

INSPECTION REPORT

SUNNINGDALE SCHOOL

Spring well, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108882

Headteacher: John McKnight

Reporting inspector: George Derby
OIN: 25349

Dates of inspection: 8 – 11 July 2002

Inspection number: 198691

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Shafted Road Spring well Sunderland
Postcode:	SR3 4HA
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Peter Kelly
Date of previous inspection:	May 2000

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Design and technology; Information and communication technology.	Characteristics of the school; Pupils' results and achievements.
9652	Colin Herbert	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development; Attendance; The care the school has for its pupils; Partnership with parents; Links with business and the community.
27053	Sheila Berwick	<i>Team inspector</i>	Personal, social and health education; Physical education.	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils; The quality of teaching; The school's strategic use of its resources.
7042	Keith Guttering	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; History.	Leadership and management.
10099	Sue Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Foundation Stage; Special educational needs; Educational inclusion.	Assessment.
10781	Bob Thompson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; French; Religious education.	The opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
13623	James Waddington	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Geography; Music.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Sunningdale has been a very large maintained day special school for pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs. However, over the past three years the number of pupils on roll has significantly reduced and the number of staff has nearly halved in line with the local education authority's plan for special school re-organisation in Sunderland. The school roll will reduce further in September 2002 to around 70 pupils. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is very low. At the time of this inspection, there were 145 pupils on roll between the ages of 3 (pre-Nursery) and 13 (Year 8). Nearly two thirds of pupils had moderate or severe learning difficulties as their main special educational need, in nearly equal proportions. A quarter of pupils had profound and multiple learning difficulties including medical needs and a tenth, emotional and behavioural difficulties. From September 2002 the school will become a school for Nursery and primary aged pupils with severe learning difficulties and profound and multiple learning difficulties. In addition, a small number of Year 6 moderate learning difficulty pupils will complete their primary education at the school. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is high at 58 per cent. The number of pupils from minority ethnic groups is traditionally very low (currently, one of black origin, one Chinese, and three Bangladeshi). Three pupils have English as an additional language, although none is at an early stage of language acquisition because of this; the difficulties they have with language relate to their learning difficulties. Three temporary teachers were new to the school at the time of the inspection.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Sunningdale is an effective school, which has some very good and even excellent features. Pupils achieve well as a result of the good teaching and support they receive from staff. The school very strongly promotes pupils' independence and their personal development. There is a strong ethos of care and concern for all pupils and a great sense of valuing pupils' efforts and contributions. As a result, pupils' response in lessons, and their enthusiasm for school, is very good. There are some lapses in health and safety procedures, however. The school is very well led by the headteacher and he has been well supported by the senior management team, especially through the process of change over the past two years. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Pupils' attitudes to, and interest in, their work are very good. Their behaviour in lessons is also very good. Staffs' care for pupils' physical and emotional care is outstanding and, as a result, relationships are very strong.
- Pupils' personal development is very well promoted; the opportunities for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good.
- There is excellent provision for the high quality activities that occur outside lessons.
- The way the school uses its links with partner institutions is very good and the contribution the community makes to pupils' learning is excellent.
- Links with parents are excellent and parents have very positive views of the school.
- The provision in the Foundation Stage is very good and has some excellent features.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The school's approach to, and monitoring of, health and safety.
- The curriculum for pupils with severe learning difficulties \ profound and multiple learning difficulties and, in particular, the way some subjects are linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study for these pupils.
- The support for some pupils' more complex needs, including the availability of therapy and specialist support and the use of information and communication technology to support their independence, understanding, communication and writing.

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 has made sound progress since its last inspection in May 2000, when it was removed from special measures. The main focus has been the management of significant change and this has been very successfully implemented through the very strong commitment to staff and pupils by the headteacher. There remains a very good vision for the future development of the school. The good quality of teaching and learning has been maintained. Monitoring of teaching and learning has been satisfactorily undertaken by the senior management team and by some subject leaders, although not by all. The curriculum for pupils with more complex needs has been adequately addressed; however, in common with the curriculum for other year groups it is still insufficiently detailed. The use of computers to support pupils' learning and communication has only partly been addressed and is unsatisfactory.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 8	Key	
speaking, and listening and communicating	A	A	A	<i>very good</i>	A
reading	A	B	B	<i>good</i>	B
writing	A	C	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
mathematics	A	B	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	<i>poor</i>	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in their individual education plans	A	A	A		

Overall, the pupils' achievements are good. They are very good in the Foundation Stage, where teachers of children under the age of six, know them very well and very successfully adapt the curriculum to meet the very wide range of needs. Throughout the school, very good attention to pupils' personal skills, mean they achieve very well in personal, social and health education. Pupils' individual education plans targets are well thought out and they make very good progress towards these. Achievement is good in English, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology and geography pupils make

satisfactory progress. However, lack of information and communication technology to support learning and communication for some pupils weakens their progress, especially in writing. In art, music, physical education and religious education pupils make good progress. As a result of the narrowness in the curriculum for design and technology and history, most pupils in Years 1 to 6 do not make enough progress. In these subjects, pupils in Years 7 and 8 make good progress because the planning is much more detailed and comprehensive. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, especially those with medical needs in Yellow department, make good progress. There is a good range of therapies provided by school staff, but limited support for pupils' complex needs from visiting specialists and therapists. This limits the progress that some pupils can make.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested and responsive in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well. There is absolutely no indication of bullying, unsociable or racist behaviour. There have been no exclusions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are well mannered, polite and courteous to visitors. They have a very good understanding of right and wrong. Pupils take their responsibilities very seriously and relationships in the school are very good.
Attendance	Good. Pupils' enthusiasm for school is outstanding.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 - 6	Years 7 - 8
Lessons seen overall	very good	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.

The quality of teaching is good. It contributes positively to pupils' good learning in lessons. The quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good. A significant strength here is the knowledge the staff have of the children's complex needs and the way activities are planned to specifically meet these. In the rest of the school, the teachers' knowledge of their pupils and their learning need is good and they have a good understanding of the subjects they teach. Teachers' planning is generally very effective, although less so in information and communication technology and design and technology. However, teaching in these subjects is generally satisfactory. Teachers have a strong commitment to improving pupils' achievements and want pupils to do their best. Pupils respond positively to this encouragement and to the good support provided by staff in lessons. In two lessons, the quality of teaching was unsatisfactory for pupils in Years 6 and 7. This was because the work failed to challenge them. Literacy and numeracy skills are well promoted during most lessons. The teaching of English is good and employs some very good approaches to promoting speaking and listening skills. However, information and communication technology is not used consistently enough to support some pupils' communication and writing needs using information and communication technology, apart from those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The teaching of mathematics and science is

good. Very good teaching was seen in personal, social and health education and music. The teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is good, although some staff have limited awareness of how best to support pupils' sensory needs. Homework supports pupils' learning well.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good overall. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements, although it is narrow in some places, particularly for severe learning difficulties pupils and those with more complex needs. The curriculum provided is strongly relevant. Foundation Stage children follow a very good, distinct curriculum. Links with the partner schools and business are very good and the community makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning opportunities. Activities outside lessons significantly enrich the provision.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is developed very well through a range of excellent opportunities, both in lessons and celebrations of pupils' achievements. The high quality programme of personal, social and health education contributes very significantly to pupils' moral and social development. Cultural opportunities are very good and an extensive programme of visits and visitors provides pupils with opportunities to develop an awareness of the richness of their own and others' cultures.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school provides good care; pastoral systems ensure that all pupils are well known by staff. Child protection procedures are good. Although procedures for first aid and for building evacuation are in place, senior staff and governors are generally not aware enough of health and safety issues. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are particularly effective. Personal development is monitored well. Assessment procedures, the use of assessment, and the monitoring of pupils' academic performance are all good.

Links with parents are excellent and parents view the school as very good. The school is also very supportive of its parents and keeps them well informed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school and has been highly instrumental in maintaining good staff morale and pupil progress through a time of considerable change. He has been ably supported by his senior management team and has made good management appointments for the newly re-structured team. The school is aware of the weaknesses in the curriculum; however, the immediate plans for school re-organisation have meant that the review of the curriculum has not gone ahead as planned.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors have been strongly supportive in shaping the development of the school. The governing body meets most of its statutory duties well; however, they pay insufficient attention to health and safety matters. Governors and the Chair, in particular, support the school well and are well informed. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and where it needs to improve.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The headteacher, senior management and some subject co-ordinators have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching, practice and pupils' standards. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff well. Performance management systems for teachers are good and there are plans to introduce a similar system for all staff. Co-ordinators' roles for literacy and numeracy are well developed, but other subject leaders have limited opportunity to check on the quality and standards in their subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Sound. Financial planning and control is satisfactory and governors are fully involved in budget setting. Careful financial planning has wisely taken school re-organisation into account. The school development plan has relevant priorities, but some of the ways the school will measure the success of its actions are not always clear enough. Specific grants are used well.

