. Classroom and kitchen staff make full use of parental information and guidance about food allergies, special diets or techniques they have found successful at home.
39. Arrangements for child protection are good. The designated person is experienced, passing updated information to staff. Local authority guidance is followed. The school is aware that its own policy requires review and updating. There are two children on the 'at risk' register and one looked-after child. Restricted access to sensitive records protects confidentiality and these are kept securely. Relationships with different boroughs and support agencies are very good.
40. The school undertakes required health and safety practices and checks. There is a health and safety policy. The headteacher and governing body have been informed of issues noted during inspection.
41. The last inspection report identified assessment procedures as a matter of concern. Since that time, the school has made very good improvements in this aspect of its work. Procedures are good and the school is now carefully monitoring its recently introduced new assessment and recording policy. A particularly good feature of this policy is the way in which the school has combined a range of formats to provide assessment procedures for the core subjects, which are both detailed and very practical. It provides a sound basis for identifying the attainment and progress of

- each pupil. There is no similar process for the non-core subjects, but the school plans to develop this once the piloting of the core is complete.
42. Early data collected in this way is already being used to modify the curriculum and adapt individual programmes. Computer software is being used to collate and analyse pupils' levels and progress over time. As more information is collected the school will have a strong basis for monitoring achievement. This information also feeds into comprehensive and specific information for parents.
 43. Most teachers make good use of the assessment information to monitor pupils' academic progress and guide their planning and teaching. The pupils' individual files, with annotated records, provide useful information about how well pupils are achieving in terms of the National Curriculum and IEPs. Teachers record their observations and assessments in their own way and this is sensible given the different teaching styles. All of the information is brought together in a consistent way and reviewed on a termly basis by the assessment co-ordinator. The inspection team was particularly impressed with the 'communication passport' which provided an extremely valuable snapshot of the interactive skills of each pupil. This represents innovative and effective work. There is still some work to be done to ensure that the quality of teacher records is of a uniformly detailed nature. In some classes learning support assistants are used well to make on-the-spot assessment observations of pupils and this good practice should now be implemented in all classes throughout the school.
 44. There is good involvement of pupils in compiling the 'Year Books' which record and annotate examples of individual progress. A few pupils participate in their own annual reviews. However, pupil involvement in target setting and the review process is underdeveloped. The school has plans to increase this aspect of pupil involvement.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

45. The school has a very good partnership with its parents, working hard and very successfully to provide support for the whole family, so that education at home continues, building on learning at school. This is largely enabled by the excellent two-way communication through the home school diaries, very good relationships and strategies such as home visits before children start school. Parents are welcomed warmly when they visit the school.
46. There is a highly effective and very well established programme to ensure that parents are fully supported and involved. Home visits are made before children start school, to establish positive relationships and to get to know each child. The Foundation Stage department has introduced regular coffee afternoons, inviting specialists to talk to parents informally on aspects of care and education, including communication, diet, dental care, toileting and speech therapy. These are greatly appreciated by parents, offering them useful guidance and new ideas, as well as bringing parents together. Much support is provided for parents, whether it be in applying for grants, getting in touch with local disability support groups, helping parents to accept their child's disability, or through bereavement counselling, that is sometimes, sadly, required. The school is always ready to listen.
47. There is a well-established 'Friends Association', who very effectively raise considerable funds for the school through social and fundraising events like the

Summer and Christmas Bazaars. Plans are in place for Christmas fundraising and the children's Christmas parties.

48. The quality of information provided for parents is very good. Parents receive regular informative newsletters. The prospectus and annual governors' report in particular, are detailed, giving a thorough insight into school life and events, illustrated with pupil's drawings and photographs. However, the headteacher has been informed that several items of required information are not included. Parents are fully informed of their child's progress through a very good, comprehensive system of reporting, a significant improvement since the last report. They are involved in annual reviews, and receive copies of individual education plans, termly evaluation sheets linked to all aspects of learning and personal development, and an annual report. Targets are suitable and achievable for each child. They are set and reviewed very regularly. Pupils' successes are shared with parents and the highest support offered to help pupils achieve their targets, so that their quality of life and learning is enhanced. All pupils have a Record of Achievement containing significant achievements, often illustrated by high-quality photographs. Parents have the opportunity to attend two formal progress meetings a year and there is also an open day. Staff are always available to parents at other times, although, quite properly, it is not considered appropriate for parents to arrive unannounced expecting to visit classrooms.
49. The contribution to, and impact of, parents' involvement in their children's learning is very good. The extremely detailed daily two-way communication through home school diaries, is excellent. Staff and parents have established close, supportive and positive relationships through these diaries. Staff provide detailed information about each child's day, informing parents about what has been taught and writing about the child's response, positive or negative. Parents, for their part, provide equal detail of, for example, any problems with transport, or children's attitudes and behaviour at home, or any illness or upset that may carry over into the next school day. Many questions are asked and answered by both parents and teachers. This provides an excellent all round picture of the children, that is of immense benefit to both parents and staff, enabling a significant depth of understanding, so that the best possible outcomes are made possible. Parents are invited to attend meetings, for example about the teaching of the sex education programme, or to learn basic signing. Homework is provided on an individual basis, appropriate to pupil's needs, usually in response to parental request. Staff have generally found that this works well, enhancing pupil's self-esteem. Younger children take books home and some pupils follow speech or physiotherapy programmes at home.
50. The school staff are very aware that a significant minority of parents do not have English as their first language. For this reason it makes very good use of the specialist teacher and local interpreters and translators to make sure that reports and letters are understood by all parents, and that, for example, information at annual reviews is thoroughly considered. Parents of pupils with EAL make a valuable contribution to the school with cookery demonstrations, Mendhi printing and story telling in both their first language and English.
51. The parents' views of the school are very positive. They are very supportive of the inclusion programme. Parental permission is sought before pupils can participate. Many parents speak of significant improvement and progress in their children's attitudes and learning. They are happy with the quality of teaching and the open, honest and positive leadership of the headteacher. They are rightly concerned about the disorganisation of the transport system, with a good number of parents

deciding to bring children to school themselves, to avoid ongoing upset for their children. However, the majority of parents have no option other than using school transport. Many parents would be pleased to see more activities for pupils during lunchtimes. The partnership with parents has strengthened significantly since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

52. The headteacher is an extremely effective leader. With the senior management team, she provides an excellent educational direction to the work of the school. Its aims and values are fully reflected in its day-to-day practice. The school has a very clear sense of purpose in meeting the needs of the wide range of pupils and is at the forefront of initiatives for social and educational inclusion of pupils with special educational needs within the authority. The headteacher has played an extremely significant role in developments in this work since her appointment in September 2000.
53. Staff with management responsibilities are very effective in carrying out their responsibilities. The heads of department, other members of the senior management team and subject leaders have clearly defined roles and carry out their respective responsibilities diligently. The headteacher, curriculum manager and some subject co-ordinators have undertaken systematic lesson observations and there is a clear plan to provide increasing opportunities for other subject co-ordinators to do so. The school curriculum and individual education plans are rigorously monitored and evaluated by senior staff. There is a very strong sense of teamwork. However, the school has been rather slow in adopting and implementing the new arrangements for Performance Management. This has been largely due to the lack of a permanent deputy headteacher and long-term absence of another member of the senior management team. As a result, staff development is not always provided in a systematic and rigorous manner. However, there have been some very good whole staff training packages, for example related to managing very challenging behaviour and implementing the TEACCH method.
54. The school benefits from the contribution of a very effective governing body. The governors are fully aware of their statutory responsibilities and duties and fulfil them well. There is a new governor who has taken on responsibility for health and safety who is keen to fulfil this role effectively. The school is well placed to address the health and safety matters identified during the inspection by this governor working closely with the school's health and safety officer and site manager. The governors are very active in their involvement in school self-evaluation and development. They have a very good understanding of what it does well and what needs to be done next. Some governors visit the school very regularly during the school day and observe teaching. They use an observation form with clear criteria. Following each observation, the governor reports their findings to the headteacher and then sends a copy of the report to the teacher concerned. This is a very good example of governors becoming involved in the monitoring of the school's work.
55. The staff and governors work very well together in the production of the school improvement plan and monitoring progress towards each of the targets contained in it. The school carefully analyses its performance using all available data and, as far as possible, compares how well it is doing with other schools. Use has been made of nationally produced materials in carrying out school self-evaluation and the results of this activity have informed staff development and communication with parents.

56. Financial planning and control are very good. There are very good plans to reduce the significant underspend in the budget. Some of this funding was inherited from the previous headteacher and a large amount of it has been allocated to identified building and resource developments in the next two years. For example the Early Years department has to move to the main site in May 2002 because the existing accommodation has been allocated for another purpose by the local education authority. The school administrator plays a significant role in planning and monitoring the budget with the headteacher and governors' finance committee. The other office staff ensure smooth running of the school and close liaison between the three sites and numerous mainstream schools involved in inclusion activities. Specific grants such as Standards Funds and funding for pupils with EAL are used very well in accordance with their stated purposes. For example, a part-time teacher and learning support assistant work well with individuals and groups of pupils with EAL, and liaise closely with colleagues. The school is seeking to extend this provision to include support in the pupils' mother tongues. The staff training programme includes multi-ethnic issues, including recent legal requirements. Visitors from ethnic minority groups and a wide range of high quality resources which reflect the pupils' home backgrounds, are used well to support the learning and personal development of these pupils.
57. The use of modern technology is good and improving. Computers are used well in school administration and financial management. Highly specialised equipment is used very effectively in the classes for pupils with PMLD. The school applies the principles of best value well.
58. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are all good overall. A high staff turnover since the last inspection has been due to some staff gaining promotion elsewhere, some staff moving out of the area and some staff having children. The school has been able to replace those teachers and support staff who have left with good quality staff. There are very good arrangements for the induction of new staff, particularly newly qualified teachers and the school is providing considerable support for two unqualified teachers with their training, including experience in other schools, towards fully qualified status. The school has been unable to appoint a deputy head for some time. The governors are pursuing this appointment but have strict criteria which they correctly insist must be met. The staff successfully teach subjects such as science, art and design, and design and technology in the classrooms, as they do in most primary schools, both mainstream and special, without specialist rooms. The school does benefit from a good specialist facility for food studies. The range of specialised equipment around the school, particularly for the pupils with PMLD, is good and used very well by classroom staff. Specialist facilities such as the hydrotherapy pool and the sensory room are used well, as is the accommodation for physiotherapy.
59. The school was previously inspected in April 1997. Overall improvement has been very good. School transport remains an issue. The school addressed the other three issues for action very well. They were related to the monitoring of the curriculum and pupils' progress, monitoring and costing of the school development plan, and procedures for managing and monitoring pupil behaviour. In addition and most significantly, there have been considerable improvements in the quality of teaching and leadership and management and this has resulted in better achievement by the pupils. Taking these factors into consideration, the school provides good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Key issues for action

60. In order to improve standards of achievement and pupils' welfare, the headteacher and governors should now:

(1) Lengthen the school day and improve punctuality, providing a good start to the day for all pupils by:

- renewing their negotiations about school transport with the local education authority to ensure prompt arrival at school by all vehicles at the correct time;
- starting school earlier.

(Paragraphs 9, 20, 51 and 114)

(2) Address the health and safety issues identified during the inspection and discussed with the senior management team and the Governing Body.

(Paragraphs 33 and 55)

Minor issues

61. The headteacher and governors should:

i. Improve the use of support staff in the classroom by:

- carrying out a rigorous review of the role of support staff so that it is clear what they should do to support teaching and learning at all times;
- including this in teachers' lesson plans.

(Paragraph 17)

ii. Improve Performance Management procedures by implementing the national requirements and recommendations more quickly;

(Paragraph 54)

iii. Increasing the range of extra-curricular activities or clubs provided during lunchtime and considering the possibility of offering such activities after school.

(Paragraph 27)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	115
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	38	46	17	4	0	0
Percentage	9	33	40	15	3	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	127
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	35

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	37

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	3
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	7

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data - Early Years	7.7
School data - Pupils with ASD	3.8
School data - Pupils with SLD or PMLD	6.0

Unauthorised absence	%
School data - Early Years	0.0
School data- Pupils with ASD	0.6
School data - Pupils with SLD or PMLD	0.9

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	10
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	3
Chinese	0
White	84
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table only includes pupils of compulsory school age.

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: YN – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.3
Average class size	6.7

Education support staff: YN – Y6

Total number of education support staff	36
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1028

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	1,596,515
Total expenditure	1,499,964
Expenditure per pupil	11,811
Balance brought forward from previous year	276,855
Balance carried forward to next year	373,406

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	10
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate = 21%

Number of questionnaires sent out	127
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	62	31	4	0	4
My child is making good progress in school.	38	58	0	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	38	54	4	0	4
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	23	15	0	12
The teaching is good.	62	35	0	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	15	8	0	0
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.	46	42	12	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	54	38	8	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	65	35	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	35	0	8	15
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	31	0	8	15

Please note that the responses to some questions may not total 100 per cent because some parents left all options blank.