The accommodation is satisfactory overall but is limited in the library, information and communication technology and food studies room. Staffing levels are reasonable and there are good numbers of experienced and skilled support staff. There are may not be enough teachers for the numbers and range of needs the school will take in the autumn term. Some aspects of therapy support are limited. Learning resources for subjects are sound. The school applies best value principles soundly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parents like nearly everything about the school and are highly supportive of its work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The amount of work pupils get to do at home.

The inspection team agrees with what pleases parents most. A third of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressing highly positive views of the school. Inspectors

found the provision for homework good but the school could make more clear to parents what 'homework' actually is.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Strengths:

- Very good progress is made in personal, social and health education.
- There is good progress in art and design, music, physical education and religious education.

Areas for improvement:

- In design and technology, geography, history and music the narrowness of the curriculum reduces pupils' progress.
- The use of information and communication technology, signs and symbols to enable pupils to express their ideas in writing or pictorial form, and to aid their self-expression, is inconsistent.

Introduction

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. Pupils' attainment is well below what is expected for their age for most pupils when they enter the school in the nursery. By the time they are in Year 8 only a very few achieve levels near national expectations in some aspects of physical education, such as in games and swimming. In line with pupils in similar schools, a significant number of pupils attain levels throughout their life in the school, below National Curriculum Level 1 and are recorded on the nationally recognised differentiated performance criteria ('P' Levels) as between P1 and P8.

2. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand, and can do at the end of Year 2, Year 6 and Year 8 (when they leave the school). Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' Statement of Special Educational Need and their Annual Reviews. References to higher- and lower-attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.

Pupils' achievements across the school

3. Pupils' achievements throughout the school are good overall. They are very good in the Foundation Stage (Nursery and Reception) because of the very good way the curriculum is planned and the thorough knowledge the teacher and her staff have of the needs of the pupils. The teaching in this department is very good; a rich range of activities build on what the children have learned before, in small steps that aid their progress significantly.

4. In Years 1 to Year 8, pupils learn well because of the good teaching and the strong teamwork among staff. Although the support from external specialists, including teachers of pupils with sensory disabilities and therapists is limited, the time that is available to the school is used well and liaison is good. Curriculum planning is weak in some subjects and this reduces the progress that some pupils make. For instance, the very good teaching in music by a specialist teacher has a limited impact on pupils' progress; although pupils make good progress, their progress would be even better if the curriculum was more detailed.

The curriculum has not yet been fully completed and not all elements of the subject are fully represented in the planning. This limits the progress that pupils can ultimately make. The very few pupils who have English as an additional language (EAL) make the same good progress as the rest of the pupils. Some pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or who have complex needs such as physical or sensory impairment make less progress than they might because the work and the equipment, and the use of computers, are not sufficiently adapted or consistently used to support their needs. However, overall, pupils with these additional special educational needs (SEN) make satisfactory progress.

5. The way the school has grouped pupils according to their attainment and types of disability usually works well. Pupil groupings are based on the assessment of pupils, using the national *differentiated performance criteria* ('P' Levels) and other assessments, as well as pupils' range of additional difficulties. This aids pupils' progress. The organisation supports their progress well and enables the school to meet pupils' wide ranging needs. For instance, the highest attaining pupils (those mainly with moderate learning difficulties (MLD)) tend to be the red department (Years 6 to 8) and receive a modified curriculum based directly on the National Curriculum programmes of study. Planning here is good this supports pupils' progress well. Pupils with the most profound disabilities which include pupils with medical needs in the yellow group (Years 1 to 8) have their needs met well with a regime which allows smooth transition from one activity to the next and as well as integrating the physical and emotional care at the same time. In the orange group (Years 1 to 6), where there are pupils with SLD and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) together, the curriculum in some subjects is not sufficiently challenging. The school is trialling its modified curriculum planning (its 'access' curriculum') and it now covers all classes in this department. In some subjects (design and technology, geography, and history) the planning is not sufficiently aligned to the National Curriculum programmes of study and some pupils have little time to study the elements that are planned. Although some teachers have recognised this and modified the planning well, overall, the weakness in the curriculum for these subjects limits the progress the pupils can make.

Pupils' achievement in subjects

6. Pupils' achievement in English is good overall. Throughout the school, most pupils make very good progress in communicating and watching, and speaking and listening. This is because of the very good use of drama, role-play and song throughout the school and the very strong support for almost all aspects of pupils' communication skills. However, progress in relation to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning and communication skills in English has been more limited. Pupils' progress in reading and early pre-reading skills is good overall. Pupils with SLD and PMLD make good progress in their ability to identify key words and symbols. Pupils' achievements and progress in writing are satisfactory throughout the school, although the support given for writing is inconsistent and some pupils are still very reluctant writers by the time they leave. This is because the school's policy and practice in relation to early writing and to handwriting and spelling are less well defined than other aspects of its English work. Lower-attaining pupils would make more progress if ICT, signs and symbols were used more systematically to enable them to express their ideas in writing and/or pictorial form. In addition, pupils would be more independent in their self-expression if they had technological aids to support this.

7. In mathematics, the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school has been successful and has had a good effect on pupils' progress. Pupils' progress is good and sometimes very good or excellent because of the good quality of teaching in the school and the strong leadership provided by the co-ordinator for

mathematics, who is an advanced skills teacher (AST). Sometimes, pupils with PMLD or the most complex needs make less progress than other pupils, although their progress is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning does not always identify the mathematical purpose of the lesson clearly enough and this leads to a lack of challenge and opportunities for some of these pupils.

8. The pupils' achievements in science are good across the whole school from Year 1 to Year 8 and they make good progress. The science curriculum is good; it is broad and balanced. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in science. The sensory approach and practical way teachers make the activities meaningful are good and particularly relevant for pupils with PMLD. This helps them, too, to make good progress. Good use is made of discussion in group time, and pupils' understanding is well supported by signing and communication. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, although there is little use of ICT.

9. In ICT pupils make satisfactory progress. However, mainly with the exception of pupils with the most profound needs, there is not enough thought given to how ICT can be used in ways which help support learning, how it can support pupils' access to equipment or how it can aid their communication. This reduces the progress that some pupils could make. The school has been most successful in developing the skills of the older pupils with MLD, because such skills have been systematically taught. This has resulted in the pupils in Year 7 and 8 making good progress. For those pupils with SLD or PMLD in the other classes, their opportunities have been less consistent. Teachers of pupils with the most PMLD (in the Yellow classes) make good use of computers and the ICT work provided for their pupils is appropriate, although some teachers use an insufficient range of software and hardware and the work for some pupils can be repetitive. Overall, these pupils' progress is sound.

10. Pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is very good because of the good and in some cases very good teaching in lessons and in the wider opportunities provided. Pupils' self-care, social and emotional development is central to the work of the school. From a very early age, pupils are expected to do things for themselves and there is great encouragement for them to become as independent as possible and pupils undertake their responsibilities with pride and enthusiasm.

11. In art and design, music, physical education and religious education pupils' progress is good and they achieve well. Particularly strong features of this are the subject knowledge by teachers and the skill with which they adapt the activities to meet the particular needs of the pupils.

12. In French, although no teaching could be seen, pupils make at least sound progress and have benefited well by being taught by a 'native' French assistant.

13. In design and technology, geography and history the pupils' progress is affected by weaknesses in the schools 'access' curriculum in Years 1 to 6. However, pupils often do better because of improved and comprehensive planning in Years 7 and 8 and in design and technology and history, make good progress in these year groups. In geography their progress in Year 7 and Year 8 is sound.

Pupils' individual targets and school target setting

14. The school is very committed to raising pupils' individual levels of achievement and is successful at doing so. A good range of assessment information is collected, especially in relation to personal targets, and pupils make very good progress towards these. The school has this year begun to set challenging targets and has thoroughly analysed the achievements of last year's Year 5 pupils. Good practice is evident through the school's performance review system, although more could be done to analyse the achievements of different groups in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

Strengths:

- Attendance is good compared to similar schools.
- Pupils are very well mannered and polite.
- There are excellent relationships in lessons.
- Behaviour is very good.
- There are many responsibilities available for pupils.
- Pupils make generous donations to charities and organisations seeking aid.