One parent expressed great concerns about school transport. Other comments made by parents very closely matched the results of the survey shown in the table.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

62. The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good overall. All of the children in the nursery and reception and a small number of Year 1 pupils attend the school's Early Years Centre at Houghton Regis some distance from the main school. However, this provision is moving to the main site after Easter 2002. There are three groups, which run throughout the school day, each with a teacher and support staff. One group is for children with ASD using the TEACCH method, as at the main site. There is one group for children with SLD and one for children with PMLD. A fourth group operates in the mornings only, using the TEACCH method and staffed by a qualified nursery nurse and learning support assistant.
63. This provision is extremely well led and managed by the head of department and the staff work as a very effective team organising the classes and additional facilities. There is a soft-play room, a large gymnasium, physiotherapy room and there are good outside areas, with good resources including bikes, trolleys and climbing equipment.
64. The curriculum is well planned and organised in accordance with the national guidelines for the Foundation Stage and due regard is given to the National Curriculum requirements for the Year 1 pupils. Very good procedures are in place to assess what the children know, understand and can do and very high quality records of their progress are kept in accordance with, and beyond, the recommendations of the National Code of Practice for children with special educational needs. The children make good progress overall, but the nature of their learning difficulties are such that none of them achieve any of the Early Learning Goals in any of the areas of learning.
65. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. A total of 13 lessons were observed, including at least one session in each class. All of the lessons were judged to be good or better and eight of them were very good or excellent. Teachers and support staff have a very good understanding of the children's needs and the development of young children's learning and very good knowledge of the Foundation Curriculum. Lessons are planned well and classrooms and the other areas are very well organised and presented. There are very good relationships between staff and children. Staff have very high expectations of the children's work and behaviour.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. The children make very good progress in this key area of their development. They quickly understand school rules and routines. Pupils with ASD in particular make significant gains in accepting that they are part of a group and that they can not always carry out set tasks on their own. All of the children learn how to take turns and share. A particularly good example of ASD pupils working as a group was seen in a session with a numeracy focus when they had to take turns to add bricks to a tower and help to count how many there were. There are set times every day when all of the children play together in one of the classrooms and the adjoining outside area. This is particularly effective in promoting social development as the children become increasingly aware that they are part of a bigger group and make contact with more of their peers with different needs and abilities.

Communication, language and literacy

67. The children make very good progress in the key skills of communication. In all classes, staff use very clear language, and sign well, in providing explanations and instructions for the children. Symbols, pictures and photographs are used systematically, particularly with children with ASD. The more able children with ASD or SLD are developing an interest in books. They hold a book the right way round and carefully and correctly turn the pages. Many children are beginning to make purposeful marks with a pencil or crayon. The more able may say that they have drawn mummy or daddy and are beginning to learn the names of some of the letters of the alphabet and the sounds they make. During inspection no examples were seen of children in the nursery or reception age range writing any recognisable letters, either in the provided work sample or during lessons. However, this was evident in the work of two pupils in Year 1 who were carefully copying or over-writing and beginning to write a few letters independently. This clearly demonstrates the progress made by children at the Centre and the success of the teaching.

Mathematical development

68. The children make good progress. The key skills of numeracy and fundamental mathematical ideas and concepts are taught through a wide range of classroom activities, including specific individual learning tasks and exploratory play activities. Counting activities and the language of colour, shape, size and position are used as a part of the daily routines. Children complete simple tasks involving threading, matching, sorting and sequencing skills. The more able children are consistently counting to five or six.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

69. Progress in this area of learning is satisfactory. The nature of the children's learning difficulties are such that many aspects of this area of learning are appropriately given a lower priority in the provision. However, children with SLD and ASD learn how to use the mouse or a few keys to change images on the computer screen. Pupils with PMLD use special switches to interact with the computer or other devices such as lights. The children are learning to name, or point to, parts of the body. Daily routines and patterns to classroom activities are important precursors to learning for the children, especially those with ASD. The use of pictorial time-tables successfully helps the children understand what is going to happen next and, in some cases, look forward to later in the day. All of the children enjoy exploring materials such as sand and water and the more able children with ASD or SLD very carefully pour from one container into another. More able children with ASD construct a toy train circuit and move the train along the rails.

Physical development

70. The children achieve well in all aspects of physical development. The daily sessions outside and in the soft-play room promote general physical development through running and jumping, climbing, riding bikes, pushing trolleys and playing with balls and other equipment. Teachers make very good use of the large gymnasium at the site and, during the inspection, very good use was made of a parachute with a group of children with PMLD to encourage head turning and rolling over. Staff, working with the group of children with PMLD, take every opportunity to maximise the children's independence in activities such as dressing and eating. An excellent series of photographs shows a pupil with PMLD demonstrating tremendous

concentration and perseverance in holding a paintbrush and trying to move it from the paint pot to the paper.

Creative development

71. Pupils make good progress in art and music activities. The children with SLD join in with familiar songs and rhymes and are beginning to tap out a simple rhythm on a drum or tambourine. Children with ASD are reluctant to join in with such activities but some of them do so and, in fact, at least two of them clearly enjoy singing very simple songs. All of the children experience a good range of activities involving drawing, painting and printing. The more able children draw a recognisable face with hair, eyes, nose and mouth, and, in one example, ears. One girl spent a considerable amount of time at the end of one day in intense creative endeavour! First, she painted a piece of paper very carefully with different colours she had chosen with clear purpose and, second, she cleaned up the paint which had ended up on the easel and the floor as well as the paper. Throughout this activity the teacher was encouraging and praising her.

ENGLISH

72. Overall, all pupils, including those with SLD, PMLD and ASD, achieve well. They learn well in lessons and make good progress over time throughout the school. This is one of many significant improvements since the last inspection when pupils' progress was judged to be satisfactory. Pupils with EAL also make good progress. They benefit from the consistent good models of spoken, signed and written English provided by all adults, and from the school's specialist EAL teaching and resources. All pupils make very good progress in communicating, speaking and listening, and good progress in reading and writing. Those pupils who attend mainstream schools for some lessons as part of the extensive inclusion programme benefit greatly in terms of using and developing key communication and literacy skills in different learning situations.
73. This notable improvement is a result of teaching that is almost always good, and is often very good or excellent, and because the school places particular emphasis on literacy and communication skills, not only in English lessons but across other subject areas and in more informal times during the day. This provides consistency for the pupils and has a particularly positive impact on their acquisition of the key skills of speaking, listening and reading. The most significant features of all English lessons, are the teachers' widespread understanding of the pupils' special educational needs and the positive contribution made by learning support assistants. As a consequence, learning is of a good quality all day, every day. In nearly all lessons, there is an insistent but realistic expectation of good behaviour and communication, coupled to a very good range of interesting and challenging activities. In addition, nearly all lessons are well planned and prepared so that a good pace of learning is maintained. Good assessment procedures inform teaching and planning and ensure pupils are challenged at an appropriate level.
74. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 with PMLD, make excellent progress in developing intentional communication through being active partners in interpersonal exchanges with their peers. The lesson starts with an intimate 'Hello' session in which they shake hands with their partner and use a switch device to say hello to everyone else in the group. They explore different media through their available senses, for example, touching dried peas, wet powder, soft toys and different textures; looking at their reflection in

a mirror or the classroom through a veil, and listening to stirring music or the beating of a drum. They track objects and sources by sight or sound and express their delight or dislike by vocalisation and gestures. There is constant support and interaction with staff, encouraging, communicating, touching and challenging, eliciting responses and sensitively interpreting them. The excellent teamwork of the teacher and learning support assistants ensure everyone is involved and learning opportunities are continuous. One learning support assistant is effectively used to record pupils' responses, however small. An ethos of collaborative learning permeates the lessons, which are concluded by shared reading, led brilliantly by the teacher, 'We're all going on a bear hunt, we're going to catch a big one!' During this 'bear hunt' the pupils experience the cold water, the cloying mud, the rough feel of twigs and leaves, soft snowflakes blown by an electric fan, and finally the darkness of a cave, provided by a parachute where, of course, they find a large teddy bear! Very good resources, some simple and others technological, are imaginatively used to provide for this wide range of sensory experiences that excite and exhaust everyone. Higher attaining pupils in this group are active participants, and use a variety of switches to get a response or shake a musical instrument. Lower attaining pupils show some awareness of objects, light and sound. In writing, lower attaining pupils make deliberate marks and show awareness that these convey meaning. Higher attaining pupils write over or under models, with increasing accuracy.

75. Pupils up to the age of seven, make very good progress in speaking and listening and good progress in reading and writing. For example, in a class for Year 2 pupils with ASD, pupils share the story of 'The Monster Pet'. The reading is interspersed with challenging questions to confirm understanding. Relationships are excellent and all contributions are welcome. As a result, pupils are at ease in expressing themselves. They are required to choose a colour word from a list and match it against the colour of the monster. This they do readily and with great enthusiasm, for example, 'May I do the purple one please?' Pupils' progress is good because the teacher makes good use of contextual clues and pictures to help pupils to predict what will happen next. Well-established routines result in pupils quickly going to their workstations and completing individual tasks, which are carefully matched to their level of competence. One pupil, who is obsessed with finishing first, is sensitively reminded that accuracy not speed is what is expected.
76. In another lesson, in this same age group, pupils with SLD make good progress in consolidating their knowledge and understanding of story sequencing and rhyming, and in developing their fine motor skills. Signing and symbols are used well to ensure all pupils understand, and quiet firm management maintains their attention. Pupils' interest in books is encouraged by a visit to the attractive school library for book choice and discussion. Pupils are well behaved. Most take turns sensibly and are pleased with each other's success. Their self-esteem is successfully promoted by praise. The fine motor tasks are appropriate for emerging writing but insufficient emphasis is given to the correct pencil grip and starting and finishing points for letters in overwriting and copy writing their names. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 are beginning to recognise rhyme in text and know that an illustrator draws the pictures in books. Most pupils read and sign each other's names.
77. Pupils, aged between seven and eleven, build on this prior learning and achievement well. In a lesson with pupils in Years 5 and 6 with ASD, pupils consolidated their literacy skills, behaviour and understanding of classroom routines. They selected words, symbols or sentences, to accompany their previously made illustrations of cars and helicopters. They are polite and well motivated. They join in and take turns readily, to put their names, and later, index names to do with

transport in alphabetical order. Higher attaining pupils know that you must look at the second letter when both first letters are the same. They break up for individual work at the key command 'Check your schedules please' and settle in their work stations to complete a range of literacy tasks, for example, matching words to pictures, sentences and words. The learning support assistants are busy maintaining them on task. The teacher works with pupils in turn using a big book on modes of transport. She encourages them to talk about the pictures and photographs of trains and to read sections. Good questioning, for example, 'What is the weather like?' and 'What is the station called?' challenges pupils to search the text for information. Pupils have the potential to be difficult and disturbed but their idiosyncratic and occasionally ritualistic behaviour is either ignored or dealt with in a calm and effective way so that learning is not interrupted. Most pupils demonstrate good mouse control when working on the computer, and one pupil showed good fine motor skills when cutting out letter shapes. A very good plenary rounds off the lesson. Pupils' work is reviewed in turn and generously acclaimed by everyone. Pupils are confident and articulate and come to the front of the class to share their individual knowledge of trains and illustrate this with drawings on the blackboard. Everyone listens carefully and respectfully. One pupil draws a train from memory quickly, accurately and in great detail. One girl identifies a single-track railway as a monorail.

78. Pupils, in Year 4 with SLD, make good progress in understanding and using prepositions. The teacher leads the session well, commanding attention and getting pupils to practise their signing, in this case signs to describe the weather. Using the Derbyshire Language Scheme, the class divides into two groups to focus on prepositions. First, the teacher shows the symbols of the prepositions and gets pupils to verbalise or sign the meaning. Then using toys, including plastic figures, a bicycle and a wheelbarrow, the pupils engage in a lovely and enjoyable session of placing them in all sorts of positions – 'in front' and then 'its hiding' - and so on. The teacher encourages every effort, for example, 'Well done!' and 'What else can we say?' 'It's behind,' says a pupil, and in this way learning is consolidated. Pupils display good dexterity in placing the figures on the bicycle and under the wheelbarrow and all get their turn. There is a seamless change of activity as learning is reinforced using a 'Big Book' and supporting materials. These include picture cards, dolls and computer software. Pupils improve in colouring within lines and in simple comprehension. One high attaining pupil displays excellent mouse skills while using the computer.
79. The highest attaining pupils in Year 6 read simple, unfamiliar text independently. They communicate clearly with their peers or staff about things that interest them. Their writing is in sufficient detail to engage a reader. There is a growing awareness of simple punctuation and handwriting is legible if somewhat inconsistent. Lower attaining pupils use simple phrases and statements to communicate ideas. They show an interest in books and reading and they recognise some familiar letters by shape or sound. They write or copy their own name.
80. Examination of pupils' books confirms that they make good progress overtime. Samples of pupils' written work have been collected, dated, annotated and levelled. Good use is made of photographs to demonstrate pupils' progress and achievement, however small. Accurate initial and on-going assessment information informs organisation, groupings, inclusion opportunities, selection of resources, teaching and planning. Homework, including reading and spelling, is provided for pupils whose parents request it, and detailed home-school diaries, extend and consolidate pupils' learning.

81. There have been very good improvements since the last inspection. The subject is led well by a specialist who has a good understanding of literacy development and who is an excellent role model in terms of her own teaching, preparation and commitment. The school has adapted the National Literacy Strategy to good effect including relevant training for most staff. The monitoring of the literacy hour has had a positive impact on teaching. Curriculum planning and assessments are particular strengths and ensure a broad and balanced coverage of the Programmes of Study. Resources have been improved and are well organised to support and enhance learning. A new library has been set up with a range of good quality fiction and non-fiction books, which reflect the multi-cultural backgrounds of the school population. ICT is now used, as a matter of course, in every English lesson. Speech and language therapy support is good. The speech therapists make a notable contribution to pupils' assessments, individual education plans and reports, and provide training on communication and signing for all staff working with pupils in the school, and those parents and governors who are interested. The school has used the Derbyshire Language Scheme and for many years and recently introduced the Tracks Literacy Programme to challenge and extend the learning of higher attaining pupils. An area for further development is the introduction of a handwriting policy and programme to ensure consistent practice through the school.