Areas for improvement:

- There is occasional challenging behaviour linked to problems in class management.

15. The pupils' attitudes to school and their learning are very positive. Their behaviour in and around school is very good. Relationships between all members of the school community and the initiatives and personal responsibility taken by pupils are very good. Pupils have maintained these features of their life at school since the last inspection and, in particular, they are closely linked to the very good provision of moral and social development provided by the school.

16. At the last inspection, pupils' attitudes, their behaviour around the school, their relationships with staff and each other and their developing personal responsibility were judged a strength of the school and continue to be so. Pupils' attitudes to their learning, their behaviour and their initiative are very good. Such standards owe much to the very strong provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A very high proportion of those parents who completed and returned the questionnaire or who attended the meeting also expressed very positive views about behaviour in school.

17. The attitudes and behaviour of pupils were good or better in over four fifths of lessons observed and were very good or better in over two fifths. However, a very small number of pupils occasionally display inappropriate and challenging behaviour and this is usually the result of weak class management. The behaviour of pupils in the playground and in the dining hall at lunchtime is very good. Staff apply the school code of behaviour very well and pupils generally know what is expected of them. Support by individual teachers to help pupils understand right from wrong is very good. Pupils are very polite and very well mannered towards visitors as they move around school. Support for their personal development promotes this very well. For example, at lunchtime they greet visitors and offer to get their trays and glasses of water. There was no indication of any unsociable or racist behaviour, whatsoever, during the inspection and there have been no exclusions during the last reporting year.

18. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and all adults, are very good and are sometimes excellent. It was especially noticeable how excited pupils were when they arrived at school and were greeted individually at the entrance by their classroom staff. Pupils in one of the classes for the oldest pupils were observed walking around the school taking photographs with their digital camera. They were very keen to help each other and choose the next subject to be photographed. The high level of co-operation among pupils is a result of the school's very good provision for their social development. For example, when pupils in the department for pupils in Years 6 to 8 visited the local youth club, the boys and girls readily joined in the numerous activities such as football, pool, table tennis or playing snakes and ladders. They played together very well. The high quality of these relationships has a very positive impact on pupils' learning, as they are all included in all school activities.

19. The opportunities for pupils to take responsibility in school are very good. The whole ethos of the school is to encourage pupils to become independent. In class or in play the encouraging phrases such as *'Come on, you can do it'* were often heard during the inspection. Older pupils are given the responsibility of helping nursery children at lunchtime or organise the packed lunch trolley. Pupils of all ages are encouraged, where appropriate, to do things for themselves and take responsibility for their own actions. For example, Year 8 pupils were preparing for their residential visit to Edinburgh and the teacher took every opportunity, particularly, in PSHE lessons, to reinforce the message *'stop, think and choose'* in case they encountered any problems in their exciting trip. Pupils are also very aware of the needs of those less fortunate than themselves and make generous donations to a variety of charities such as Blaze Bears, Comic Relief and a local respite home. All these opportunities have a very positive effect on pupils' personal development.

Attendance

Strengths:

- Attendance is good and is very well monitored.

Areas for improvement:

- Continue to raise the level of attendance.

20. The level of attendance is good compared with other similar schools in the local area and when compared to other special schools on a national basis. The level of authorised absence is slightly less than other similar schools and is almost entirely due to the long periods that many pupils have to spend in hospital. Punctuality to school is very good due to the very well planned arrangements that are in place with escorts and carriers.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

Strengths:

- Teaching in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Teachers and support staff generally understand well the individual learning and personal needs of pupils.
- In most lessons, the work builds on what pupils have learned before and matches their individual needs well.
- Very good teamwork between the teacher and support staff exists in lessons.
- Teachers' planning is good.
- Lessons start promptly; the pace is brisk but adjusted to the pupil and the activity and teachers are adept in fostering enjoyment.
- Teachers provide a wide range of activities and are skilled in eliciting a response from pupils, using very good questioning techniques.
- Staff catch the moment well to extend learning.
- Behaviour management is generally good.

Areas for improvement:

- Some teachers find the matching of work for pupils with the most complex needs or those with sensory disabilities difficult. Not enough guidance is provided by external specialists.
- Not enough use is made of information and communication technology for all aspects of teaching and learning.
- The management of a few pupils is inconsistent.
- Not enough use is made of ways to help pupils to communicate in lessons, including information and communication technology.
- No visual materials are used to help pupils work independently in information and communication technology.

21. The quality of teaching is good overall. This is similar to that found at the last inspection. The teaching is strongest in the Foundation Stage where it is judged to be very good. Unsatisfactory teaching was observed in two lessons which included mainly Year 7 pupils. The quality of teaching has been maintained despite the many changes in school linked to teachers leaving, some long-term staff absence and the planned reorganisation. As a result of the good teaching and interesting activities, pupils put a real effort into their work and try very hard. The headteacher, deputy headteacher and the literacy and numeracy co-ordinators have provided good support for staff and given useful feedback from observing lessons. This has resulted in the quality of teaching being maintained during the long period of reorganisation. This is good preparation and a secure foundation for the transition in September 2002 to a school for pupils with severe (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD).

The quality of teaching across the school

22. The quality of the teaching is satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons. It is good or better in just over two thirds of lessons of lessons. It is very good or better in over one third of lessons. There are some excellent features to the teaching in some lessons. Teaching is strongest in the Foundation Stage where it is judged to be very good. This was because teachers and support staff were highly knowledgeable of the pupils' needs, observe their pupils' responses very well, and know how to communicate with the children to involve them in learning. In Years 1 to 6 teaching is good with some very good features. This is because teachers and support staff work well as a team, match the activity or questions well to

individual pupils and make learning meaningful and enjoyable. In Years 7 and 8 the quality of teaching is good overall. There was a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching in an information and communication technology (ICT) and design and technology lessons. This was because weaknesses in the planning resulted in a lack of demonstration, so that pupils were not clear about what they were aiming to do. Pupils were not managed well and sat for too long, doing little. In ICT there were no materials to support pupils working independently, such as pictures of the sequences they were to follow; as a result pupils often spent too much time waiting for help from the teacher and opportunities for reinforcing key knowledge and skills were lost.

The quality of teaching in subjects

23. Teaching in English is good with some very good approaches to teaching speaking and listening. In mathematics good teaching results from the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy and from the training provided by the co-ordinator. Teaching in personal, social and health education (PSHE) is good in from Years 1 to 6 and very good in Years 7 and 8. In music, teaching is good in Years 1 and 2 and very good in Years 3 to 8 where a specialist teacher of music has been involved. Teaching is good in science, art and religious education. Physical education teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. In geography and history the teaching is satisfactory. The teaching of ICT is broadly satisfactory across the school. Although French was not being taught during the inspection, scrutiny of pupils' work and records and evaluation of progress indicates that teaching is at least satisfactory.

The features of teaching

24. Teachers have very good understanding of the specific needs of the pupils and have good skills in meeting the wide range of needs. Most teachers are extremely committed to providing interesting experiences to help their pupils learn and they are very well supported in this by the work of the support assistants. There is a very strong sense of teamwork and this is a strength of the school. Well-planned and thoroughly prepared lessons generally have clear overall learning objectives. The planning usually identifies outcomes for individual pupils, where this is needed and is usually linked well to pupils' individual education plans (IEPs).

25. Overall teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. In the Foundation Stage and Years 1 and 2 teachers have very good knowledge of the areas of learning and National Curriculum Programmes of Study and plan very well to provide activities that extend pupil's learning. Teachers' subject knowledge is mostly good in Years 3 to 8. The lesson planning enables teachers and support staff to make and record good clear assessments of pupil progress. This is then used as a basis for further planning. Assessments are used very well for the youngest pupils. However, there is insufficient attention to detail in the planning of some design and technology, geography and history lessons. This resulted in pupils not having a range of activities and some waited too long for help. All teachers have improved their skills in teaching literacy and numeracy. As a result of the better planning for these lessons, pupils make good progress.

26. Teachers are usually good at including all pupils in their lessons and matching work for their needs. This enables most pupils to learn well. Teachers use carefully considered questions to check pupil's understanding and provide well-timed and individual prompts or cues to help the pupil to give their answer. Although most teachers plan appropriate graded activities which match pupil's current levels of understanding, some do not always do this.