MATHEMATICS

82. There has been noticeable and good improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Pupils achieve well at seven and eleven years of age in relation to their special educational needs and capabilities. Progress is uniformly good throughout Years 1 to 6 for the many different groups of pupils attending the school. This results from very good leadership in the subject, which has ensured the effective implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, good staff training to support it and the development of imaginative resources throughout the school. The support for new staff is effective in sustaining this high quality of provision and good monitoring of teaching skills has begun.
83. All pupils achieve well. When they enter Year 1, they display a range of mathematical skills and limitations. Pupils with PMLD are only just beginning to respond to adult stimuli during rhymes and song. They are just registering that things begin and end and sounds and sizes differ. They are starting to relate to their environment, but concepts such as counting, using money and differences of shape and colour are only just taking on meaning. More able pupils are developing good skills in counting, often from one to four from memory. They are beginning to match objects and are developing a small, but secure, vocabulary of colours and concepts, such as 'big' and 'little'. In Years 1 and 2 all pupils make good progress, although much of this relates to consolidation of skills rather than learning new ideas. By the age of seven pupils with profound and complex difficulties are beginning to distinguish between 'big' and 'small', 'long' and 'short' and 'heavy' and 'light'. This development takes place with regard to real activities and objects rather than in the abstract. They join in number rhymes and songs, often using a simple switch system to respond. Pupils with ASD demonstrate a range of abilities, from the early skills of picking up 'one' object when asked to role play buying and selling, ordering and counting numbers up to 20 and recognising and naming circles, squares and triangles. More able pupils are starting to deal with some abstract concepts. For example, they name two-dimensional shapes, identify how many corners each has

- and recognise and name the numbers 'one' to 'five'. Good progress is also made as they begin to sort and group objects and toys in different ways.
84. Good progress in Years 3 to 6, means that by the age of eleven the higher achieving pupils count in fives and tens, sequence numbers up to 100 and have a growing awareness and interest in number patterns. They estimate well and complete simple addition and subtraction sums unaided. Pupils with PMLD continue to develop and use skills related to recognition of textures, starting and stopping, and choosing between big and small items. A few pupils still have the most extreme difficulty in reaching for objects and placing them in a given order. Even here, however, progress is good and skills are nurtured on every possible occasion. Pupils with ASD respond well to number symbols and rhymes, and demonstrate greater concentration in individual and group tasks. The more able pupils within this group understand place value and count forwards and backwards to and from 20. They are also increasingly able to use mathematical strategies and know why they use them
85. Good progress results from good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent teaching in mathematics. Everyone is given an opportunity to participate, while good use of questioning and adaptation of tasks allow pupils to work at an appropriate level with suitable challenges. Thus, in an excellent lesson with reception and Year 1 pupils, the pupils join in a counting song while the teacher makes excellent use of signing and symbol cards to reinforce adding and subtracting using play bricks. All pupils move sensibly to their workstations and complete tasks that are matched well to their needs. Throughout the lesson there is very good management within the classroom and all adults work excellently as a team. This creates both the security and consistency that these pupils need to learn and develop. Similarly in a PMLD mathematics lesson, there is excellent teamwork and each pupil or group receives the same quality of work and support, but carefully modified to meet their specific needs. At one point, the majority of the class sing 'One finger, one thumb...' The song is mirrored for two pupils in the sensory room by the learning support assistant. The work throughout is of the highest quality and this arises from detailed planning and an excellent understanding of both the mathematics involved and the specific needs of each individual child.
86. The good development that has taken place since the last inspection is largely the result of very good leadership in this subject. There is now an effective scheme of work that is being regularly reviewed and adapted. Mainstream skills have blended well with the best of good special school practice. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy have been incorporated well into mathematics lessons and there is now a good combination of mental mathematics and practical tasks. Teaching is monitored well and new staff are given good support. The achievement of pupils is also recorded accurately and monitored using the nationally recommended 'P' scales, and the Equals and National Curriculum levels. This leads to improved lesson planning. All staff ensure that mathematics is incorporated into all lessons and within social settings. Thus, a good ASD literacy lesson followed by snacktime both have counting and matching built into them, reinforcing basic but essential skills in a practical context. There is effective use of computer programs in some lessons, but this is not consistently included in every teacher's planning and practice.

SCIENCE

87. Pupils achieve well in relation to their special educational needs as they move from year to year. They make good progress and, by the age of seven, they are developing the key skills of scientific investigation through activities such as making very simple circuits and working with switches to recognise cause and effect. Pupils with PMLD are encouraged to use their senses to recognise and compare textures, sensations, tastes and smells as well as exploring the properties of mirrors and lights. The pupils make good progress as their observational abilities develop and their understanding of cause and effect improves. The more able pupils understand that a plug needs to be in a socket and the equipment switched on for it to work. The good use of questioning and the use of an appropriate key vocabulary by staff, for example, on, off, start, stop and observation, are significant factors in the pupils' learning.
88. By the age of eleven, pupils are beginning to develop the skills of prediction and comparison and to understand concepts such as floating and sinking, and they distinguish between healthy and unhealthy foods. They recognise the main parts of the human body including the skeleton. Some pupils demonstrate an understanding of how a circuit powers a light, fan or buzzer and that a switch can be used to break the circuit. They sort objects into similar groups, for example those that will float or sink, and they make a simple record of their observations and talk about and explain their work. The more able pupils are beginning to develop a simple scientific vocabulary, for example senses, electricity, circuit, breathing, and prediction. Pupils demonstrate good self-control when undertaking experiments and concentrate for quite lengthy periods during science lessons.
89. The quality of teaching is very good overall, with no lesson judged to be unsatisfactory and 60 per cent of lessons being either very good or excellent. The features of the very successful lessons observed were:
- clear, detailed planning;
 - activities and questions matched to the needs of individuals and groups;
 - a challenging pace to the lesson and good use of time for review;
 - a good range of practical teaching methods balanced with clear explanation and information;
 - learning support assistants effectively deployed to provide targeted support to, and management of, particular pupils;
 - effective use of signing and symbol cards to promote pupils' understanding of the lesson objectives as well as basic speaking and listening skills; and,
 - well chosen resources, immediately available for use.
90. Where lessons were less successful teachers failed to modify the tasks to the needs of individual pupils and sometimes missed opportunities to promote collaborative learning among pupils. In a very small number of lessons some pupils opted out of activities and clear strategies to manage this behaviour were not evident.
91. There has been good improvement since the last inspection. The clear curriculum policy and effective evaluation of long-term and medium-term teaching plans are important ingredients in this success. The co-ordinator has monitored lessons and has evaluated pupils' work. The co-ordinator has an action plan in place, which prioritises the more immediate developments being planned. Resources are adequate and they are easily accessed by staff from the store. There are stimulating displays in the corridors. The provision for more able pupils has recently been enhanced through the organisation of a science investigation day. This day

was evaluated well by the co-ordinator and the success of the day was demonstrable. Termly learning objectives are set for all pupils and the majority of these are carefully matched to individual needs. However, in one or two instances, the same objectives are set for the more able and less able pupils in the same class and this is unsatisfactory practice.