This means that at times, more able pupils are not stretched and lose interest in the learning. Some find the challenge of working with pupils with complex or sensory needs quite difficult and planning, methods and organisation of lessons to take their needs into account, is sometimes limited. As a result, these pupils' learning is not as good as the rest of the school, although overall it is satisfactory. In the best lessons, teachers expertly select the most significant moment to increase the difficulty of a task or add new knowledge. This was used to very good effect in a Year 4 numeracy lesson and in a lesson for some of the oldest pupils in the school where they were planning their visit to Edinburgh. As a result, pupils' delight in their progress spurred them on to even greater efforts.

27. Teachers know how to stimulate pupils' interest and learning. They ensure that lessons contain a wide variety of activities, which are frequently changed, and which build upon each other. This results in good progress across the lesson and over time. The pace of lessons is usually very good, and this helps maintain pupils with poorer attention skills on task. Activities are very well organised and are made relevant and enjoyable. Lessons start on time and because of good preparation with equipment made ready and because they are well prepared the teaching time is used effectively. This is done very well in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2.

28. Most teachers plan and use a variety of methods to help pupils learn. Individual, group or whole class activities, role-play, listening to sounds, watching images are used to stimulate learning. In the best teaching, practical 'hands-on' materials and equipment and objects of reference are used; for example, in a Year 1 and 2 literacy lesson the use of a caterpillar glove puppet and large pictures of fruit with the centre missing, resulted in pupils learning very well about the main character and the progressive nature of a story. They had fun, really enjoyed the tactile experience and were engrossed in the story line. They also interacted well with each other.

29. A strength of teaching is the teachers' aim for all pupils to make responses during lessons. Where this is done particularly well, signing and symbols are used to support learning and communication. The school is good at teaching routines and helping pupils follow the sequence of the day. A good start has been made in using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). However, although good examples were seen for some pupils in Years 1 and 2, not all pupils have consistent access to the communication systems they need.

30. Rapport and relationships between staff and pupils are of very high quality. Trust and mutual respect are clearly evident throughout the school. The very good relationships between pupils and their teachers and support assistants result in most pupils behaving well and trying very hard to do their work. Pupils respond very positively when they are asked or signalled to pay attention.

31. Teachers have high expectations of pupils' behaviour and give clear messages to pupils, which help them behave very well. Teachers use praise very well to let pupils know that they are doing the right thing. In some lessons, strategies for helping pupils manage their behaviour are very well planned and are consistently used. For example, to teach a pupil that biting is unacceptable a three-step plan was implemented and had been rigorously followed with the result that this behaviour had reduced. However, in a few lessons teachers do not have effective strategies for some pupils with known patterns of behaviour. Very occasionally, support staff are not well positioned to redirect unwanted

behaviours; for example, in a Year 6 and 7 lesson, when the pupils were sitting in a circle the support assistants were not seated near to nor did they move to be near pupils whose behaviour was slowing the pace of the lesson. Occasionally, staff sit some pupils on their knees to calm and pacify them, a practice which is not in line with the pupils' behaviour management programmes.

32. Teachers use every opportunity across all lessons to reinforce emerging literacy and numeracy skills; for example, in a physical education lesson pupils practiced counting as they jumped up and down in the pool. In another instance, pupils were naming colours. In literacy lessons, counting is again be reinforced.

33. Teachers make very good use of support assistants' time and skills. Support assistants are particularly effective because they know what is in the lesson plan, and they are clear about their role. Even though teachers plan, direct and monitor activities, learning support staff are sufficiently skilled to lead activities for small groups or individuals. The very best support seen gave pupils time to think, to respond and make choices.

34. Teachers have only recently completed their training in ICT and, as yet, do not use it enough in lessons. Information and communication technology is used well in the Foundation Stage classes and pupils benefit well from the sensory and language activities this supports. There is little use of ICT as a demonstration tool and computers are used infrequently to help pupils' write or communicate. The use of ICT by teachers' to support learning in subjects is limited and subjects insufficiently support pupils' learning in ICT. Some individual teachers use computers well and this does serve to re-enforce their pupils' skills. For instance, some use ICT so that pupils can research using the Internet, while others use programmes which support work in lessons, such as the use of digital camera and for pupils to select things using switches. Although the situation is improving, the right equipment or the appropriate software are not always available for the particular needs of pupils in each class.

35. Homework makes a strong contribution to pupils learning and takes many forms. In some cases this is 'traditional' homework where pupils complete work in relation to mathematics or English. For some pupils it is learning symbols or signs. Parents expressed concern over homework in their responses in the inspection questionnaire. The provision for homework is good but the school could better explain to parents what home-based activities actually constitute homework.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning

Strengths:

- The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is very good.
- Teachers have made the pupils' learning opportunities very relevant in order to meet their needs and interests.
- The curriculum is strong in Year 7 and Year 8.
- The curriculum is supported by an excellent range and quality of activities outside lessons that support the curriculum.
- The provision is very good for pupils' personal, social and health education.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is narrow in parts.
- The monitoring of the curriculum overall and individual subjects, in particular, is insufficient.

36. The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided are good. There are significant strengths in the provision outside lessons, and the school works very hard, and is very successful, at making the activities relevant and in involving the community, especially for pupils with severe (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The strongly relevant activities help pupils understand better what they are doing and help them learn more effectively.

37. The school's curriculum continues to be developed and, overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The curriculum for the whole school supports the aims of the school well and is highly relevant in relation to pupils' needs. The Foundation Stage curriculum for children under the age of six is planned very well using the six areas of learning. Planning is highly detailed and is linked very well to the ongoing assessment of the children's progress.

38. At the time of the last inspection, the school was required to develop further an appropriate curriculum for pupils who had severe and complex learning difficulties in Years 7 and 8. This resulted in the development of the school's own 'access' curriculum across all year groups. The 'access' curriculum is a modified curriculum based on a topic approach with specific themes from the areas of learning from the national Foundation Stage curriculum for children under the age of six. The school's view, appropriately, was that given the changes in the school population, the curriculum for all pupils with SLD / PMLD needed revising and developing. This is still being piloted, although a formal planned review, to be held during the summer term 2002, did not take place because of the pressures of re-organisation and the imminent departure of many staff and pupils.

39. The current curriculum meets statutory requirements. The curriculum for pupils in Year 7 and 8 is good and planning is generally thorough, detailed and very relevant. It includes French as a modern foreign language and the programme covers speaking and listening and knowledge about France and French culture. However, aspects of some subjects (history, geography, design and technology and music) are not sufficiently planned for pupils between Year 1 and Year 6. Similarly, the planned programmes for these subjects are not yet sufficiently linked to the National Curriculum and do not allow for a good depth

of study over a period of time. For example, pupils from Years 1 to 6, currently, do not learn about British history or about invaders and settlers, such as the Romans. These weaknesses have also been identified by some of the staff who have, within their own class, made very good and relevant short-term changes to their planning.

40. The English and mathematics curriculum is good. They offer pupils a broad and balanced base for learning English and mathematics. The school has implemented the national literacy and numeracy strategies very well. Every opportunity in other lessons, and informally around school, is used to practice and extend pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills as well as their literacy and numeracy skills. However, aspects of their writing skills are insufficiently promoted through other lessons and pupils do not use ICT enough to support their written work. The science curriculum is well thought out and adapted well to meet the needs of the pupils. It is practically based and, in particular, the sensory opportunities and planning for pupils with PMLD are good. Music is taught by a specialist teacher who has been coming into school one day each week. The content of this programme is very good. The emphasis on music pervades the curriculum. Singing, moving to different rhythms and making sounds and rhythms are used during many other lessons; for example, drum beats in physical education, nursery rhymes as songs in literacy lessons. From September 2002 music will be taught by each class teacher, as the specialist music post will disappear as part of the reorganisation. The school will need to monitor the situation closely to ensure that all aspects of music are covered and that it is taught well.

41. The provision for pupils with complex or sensory needs is satisfactory. The strength is in the individual support the pupils receive and the way pupils' IEP targets support their learning in key areas. The use of ICT or other communication technology to support pupils' learning and communication is limited, however.

42. The range and quality of activities outside lessons are excellent and add much to pupils' personal development. Lunchtime clubs are highly organised, very well managed by support and lunchtime staff and significantly enrich the curriculum. Some activities are also available before and after school. All are very popular with pupils. Pupils can participate in music, dance, art, construction activities, as well as a very good range of sports for pupils to participate in. The school makes arrangements for pupils to visit leisure and sports centres to pursue swimming and experience a wide range of other games. Lunchtime programmes also include a very good range of physical activity such as, 'fitness for fun; youth club, pool, skittles, ball games, and activities in the soft play room. An important function of the wide range of activities on offer lies in teaching the pupils to make choices and providing them with opportunities to practise the personal and social skills in settings wider than school.

43. The provision for PSHE is very good. The school's own 'therapies', such as 'sound' therapy, support this well. As well as lessons in PSHE, many other opportunities during the school day are created and used very well to support pupils' personal development. All staff contribute to this area. Lunchtime assistants work with pupils on their eating and drinking skills, personal care and hygiene programmes, and daily living and symbol timetable routines are practised. A good start has been made in using the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). Although good examples are seen in Years 1 and 2, not all pupils have consistent access to the communication systems they need in order to improve their communication with others. For pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties the curriculum includes good programmes (including therapy support) to stimulate hearing, sight, vocalisation, and movements such as grasping, releasing and manipulating objects. The recent additional provision of the sensory room and music, sound, light and rebound therapy extends the curriculum well for these pupils.

44. The curriculum fulfils the legal requirements to provide careers, sex and relationship education, and the basics of drugs education are covered, in addition. Provision in these areas is good. The sex and religious education policy is clear and shared with parents of Year 6 pupils. Each year, from Year 5 onwards, the topic is re-visited in increasing depth. The co-ordinator, as well as teaching this herself, involves the school nurse. Where necessary, staff provide individual teaching and support for some pupils. There are good links with parents with regard to this aspect. The PSHE co-ordinator is rightly seeking information about providing a more detailed drugs education course for pupils with SLD. Currently, a drugs awareness programme, linked to substances that cause harm, is introduced in Year 1 and is referred to and developed as the pupils get older.

45. The amount of teaching time in the school week is slightly less than that recommended. However, the school makes the most of the time pupils are in school. Good routines for getting pupils changed, into class and ready for the lessons means that time is not lost. The purposeful working atmosphere also helps to make sure that the maximum time is used for learning. The school will need to make sure that this good pace is maintained. As part of their health needs, some pupils receive physiotherapy. When possible this is delivered in the classrooms during lessons with the result that pupils do not miss lessons.

46. All co-ordinators need to be provided with time to monitor their subjects to make sure that all pupils have full access to the National Curriculum and religious education programmes of study. This monitoring needs to include observing teaching and analysing pupils' work in order to ensure the effectiveness of curriculum planning, consistency of teaching quality, and that pupils make sufficient progress.

Links with business and the community

Strengths:

- Links with the community are excellent.
- The school integrates its links with the community and business very well into the work done in lessons.
- There are very good links with the schools the pupils transfer to.

Areas for improvement:

- None.

47. The school has developed excellent links with its local community and a number of businesses in the North East of England. The community provides a very good contribution to pupils' learning. Learning in school is extended and enriched well by visits and pupils make numerous trips to local places of interest such as a farm in Morpeth, Washington Wildlife Park, Monkwearmouth Museum and Newcastle airport. During the inspection older pupils were preparing to make a residential visit to Edinburgh where they would be going to the castle and the zoo. The work prepared by the teacher for this visit was of very high quality and prepared pupils very well to benefit from the community and locality in which they were staying. In addition, some pupils in Years 7 and 8 were undertaking a project on the Romans, which included a field trip to a Roman fort. This emphasis on day and residential visits and 'real-life' experiences adds much to the school's personal development programme.

48. Community visitors include representatives from the fire and police services, an American Civil War Society and the local pipe band. The school links all these activities clearly into the curriculum and they have a very positive impact on pupils' learning and progress. The development of business links has resulted in very generous financial

donations being given to the school. For example, one company has generously donated money for the refurbishment of the hydrotherapy pool. Other donations have been used to equip the light room and provide resources for classrooms. Many other firms and charities in the area support the school and donate money for other aspects of school life. The school does not see these business relationships as a one-way process, as during the year it also provides support for functions being held by these organisations. The relationships are mutually beneficial. The school has developed very good links with other schools such as Portland and Felstead, the schools to which many pupils' transfer in September each year. A number of pupils also have positive experiences when they spend time in local mainstream schools, with which the school has strong links.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Strengths:

- There are very good opportunities for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Policy and planning for spiritual, moral, social and cultural are well developed.
- There are very effective assemblies, daily prayers and reflection.
- The celebration of festivals and the personal, social and health education programme contribute very well.
- More able pupils help less able.
- Staff are excellent role models, and very good relationships exist between staff and pupils.
- There is a significant contribution of the community to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural, especially through visits and visitors to school.
- There is an extensive programme for cultural development.

Areas for improvement:

- None.

49. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a significant strength of the school. Overall, the provision is very good with some outstanding features.

50. Provision for spiritual development is very good, with numerous opportunities throughout the school, both planned and spontaneous. Lessons in religious education, such as those focusing on special events, places and festivals, such as Christmas, Easter, and Divali, play an important part. Each class has an act of collective worship or period of reflection daily, usually at the end of the day. In some classes, a school prayer is led by one of the pupils. Pupils have opportunities to participate in carefully planned assemblies. This ensures they celebrate the main Christian religious festivals as well as having opportunities to appreciate the richness and diversity of other religions. The school is careful to do this, recognising that it has few pupils from minority ethnic groups. Each department holds its own assemblies weekly, and there are whole school assemblies each half term, usually within a theme, such as the one to celebrate many of the staff and pupils leaving the school at the end of term. During the week of the inspection, there were two departmental assemblies held to celebrate the good work of pupils. These contribute significantly to pupils' self-esteem and feelings of self-worth. During the second assembly, live music was played by visitors to the school; the children were clearly excited and moved and swayed to the music, enjoying every moment of a most fulfilling spiritual experience. Where pupils have individual religious beliefs and needs, such as special food for religious festivals, the school ensures that these are met in an appropriate way.

51. Arrangements to promote moral and social development are very good. A high quality programme for personal, social and health education (PSHE) permeates the school. There is constant, but unobtrusive emphasis, on appropriate behaviour, taking turns and thinking of others' needs. Many of the more able pupils voluntarily help their less able peers, such as wheeling them into the dining room at lunchtime and making sure they are seated properly at the tables for their lunch. They also help in this way when the class is going to the therapy pool or at break times. More able pupils often ensure that their friends are comfortably seated and positioned in lessons. Pupils are aware of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour and develop this awareness into a clearer understanding of right and wrong. The school consistently promotes acceptable moral behaviour as it fosters fair play; a good example of this was during one lunch time football activity when pupils refereed their own game and consistently played to the rules, accepting decisions that went both for them and against them with equal grace. The very good and sometimes excellent relationships between staff and pupils enhance pupils' social development. Staff also provide excellent role models, both in their dealings with each other and in their treatment of the children in their care. The school constantly fosters respect between individuals and pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and actively consider the needs of others. Pupils are encouraged to think of others beyond the school; for example, pupils have raised money for Mencap and a local hospice. They have also provided 'blaze' bears, which they present to children who have had traumatic experiences.

52. Social development is an equally important part of the school personal development programme. Communication is encouraged and assisted in all lessons, and also in other activities such as lunchtime clubs and out of school educational visits and trips. Residential educational visits provide a wonderful opportunity for pupils to enhance their personal and social development, living away from home for a few days, often in a youth hostel. Responsibilities and small jobs are offered to those pupils who can handle them, such as taking daily to their classrooms dinner and attendance registers, and being 'monitors' and clearing away plates and cutlery in the dining hall. A wide range of visits and visitors and residential experiences are offered to pupils, such as visits to Beamish museum, Washington Wild Life Trust, Variety Club visits to theatres and the pantomime and sporting activities with other similar schools, enhancing their social opportunities. There is a superb range of extra-curricular activities offered at lunchtime, ensuring that all pupils are catered for in some way. All of these encourage pupils to communicate and interact with a variety of different people. The result is a strong feeling of pride and a sense of belonging in the school community.