ART AND DESIGN

92. Pupils achieve well in art by the age of eleven. Pupils in Year 6 complete recognisable portrait paintings of themselves and their friends. The pupils achieve good standards, in relation to their learning difficulties, in the skills of making and investigating. They describe and make comparisons between their own work and that of others. They name most common colours and use brushes and stencils with varying degrees of control for printing.
93. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Two lessons in Years 1 and 2 were very good. Nine lessons in Years 3 to 6 included one excellent, four very good, three good and one satisfactory. Teachers have good levels of knowledge. Well planned lessons help pupils develop their skills and improve their use and control of materials, tools and techniques. In the excellent lesson, the teacher had high expectations of the pupils and enabled the pupils to use the available materials successfully and produce a pleasing piece of work. Pupils who show a natural interest and ability in the subject are given every opportunity to extend their knowledge and show their skill in the subject. For example one pupil with ASD has very good skills and is given extra opportunities to draw pictures of his choice. Very good displays of pupils' work throughout the school celebrate pupils' achievements and stimulate their interest. Teachers make good references to the work of other artists and use them to illustrate different styles and approaches, for example, Van Gogh and Picasso.
94. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are always at least good and sometimes very good or excellent. This means that they are interested and involved in activities and derive considerable pleasure from them. Pupils enjoy interacting with others and looking at each other's work. The subject makes a good contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development.
95. The school makes very good use of visitors to supplement the teaching, for example, the 'Osagyefo' Dance Group, who provided a week activities including African art, music and drama. Also, visitors have contributed to work using felt and screen-printing techniques on textile and paper. In these ways, pupils' skills are developed and extended in art and connections made with other subjects.
96. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. The co-ordinator has good qualifications in and knowledge of the subject. She has enthusiasm for the subject and as a result art has a high profile in the school. Regular training is provided for the staff by the co-ordinator. For example, working with clay was offered as an option during the last training day. Resources are satisfactory and readily available. The new electric kiln has enhanced the resources and this has had a positive impact on pupils' learning and achievement, for example when making Christmas, Easter and birthday presents like cups for their families. Although there is no specialised art room this is typical of primary schools and teachers make good use of available resources. The co-ordinator has also recently completed a course in art therapy with a view to introducing this as a further feature of the provision.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

97. Pupils' achieve well throughout the school, in relation to their prior learning and capabilities. Pupils make clear gains in knowledge, skills and understanding, so that the more able seven-and eleven year-olds are able to make items of good quality.
98. Teachers provide learning tasks that engage the pupils' interest and promote their abilities to make choices. For example, in a food studies lesson pupils were asked to find out the difference between an eating apple and a cooking apple. To do this they had to taste both and then prepare the cooking apple for stewing and adding sugar to it. Pupils are taught the basic rules of safety in the kitchen and they learn how to use various kitchen utensils like a knife. Because teachers and the learning support assistants take care over such procedures, pupils always behave well.
99. Teaching is good. Eleven lessons were observed, and the teaching was very good in three of them, good in seven of them and satisfactory in one. In the very best lessons, the exciting and practical tasks planned by the teachers stimulate the pupils to work hard and do well, and to develop good attitudes to the subject. These factors have a positive impact on learning and achievements. In most lessons, pupils' behaviour is good as they concentrate and want to do well.
100. Teachers use design and technology tasks well to promote learning in and make links with other subjects. For example, making models of houses, places of worship and other places of interest following an educational visit to Berkhamsted Castle, enhanced their spiritual and cultural knowledge. Good links were made between design and technology, science and geography in work about autumn. Work in food studies contributes to pupils' learning in literacy and numeracy through reading the recipes, if necessary using signs and symbols, and measuring and weighing ingredients. When pupils work on projects in groups, their personal and social development is promoted. For example, when making a model of a firework display, the pupils' worked together, choosing the materials and method for building the model. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good and they have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. They ensure pupils' safety in practical tasks.
101. The co-ordination of the subject is underdeveloped. The co-ordinator has only been in post for a short period of time and has not been able to fully develop the subject. He has had some guidance from the local education authority adviser and the school has plans for him to attend suitable courses. However, the policy has been updated recently and there is a good scheme of work. Assessment is good and new targets are set in the light of progress made. There is no specialist design and technology room, but resources are satisfactory. There is a food studies room where the resources available are good. The good standards pupils achieve and the high quality of teaching in the subject shows a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Achievement is satisfactory throughout the school. This reflects the findings of the last inspection. Improvement has been satisfactory overall as the planning of what pupils are to learn now includes clear learning objectives and assessment

opportunities, which enable teachers to make detailed assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do.

103. By the age of seven pupils are gaining an understanding of words which describe where things are. In one lesson pupils were hiding a soft toy called Barney behind the upturned table. They used what they had learned to line up behind one another for a game in the playground. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 are learning about the weather. Pupils identify the symbols which represent different types of weather. More able pupils know the word thermometer. Other pupils compare the weather in England with that in a tropical rainforest. They know that the weather there is hot and wet. In one lesson pupils identified a range of animals that live in the rainforest. By the end Year 6 pupils are developing an understanding of their own environment. Higher attaining pupils have studied journeys they make and have made maps of the school. Less able pupils use objects, which relate to particular places to remind them of areas of the school. In one lesson pupils took the register on a journey through the school and visited the office. Other pupils took some lavender on their trip to the gazebo to look at the plants and trees.
104. Teaching in geography is satisfactory overall. Where teaching is good planning clearly details what pupils are to learn and the activities are chosen to support pupils' understanding. This results in pupils responding enthusiastically to lessons. For example, in a lesson where pupils were studying the rain forest they watched a video which showed the hot and wet climate and the environment this creates. Pupils watched the animals and plants, which live in this atmosphere, with interest. In another lesson the lively presentation by the teacher resulted in the pupils demonstrating how well they had understood what it meant to be behind someone by lining up for a follow-my-leader game in the playground. Pupils do not respond well where the materials and activities do not reflect the age group and understanding of the pupils. Some pupils do not maintain their concentration on the activity and leave the group. Pupils needing extra help are effectively supported by teaching assistants, who are well briefed on what pupils are to learn and who have a clear understanding of specific individual needs. Good teamwork between teachers and support staff contributes significantly to pupils' learning.
105. Geography is appropriately led, managed and organised. Planning has been recently reviewed and yearly topics are well organised and consideration is being given to the recently published guidance for the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. The co-ordinator has recently taken on responsibility for the subject and has made a very positive start in developing resource packs to match the planned topics. Planning across the school includes learning objectives and assessment opportunities which enable teachers to make regular detailed assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do. Evaluation of the planned programme is an integral part of the medium-term planning. However, this evaluation is not undertaken as part of a common procedure across the school and this leads to inconsistency and is, therefore, unsatisfactory. The system of developing and evaluating an appropriate subject target for each pupil results in an ongoing record of individual pupils' achievements in this area. Monitoring is at an early stage of development. The co-ordinator monitors the curriculum through teachers' planning but as yet has not undertaken monitoring of the teaching of the subject across the school.

HISTORY

106. History is taught through a range of planned topics across the school. No lessons were observed in Years 1 and 2 but sufficient evidence was gathered to make reliable judgements, through the examination of teachers' planning and pupils' work and discussions with teachers. Pupils' achievement in history is satisfactory at both seven and eleven years of age. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Pupils achievement has been maintained and the findings of the last inspection in respect of the assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do has been appropriately addressed.
107. Pupils in Years 1 and 2, are developing an understanding of then and now by learning about familiar things such as old and new toys. They learn about the passage of time by becoming familiar with the use of timetables and individual schedules. Through these, pupils learn when the different activities happen in the school day. Some pupils have learned about how things were done in the past and have tried old-fashioned equipment for washing clothes such as washboards. They have experienced the difficulties of doing the laundry before washing machines were in use and have used a mangle to get water out of the clothes.
108. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about the changes that have happened in homes and at school. Pupils in Years 3 and 4, know that compact discs provided the music played at a birthday party in present times but that these had not been invented during the nineteen sixties. Pupils in Year 6, know that in Victorian times teachers were very strict and that children had to sit very quietly at their desks during lessons. In one lesson observed pupils took part in a lesson in a 'Victorian classroom'. Their teacher was dressed in Victorian costume and they held out their hands to be checked for cleanliness and referred to the teacher as 'Ma'am'.
109. Teaching is satisfactory overall and, in one lesson, it was very good. Lessons are appropriately planned using the school's scheme of work. Activities are matched well to the interests of the pupils and teachers choose resources carefully to help pupils understand. In two lessons observed, when pupils were learning about schools in Victorian times, pictures and artefacts such as slates and ink pens were used and handled by the pupils well. This helped them to understand how different school days were for children at that time. Where teaching is very good teachers ensure that pupils focus through clear introductions and the use of signing to support understanding. They make the activities exciting through the use of interesting resources. In a lesson where pupils looked at and compared toys from today and from long ago the teacher had carefully chosen two games to maximise pupils' interest. They gathered round excitedly to watch a mechanical horse racing game, shouting enthusiastically for their horse to win. They understood that the game worked by turning the handle and not by batteries. They compared the roller skates a character had for his birthday, in a video they watched, with their own skates.
110. The subject is led and managed well. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and uses this well to develop resource packs for use in the planned topics. The scheme of work has been recently revised and considered in the light of the new national guidance published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The issues identified by the last inspection in clarifying objectives and assessment opportunities in the scheme of work have been appropriately addressed. Monitoring across the subject is an area for development. Planning is monitored by the co-ordinator but available time has not yet been used to observe colleagues.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

111. Achievement is good throughout the school and at times it is very good. This represents good improvement since the last inspection when it was described as being generally satisfactory with some good features. The high quality of the teamwork among classroom staff ensures that all pupils achieve well in the development of their ICT skills.
112. In Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to learn the basic skills needed to access and input information. They experience how the web-cam can be used to take a picture, which appears on the screen, and they learn how to print and use the picture to illustrate their work. A very good example of this technique, arising from lessons in personal, social and health education lessons, is displayed in the corridor. Teachers use recording sheets to indicate progression in literacy and numeracy and the degree of independent working. Progress is very evident in the records of pupils in Years 3 to 6. Pupils with PMLD, SLD and ASD make good progress, building on the good start made in Years 1 and 2, striving for independence in their use of the computer programmes provided. One SLD pupil in Year 4 has developed excellent skills with the mouse. He moves the cursor at speed and locates the desired area to proceed with the tasks. He is proud to display his skills and move words and phrases to different positions on the screen, identifying when a selection is right or wrong. Some of the work achieved by PMLD pupils is to a very good standard. There is some excellent photographic evidence of pupils selecting from two switches, one active and one dummy, to operate a patterns program, whilst another is able to press a switch several times to operate and control a toy dinosaur.
113. During the inspection very few lessons, where ICT was the main focus, were observed. However, it is clear from the large number of references made in subject observations that ICT is being taught well in all classes. In one period of 20 minutes at the start of the school day, it was not possible to make a judgement on teaching and learning because of the late arrival of transport. Six of the seven pupils arrived with less than five minutes of the lesson remaining. This was a class of pupils with ASD, who in addition to being late, needed time to settle and prepare themselves for the day ahead. Teachers have a good level of knowledge and understanding of the subject and are confident in using the ICT resources in their classrooms. They are supported well by the subject co-ordinator who gives training at a 'school club' and assists those who have specific needs when using equipment for the first time. Teachers use ICT very well across the curriculum. Some very good examples were seen of pupils using programs, based on a commercial reading scheme, to support the development of their literacy skills. In a class of Year 5 and 6 pupils with SLD, the pupils worked in groups of three at the computers and in most cases one member of the group found it difficult to be fully involved in the activity. Although the teaching team made the most of the limitation there was recognition that it was not an ideal situation and that consideration must be given to addressing this problem.
114. Resources for the subject are adequate. They are of good quality and accessible to all staff who use them well. The co-ordinator recognises the need to undertake an audit of ICT resources and to publish a list of what is available and where it can be located. There is also a difficulty when computers, which have been loaded with material to meet the specific needs of an individual, does not move up with the pupil when they transfer to a new class base. This results in unnecessary and time consuming work for teachers adapting machines to meet needs.
115. Across the school, pupils with a range of complex needs benefit from the good provision in ICT. The very good team approach in the classrooms is a very positive feature of the provision. The good use made of resources, including staffing has an important impact on learning in all areas of the school. The quality of planning to ensure that all pupils

have access to the learning ensures that interest and enjoyment of the subject is maintained. Teachers set clear targets which enable good progress to be made. The co-ordinator is able to monitor teaching of the subject across the school which he does, amongst other things, through direct classroom observations.

MUSIC

116. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection. Pupils with ASD, PMLD and EAL make good progress in relation to their previous learning. Achievement and progress are good because teachers plan lessons carefully and have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and involvement in lessons.
117. Music is used frequently during the school day and supports many subjects of the curriculum. For instance, in English, songs and rhymes are used to encourage pupils to listen and respond to key words and phrases, and in mathematics teachers use number songs to help pupils with counting and simple addition and subtraction.
118. During music lessons pupils of all ages listen to, enjoy, take part in and respond to a variety of songs and other music. By the end of Year 2, most pupils listen carefully and learn that different instruments, such as drums and shakers, make different sounds. They join in action songs enthusiastically and enjoy moving to music, and, when playing percussion instruments, they begin to understand the meaning of 'loudly' and 'softly'. A minority of pupils take the lead in singing in a group. As pupils move through the school they build well on their previous learning so that, by Year 6, most understand 'fast and slow' and 'high and low', and follow a lead to start and stop playing and singing on command. More able pupils use their knowledge of specially adapted notation to follow a musical pattern, and compose and perform a simple rhythmic tune. Through listening to different styles of music pupils begin to recognise their own likes and dislikes, and make choices based on these preferences. Staff are skilled at giving pupils time to respond in their own way, and this encourages their efforts and promotes independence. Pupils with PMLD show pleasure at experiencing music. They explore sounds through a variety of techniques, including sight, sound and touch, and the one-to-one hands on support they receive from staff enables them to participate to the best of their ability.
119. Teaching is very good overall. In one lesson it was excellent. Enthusiastic teaching, good planning and well used resources, along with good teamwork and subject knowledge and very high expectations for attention and effort, build pupils' confidence and ensure that all pupils achieve well.
120. Music is managed well. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic and gives clear guidance to colleagues. Assessment procedures are being developed, and resources include a good range of multi-cultural instruments. Pupils' learning is further enhanced by visits from African drummers and a local wind band, and workshops with percussionists. A small number of pupils benefit from weekly sessions with a music therapist. Music makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