53. Cultural development is very good. An extensive programme of visits and visitors provides pupils with good opportunities to develop an awareness of the richness and variety of their own and others' cultures. Opportunities are provided to celebrate other faiths, beliefs and festivals, such as the Chinese New Year and Divali. The football World Cup this year provided pupils with opportunities to study traditions and cultures of countries around the world. Visits to local museums and the theatre as well as visitors to school promote an interest in arts, music, dance and drama. Religious education contributes significantly to the development of pupils' cultural awareness. It provides opportunities for them to explore the cultures associated with the religions they learn about, such as Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Sikhism, and Judaism. One of the teachers, who also teaches in another school, brings back exciting artefacts on loan from that school, such as a 'Qu'ran' for pupils studying Islam. Pupils are then given an opportunity to compare similarities and difference between the Qu'ran and the Bible. The school has had *'an artist*

in residence which provided further opportunities for pupils to study art from many other countries. As a result, there are many high quality displays of pupils work around the school, such as African masks and Ganesh elephant masks. World Cup displays, displays of the Hindu god Brahma, and the protector Vishnu, plus a particularly exciting North American bad dream catcher.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare

Strengths:

- There is excellent emotional and physical care by school staff, especially for the pupils with the most complex medical needs.
- Good procedures are in place for fire precautions and first aid.
- Supervision at lunchtime and in the playground is very good.
- Good procedures are in place for child protection.
- School promotes and monitors attendance very well and the monitoring and promotion of behaviour is good.

Areas for improvement:

- Governors' involvement in health and safety issues, especially monitoring, is limited.
- Too many hazards and incidents were seen during the inspection.
- The amount of time agencies outside the school have for supporting pupils is insufficient.

54. The school continues to provide good care and support for its pupils overall, although there are weaknesses in its health and safety procedures. The support provided by school staff for the emotional and physical needs of pupils is excellent. This quality of care is underpinned by the high level of knowledge that staff have of pupils and the very good relationships that exist in school. This very high quality of care extends particularly to the most disabled pupils who have the most complex medical needs. From the moment that pupils arrive in school, they receive the highest level of care and support from all members of staff, as well as from the specialist visitors who come into school on a regular basis. However, the level of external support is insufficient to meet the pupils' needs identified in their statements of special educational need (SEN).

55. The procedures for child protection are good and the school ensures that all members of staff have an appropriate understanding of the policy and guidance. The school also maintains appropriate records for fire drills, accident recording and the emergency contact of family and friends in case of an emergency. The school supervises pupils very well at dinnertime and in the playground. The midday supervisors are a very effective and important part of the school 'family'.

56. Although there is a comprehensive policy, the school has an insufficiently rigorous approach to other aspects of health and safety. The governing body should ensure that the job descriptions of key staff reflect specific responsibility and accountability for health and safety matters and that regular monitoring takes place. At present, the number of regular and formal inspections of the school premises is limited and hazards are not identified and removed quickly enough. For example, the tarmac area to the rear of the school, relatively disused since the reduction in classes, is now used for the emergency evacuation of some pupils only. However, it is covered in broken glass. Additionally, loose paving stones are clear hazards on the path into school and some benches in the playground are badly

splintered, causing a potential hazard to those that use them. Although the high level of staff supervision minimises the risk of injury to an extent, other breaches of health and safety procedures observed during the inspection demonstrate the need for formal written risk assessment procedures to be completed for all school activities including school visits.

57. The school promotes and monitors attendance very well. The monitoring of statistics takes place on a regular basis for both individual and class records. The school administrator plays an important part in this process and she has a very good understanding of the individual problems of pupils and their backgrounds. The school promotes and monitors behaviour well through the very effective provision of moral development and the way that teachers manage it. In almost all cases, standards are applied consistently and pupils have a good understanding of how the school expects them to behave. Occasionally, challenging behaviour is handled inappropriately by some adults.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance and support for pupils' SEN

Strengths:

- The adoption of P levels has facilitated the monitoring of pupils' progress and has helped the school to set meaningful whole school targets.
- There is very good assessment and monitoring of children in the Foundation Stage and for pupils' personal, social development across the school.
- Strong procedures are in place for reviewing pupils' progress in relation to their statement of special educational need at their annual review and for involving parents and pupils in the target setting that results from this.
- **Areas for improvement:**
- There is a lack of therapy time and external support for pupils' additional special education needs.
- The use of assessment to inform planning by some teachers sometimes does not take account sufficiently of pupils' more specialist needs and assessments. The use of augmentative communication systems to help pupils is limited.
- Further development of assessment and monitoring tools, particularly in non-core subjects, is needed.

58. Good procedures are now in place for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. In some areas of the school's work, such as in the Foundation Stage and their support for pupils' personal and social development, they are now very good. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection, when the need to develop assessment procedures in relation to the subjects of the curriculum was a key issue. Assessment procedures are now at least satisfactory in all subjects, although the school development plan rightly recognises the need to continue to strengthen this aspect of its work.

59. Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress is strongest in the Foundation Stage, where there is highly effective use of a range of observational procedures, checklists and formal tests to monitor the children's progress, both on a half termly and a day-to-day basis. These are carefully linked to the Foundation Stage areas of learning and record examples of children's responses, which clearly illustrate what children know, understand and can do. Assessment procedures and their use by teachers to inform their planning and teaching in English, mathematics, science, design and technology, personal and social development and religious education are good throughout the school. In all other subjects assessment

procedures and their use is satisfactory. The school has adopted the nationally agreed *Differentiated Performance Criteria* for the early National Curriculum Levels as descriptors for pupils' attainments (P Levels) alongside National Curriculum Level descriptors, to help them monitor pupils' progress. However, not all subjects are using fully developed, and sufficiently-detailed, assessment profiles to enable progress (or the lack of it) to be identified in all aspects of the subject, and some are still insufficiently tied into the nationally agreed P Level descriptors.

60. Assessment in English and mathematics has particularly been helped by the school's response to the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, the careful linking of programmes taught to these and the day-to-day planning and recording procedures in place. This means that in most classes teachers are clear about whole class and individual pupils' learning targets and the work is carefully planned to meet the pupils' needs and to help them progress within the subject.

61. Assessment procedures have been strengthened by the introduction of the school's tracking of pupils' progress in all subjects of the National Curriculum using the P Levels and the Lancashire local education authority (LEA) *Performance Indicator Value Added Teaching System* (PIVATS). The school has begun to analyse the results carefully, and use them to set whole school targets, to track individual pupils' progress and to set targets for improvement. The school plans now to develop further its procedures for other subjects both for checking on individual pupils' progress over time and to examine standards in subjects.

62. Effective procedures in place for reviewing pupils' progress in relation to their statement of SEN at their annual review and for involving parents and pupils in the target setting that results from this. Reports arising from these meetings are generally of a high quality. The school has worked hard to improve the wording of the targets so that they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and related well to the tasks pupils undertake and the quality of targets set in individual educational plans (IEPs) and at annual reviews is generally good. The target setting process leads to all pupils having targets set for communication, literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal and social development. Progress towards these targets is very carefully reviewed and is usually good. Teacher assessment is carried out on a yearly basis as well as at statutory times. There are appropriate plans to use the new PIVATS scales to allow the progress of pupils with more complex needs to be tracked in more detail within as well as across each P Level.

63. Most teachers use the information gained through assessment and monitoring well, although sometimes the work set in lessons does not take account sufficiently of pupils' more specialist needs and assessments. This is particularly so for some of the assessments in relation to pupils' specific communicative, sensory or physical needs. More specific advice is needed as to the implications of assessments, to be provided, by Health Trust therapists and LEA sensory support specialists so as to ensure that these pupils are able to be fully included in lessons. There is currently no occupational therapy available to the school and insufficient speech and language therapy time, in particular, to enable all pupils' needs identified in their statements of SEN to be met. Some staff do not understand the implications for their teaching of the specialist assessments made by speech and language therapists and sensory support staff.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

Strengths:

- Parents hold school in high esteem.
- There is very good support by the Friends organisation.
- There is excellent support of parents during assembly.
- Parents are very happy with the information provided.
- The school is very supportive of its parents.
- There are very positive views on communication from school.

Areas for improvement:

- No major issues.

64. The school promotes itself very well to its parents and those who responded to the questionnaire, or who attended the pre-inspection meeting, have very positive views about most aspects of school life. Parents hold Sunningdale School in high esteem. A very high proportion of those who responded to the questionnaire felt that the school kept them well informed about their children's progress and worked closely with them. Parents who were spoken to during the inspection made comments such as '*this is a wonderful school*' and '*this is the best thing that could have happened for my child*'.

65. Very effective links have been developed with parents. The school has made a very positive effort to encourage them into school to work with their children, attend assemblies and to discuss any problems with members of staff. During the inspection mothers were observed working in the hydrotherapy school with their children, enjoying the regular Wednesday coffee morning and attending Year 1 to 5 departmental assembly, when over 50 parents were present (an excellent turnout), representing 48 children.

66. The Friends of Sunningdale Association is a very enthusiastic and hard working organisation, which is very well supported by parents and friends from all over the community. The highlight in their varied and interesting programme of events is the annual 'Garden Party' where £3500 was raised earlier this year. During the year the Friends organisation raises in excess of £7000 for such major projects as the 'Oasis pool', a future hydrotherapy pool development. The school places a very high value on all this support and it has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

67. The information produced by the school for its parents is good overall. The school provides very good opportunities for parents to meet together socially and comments from parents who were spoken to in school included such positive statements as '*It's so helpful to be able to talk to other parents*' and '*I don't feel I am on my own*'. Good use is made of the home/school diary and both parents and teachers are able to have a two-way dialogue.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

Strengths:

- Day-to-day management is very good, as is the leadership of the headteacher.
- There is very good leadership by the headteacher.
- The school improvement plan is a good document, which identifies the right priorities for action.

Areas for improvement:

- The work of governors in monitoring the school's work and their responsibilities for health and safety.
- The role of all co-ordinators in monitoring teaching and learning.

68. The leadership and management of the school by the headteacher and senior management team is good overall. Day-to-day management is very good and the headteacher leads the school very well. He has been an inspiration for staff in the times of considerable uncertainty during the period leading up to re-organisation. Staff morale has been maintained to the end, a goal that the headteacher set out to achieve. This has ensured that throughout this process of change there has been as much stability in the school as possible. The change in size of the school and its designation has led to a significant reduction in both staff and the number of pupils. The headteacher (together with governors) have handled these reductions very well. The quality of teaching has been maintained and pupils' progress remains good overall. There has been some effect in a few subjects, partly due to a lack of staff with expertise and because the planned review of the 'access' curriculum has not taken place due to the pressures of re-organisation. After carefully considering the impact of staff changes and the strengths and areas for improvement of his staff team, the headteacher has built a strong, restructured senior management team to support the next stage of the school's development. The current senior management team provide good support to the headteacher. They, together with the governors, have a vision for the school that provides a very clear educational direction that is very well reflected in the school's aims and is very evident in the school's work. For example, pupils successfully grow in confidence and take responsibility for themselves.

69. Since his appointment, the headteacher has instituted a programme of school improvement that led the school out of special measures in 2000. The school has changed radically since it went into special measures in 1998, when it was an 'inward looking' and 'closed' establishment. Parents were not welcomed as part of the team supporting their children and training and advice and support from professionals was not sought. The school has been transformed and, besides the considerable improvements in the quality of the provision and the standards pupils are able to attain, the work with parents is a significant strength; staff have also benefited from a comprehensive programme of staff training.

70. A good, relevant school development plan has been produced. The main aims of this plan related to the reduction in pupil numbers and changes in the needs of pupils; the need for a new management and staffing structure; improvements to the facilities available to support pupils' learning; improvements to the curriculum, planning and pupil assessment; and school self-review. The school has made good progress in introducing assessment procedures that teachers use well to inform their planning for pupils. Staff and governors have a very strong commitment to improvement. Plans are in place for improvements to

the building, including the provision of a purpose-built, multi-sensory centre, a respite facility, a new hydrotherapy pool, learning through landscapes project and parent's room. However, the finances necessary to carry out this programme are only partly in place. The headteacher is actively seeking funds to develop the remaining projects.

71. The support offered by the governing body is satisfactory. It has been strong in shaping the direction of the school and in supporting parents, staff and pupils during the changes. Meetings are held regularly and well attended. Governors receive reports from the LEA, the school and its own committees. As a result of this and some monitoring by governors, they have a good knowledge of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and are very well versed in the issues relating to re-organisation and future school development. However, the focus on managing the changes arising from the reduction in staff and pupil numbers has resulted in other aspects, notably the curriculum, receiving insufficient attention. The introduction of the 'access curriculum' has resulted in some pupils having a limited range of opportunities to develop their knowledge skills and understanding. For example, in history, pupils do not have access to the richness of the National Curriculum in terms of being able to compare different periods of history in Britain and other parts of the world. The governing body needs to ensure that it monitors all aspects of the life of the school.

72. The governing body has been effective in ensuring that it has fulfilled its obligations in meeting most of its statutory duties. However, it has not met its statutory responsibilities in relation to health and safety. A number of serious health and safety risks were identified during the inspection. The governing body needs to ensure a full health and safety review is carried out and any necessary action taken as a matter of urgency.

73. The school has implemented a good system for performance management review of teachers in accordance with national guidance. Plans are in place to introduce a similar system for other staff. The process is being well focused on meeting the school's priorities of raising standards in literacy, numeracy, the use of ICT and signing.

74. The school has made sound progress in addressing the key issues since the last inspection. The good quality of teaching has been maintained, as has pupils' progress. At the time of the previous inspection, limitations in the provision of ICT to support pupils' learning and communication were identified. The school response has been unsatisfactory. As a result, those pupils with additional communication needs sometimes have limited access to the curriculum. In addition, the school has made only satisfactory progress in ensuring that the pace and rigour of whole-school monitoring and evaluation are maintained. The senior management team have monitored teaching and some co-ordinators, notably those responsible for literacy, numeracy, have been actively involved in monitoring their areas. Some subject co-ordinators' responsibility for this has extended to only part of the school population. The school is addressing this issue and their role will be extended to the whole school from September 2002. The school has set challenging targets for pupil performance for 2002 – 2003 and has considered well systems for doing this. For instance, the school is introducing the Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting (PIVATS) system to refine this process.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

Strengths:

- There is a good number of support staff, who are well experienced and help the pupils well.
- Staff are trained well in the national strategies.
- Accommodation is spacious and good plans exist to use the future spare capacity efficiently.
- Ambitious plans exist for modifying and modernising the accommodation.
- **Areas for improvement:**
- The number of teaching staff required for the new population of pupils needs to be kept under review.
- Staff skills need extending in order for them to effectively support pupils with the most complex needs.
- The outside play area, light room (ventilation), the library, information and communication technology and food technology areas need improving.

75. The school currently has an adequate number of teaching and good numbers of support staff whose expertise is satisfactorily matched to the needs of the pupils. The reduction in staffing has been managed well. However, the indicative teacher staffing level for September, based on LEA funding and guidance, means, that compared with similar schools, there may not be enough teachers. This arises in part from the number of pupils with high levels of medical need but also the uncertainty about pupil numbers and intake, at the present time. This may not be known until September or even later and the number of teachers the school requires needs to be kept under review. All staff have received training in the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies as well as in other curriculum areas. The school recognises the need to provide further training in the use of ICT and in the skills required to meet a changing pupil intake, especially for pupils with more complex needs. Satisfactory progress has been made in improving staff skills in general since the last inspection. However, more focus now needs to be given to supporting the communication and physical needs of pupils with complex difficulties to help them to access the curriculum more effectively. The new senior management team now has a sharper focus and recognises this need. Sound, formal procedures exist for the induction of new staff to the school, and links with local teaching and training providers are satisfactory for the initial training of both teaching and non – teaching staff.

76. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school is spacious and will be more so from September when the number of classes reduces. The school has already given effective consideration to the future efficient use of the buildings. Spare rooms are to be used by LEA education personnel, such as the educational psychology service, for which the school will receive 'rent'. Attractive wall displays combined with a high standard of cleanliness and maintenance make it a pleasant and attractive environment for the pupils.

77. Classrooms are well organised and are efficiently set out for effective teaching and learning. Information and communication technology (ICT) and food technology facilities share the same room. Both are cramped and poorly ventilated. The transfer of noise from one to group to another sharing the room is a major problem and interferes with pupils' concentration. The library is part of a recreation area and access to it is difficult. It is not well organised and does not enable pupils to develop effective library skills. However, there is a good number and wide range of book around the classrooms. Specialist facilities include a small hydrotherapy pool, light and sound room. Ventilation in the light room should be improved, as it gets very hot in a short time.

78. The school has spacious outside areas for creative play, although there is little in the way of challenging play equipment, especially for pupils with physical difficulties. The sensory garden has limited access for pupils with PMLD, and planting beds are too low to enable such pupils to participate in horticultural activities.