121. Pupils make good progress in physical education and achieve well in relation to their individual difficulties at both seven-and eleven-years of age. Pupils in Year 2 copy actions, follow demonstrations and have a clear understanding of the routines taught to them. The work of physiotherapists is integrated well into lessons with pupils with PMLD. The vast majority of pupils demonstrate confidence in the swimming pool, this having been promoted through fun activities such as games of 'ring a ring of roses', and appropriate one-to-one support where necessary. Pupils are able to move around in the water in different ways and some pupils are able to float and practice leg kicks wearing floatation aids. Pupils with PMLD clearly benefit from hydrotherapy. They enjoy the activities in the pool and, with the significant support from staff, are able to feel the buoyancy and support of the water and experience stretches and movements not possible out of the water.
122. In Years 3 to 6, pupils experience dance, gymnastics, games activities, athletics and swimming and make good progress in physical education. In dance, for example, they demonstrate the ability to travel in different ways and to make and hold shapes. All of the pupils respond well to music, which is used frequently by staff. The more able pupils link movements together and are able to change rhythm, speed and direction and respond imaginatively to the music. Generally all of the pupils respond quickly and appropriately to teacher requests and behaviour is managed well. The pupils have a good knowledge of the warm-up and warm-down routines such as a start and stop traffic lights game, racing games and the requirement to lay still and quite for a short period of time. Pupils in Year 6 undertake a weekly horse-riding session and most have the opportunity to attend a short residential outdoor pursuits programme, where they experience abseiling, canoeing and other challenging and fun activities. The horse-riding and the outdoor pursuits make a significant contribution to the pupils' knowledge and skill development and also increase their self-esteem. The school also takes part in the Luton School's Annual Sports Day for Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. The older pupils are very confident in the swimming pool and a number are able to swim unaided. In one lesson observed, five out of the ten pupils were able to swim, one quite proficiently. These pupils were being taught to improve their techniques and to increase their swimming distance.
123. The quality of teaching is very good overall with most of the lessons being good, very good or excellent. However, two lessons were unsatisfactory. The factors contributing to this very good teaching were:
- clear planning, including the matching of different requirements to different pupils;
 - the use of warm-ups and warm-downs at the start and finish of lessons respectively;
 - the effective deployment of learning support assistants to help those pupils most in need;
 - frequent changes of activity to maintain pupils' interest and motivation;
 - clear explanation of objectives to pupils, and;
 - a review of the lesson and linking this to future physical education work and other curricular work, for example a reminder of a recent science lesson on the five senses when discussing listening skills in physical education.
124. Where lessons were less successful teachers failed to provide different tasks for pupils of different abilities effectively, or to provide clear explanations to the pupils as what they were to do. Although a few pupils were asked to demonstrate a skill or movement this was infrequent and did not fully capitalise on the opportunity to

promote simple evaluation skills in the pupils. Some classes changed for physical education whilst others merely undertook the lesson in bare feet. Teachers of classes not changing for physical education missed the opportunity to promote personal, social and health education knowledge and skills such as undressing and dressing and the understanding of personal hygiene. Not all staff changed out of their normal footwear for physical education lessons.

125. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. A clear policy, regulations for swimming in the school's pool, and curriculum guidance are in place. However, a policy and guidelines for the use of swimming facilities off-site is yet to be written and this is unsatisfactory. Staff have received in-service training on the health and safety requirements and use of gymnastics equipment. The co-ordinator evaluates planning and the curriculum guidance regularly and this has contributed to the re-drafting of the curriculum guidance, which now usefully includes specific reference to provision for PMLD pupils. As yet no other teacher's lessons have been monitored by the co-ordinator and this was the case at the last inspection. The co-ordinator has a useful short subject development plan, which has identified appropriate priorities for development. Learning objectives are set for the pupils each term and the majority of teachers ensure that the objectives set reflect the individual needs of the pupil concerned. However, in one or two instances the same objectives are set for all pupils in a class and this is unsatisfactory. The provision for more able pupils is very good and the co-ordinator herself teaches a weekly session for identified more able pupils. The facilities and resources, both on-site and off-site, are good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126. Pupils achieve well throughout the school. This represents good improvement since the previous inspection. Achievement and progress are good because teachers plan lessons and acts of worship carefully, and have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour. Pupils with ASD, PMLD and EAL make good progress, because staff are careful to include them in all activities, using signing, symbols and relevant resources.
127. By the age of seven years, most pupils understand there are special times such as birthdays and Christmas, which are celebrated in particular ways. They know that Christmas is the birthday of Jesus who is a special person. They learn that God cares for them, and that there are other people, such as their parents and teachers, who also care greatly for them. The idea of sharing is promoted well and pupils are given many opportunities to developing caring attitudes towards others.
128. Between the ages of seven and eleven, pupils hear stories from the Bible, which increase their knowledge and understanding of Christianity. They benefit from the celebration of festivals of world faiths such as Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, Islam and the Chinese New Year. By the time they reach Year 6 most pupils understand that light and water are important in many religions, and know that everyone's beliefs should be treated with respect. Assemblies, and the reflective times at the end of many lessons, also help pupils to learn that everyone's efforts are valuable to the life of the school. Pupils' self-esteem is very well promoted by the praise they receive for their achievements.
129. Pupils are attentive to their teachers and most are keen to contribute to discussions and activities. Many become increasingly sensitive to the needs of others, for

instance making sure that a friend in a wheelchair can see pictures for a story. Pupils' understanding of subject vocabulary develops well because teachers explain new ideas very clearly and use interesting and relevant resources. Teaching is good overall. Planning is clear and learning objectives are identified and shared with the pupils. Candles are frequently used to promote a calm reflective atmosphere, and to focus pupils' attention.

130. Religious education is led and managed well. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and gives clear guidance to colleagues. Since the last inspection the quality of teaching has improved, and the increased range and use of resources are also promoting pupils' learning effectively. Work is underway on developing assessment procedures that will ensure pupils build systematically on their learning. Pupils benefit from the school's good links with local churches, a mosque and a synagogue, and with the local Hindu community. Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.