79. Storage space is generally good although some classrooms have limited circulation space for wheelchairs and this should be kept in view when refurbishment and adaptations take place. Although some doors have finger guards, the majority does not and provision of these should be urgently considered not least because of the increasingly vulnerable nature of the pupil intake and the fact that it will soon comprise only pupils of primary school age. The school has ambitious and well-developed plans to develop further the educational facilities on site, in line with the needs of the perceived population of pupils it is to receive. However, it is aware that it must keep clearly in view the nature of the educational needs of pupils who are actually admitted.

80. Overall, learning resources are satisfactory. The school has a wide range of learning resources of good quality, particularly in English and mathematics and for children under six years of age in the Foundation Stage. The range of specialist resources such as modified keyboards, pointing devices and communication aid equipment available to support some pupils' use of ICT is inadequate, and the range of software too narrow overall. Very good use is made of the resources in the local community with visits to the local wetlands trust, Beamish museum and coastal areas, as well as nearby schools and nurseries both for work on curriculum areas and for the development of pupils' social skills.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning

Strengths:

- Office administration and support for staff by the resources assistant is a strength.
- The finance committee and the full governing body play a full part in effectively deciding how the budget can be best spent.

Areas for improvement:

- The criteria by which the school will measure success are not always clear enough.
- The detail on how progress will be monitored to make sure the improvement plans are working.
- More consistent use of information and communication technology to support administration by support staff and teachers.

81. The school's strategic use of all resources is satisfactory. Financial planning and control is satisfactory and the chair of governors, finance committee, headteacher and office staff work effectively together to set and monitor spending and ensure efficient financial control. Careful financial planning has wisely taken the school re-organisation into account by setting up the staffing and school organisation for September. Recent minor recommendations from the LEA financial audit have been rigorously followed up.

82. The school development plan includes the reorganisation and other related priorities and is reasonably well costed. However, some of the criteria by which the school will measure success are not clear enough. Also there is not enough detail on how progress will be monitored to make sure the plans are working. The management team have identified most, but not all areas needing development; for example, improving staff skills in using alternative

forms of communication, in managing pupils with autism, aids for pupils with sensory disabilities need to be included.

83. The finance committee and the governing body play a full and effective part in deciding how the budget can be best spent. Additional funds are raised by the parents' group and are used for specific events or equipment. This improves the provision for the pupils. The governors check budget spending at least once a term. Subject co-ordinators consider carefully and evaluate materials before requesting funding for resources. The headteacher checks on improvements as a result of such purchases. However, subject leaders are not given an agreed amount of budget at the beginning of the year with the responsibility to target funding on improvements agreed.

84. The schools' income last year was in line with the average amount for similar schools nationally. For the 'new' school in September the amount of funding available is lower than that found nationally and this has led to concerns about staffing levels.

85. Specific grants are used satisfactorily for the purpose they are intended and are clearly accounted for in the financial records. During the last year some of the grants were very effectively used to release teachers to observe others teaching and give feedback to improve teaching and learning for example in literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in teachers being more skilled in those subjects. To maintain staffing levels the governors took the decision to use most of the standards fund grants to pay for staff. This has enabled the school to plan and prepare for the reorganisation, to try to adequately support pupils from September and to ensure school development activities continue. Rightly, the governors and headteacher are considering how best to tackle future funding. An appropriate amount of money is currently held in the school budget reserves. Major improvements to the site are in preparation; private funding is being raised by the school, together with the parents' group, to pay its share of the costs.

86. The administration officer, among other wide-ranging tasks, provides a warm, welcome to visitors, efficiently deals with the extensive daily transport arrangements and telephone calls from and to parents. A 'resources' assistant provides a very valuable service to the school. She produces materials for teachers and pupils to use and helps staff with their use of ICT such as digital cameras, electronic mail and word processing. As a result, the headteacher and staff can focus their time and effort efficiently directly on management or on teaching and learning.

87. The school's use of the new ICT to support administration by office and teaching staff is broadly satisfactory. The offices and classrooms are linked by a computer network and staff and pupils have access to the Internet and electronic mail. Although some staff use this well to complete pupil records and reports, wider use across all staff would lead to time saving and better resources for teaching and learning. Also, some staff use this facility to find or make teaching resources to enhance their teaching and pupil's learning. However, wider and more consistent use across the staff is needed. The range of hardware and software in some classrooms need to be improved, so that staff and pupils can have better access to new and exciting ways of learning.

88. The school satisfactorily follows the principles of best value. The headteacher and administrative officer are effective in obtaining the best price from those who tender for services and contracts, for example selecting the best quality for the price for the improvements to the hall windows. As there is at present a lack of national data for the school to compare the progress of pupils, the school has started a target setting approach that will mean that each pupil's progress can be more systematically recorded and compared year on year. Although the school seeks the views of parents on an informal

basis, the canvassing of the views of parents and pupils is an area where the school could do more. An increasing amount of information is being gathered and used to judge the effectiveness of the school. Overall, the governors provide a good level of challenge to make sure that the school is working to improve.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- Improve the school's approach to health and safety by ensuring the school's comprehensive health and safety policy is reviewed regularly and procedures identified in it are followed. In particular:
(*Paragraph 56*)
 - * Ensuring health and safety checks are regularly carried out;
 - * that job descriptions of staff identify responsibilities for health and safety matters;
 - * that governors undertake their responsibilities for overseeing health and safety in the school;
 - * undertaking a comprehensive risk assessment for all activities.

- Improve the curriculum in design and technology, geography, history and music by ensuring:
(*Paragraphs 39, 149, 156, 166, 180*)
 - * That it takes full account of the National Curriculum programmes of study and is broad and relevant;
 - * that all aspects of the subjects are represented in teachers' planning in a sufficiently balanced way and pupils are given enough time to learn these;
 - * that planning builds on what pupils have learned previously.

- Improve the support for some pupils' more complex needs, including the availability of therapy and specialist support and the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support their independence, understanding, communication and writing by:
(*Paragraphs 168, 169*)
 - * Improving teachers' knowledge of how ICT can support these areas;
 - * identifying in planning where ICT can be used in lessons and for use around the school;
 - * purchasing a wide range of relevant ICT equipment and software to support the pupils the school has;
 - * improving the detail in the scheme of work for ICT so as to provide greater guidance for teachers;
 - * ensuring that all school staff have a greater awareness of the sensory / physical / communication needs of pupils;
 - * ensuring that pupils with sensory / physical/communication needs are fully included in lessons ;
 - * ensuring that advice, guidance and skills about pupils with sensory / physical /communication needs are passed onto school staff through regular visits by specialists and therapists.

90. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- Improve the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring standards and quality in their subjects.
(Paragraph 74)
- Improve the library accommodation and resources.
(Paragraph 77)
- Keep under review the staffing levels in the light of incoming numbers and needs of pupils.
(Paragraph 75)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	101
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	46

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	34	34	29	2	0	0
Percentage	2	34	34	29	2	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	145
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	81

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	3

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	5

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.0	School data	2.0

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

Attainment at the end

Too few pupils took the National Curriculum tests or award bearing examinations to report their results.

Ethnic background of pupils

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

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YN – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	9
Average class size	10

Education support staff:

YN– Y8

Total number of education support staff	33
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1004.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001-2002
	£
Total income	1343883.00
Total expenditure	1301429.00
Expenditure per pupil	8396.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	30974.00
Balance carried forward to next year	73428.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4*
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	0

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

* Five additional teachers leave at the end of the summer term 2002 due to school re-organisation.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

145
45

Percentage of responses in each category

Number of responses in brackets

My child likes school.

My child is making good progress in school.

Behaviour in the school is good.

My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.

The teaching is good.

I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.

I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.

The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.

The school works closely with parents.

The school is well led and managed.

The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.

The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	80	18	2	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62	33	2	0	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	51	40	2	0	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	23	30	9	12
The teaching is good.	80	20	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	76	22	0	2	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	9	4	0	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	36	2	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	36	0	2	0
The school is well led and managed.	82	18	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	51	38	4	0	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	47	31	9	0	13

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

91. At the time of this inspection, children aged three to five years of age (in the Foundation Stage) were taught in two classes in the Yellow department of the school, as were a number of other pupils who have complex learning and/or medical needs. At the time of the last inspection, the teaching and progress of these pupils was judged as consistently good. The school now makes very good provision for its youngest pupils. The curriculum, facilities and teaching provided are all very good. Children within the Foundation Stage are making very good progress from their starting points across all the areas of learning that form part of the Foundation Stage curriculum. They make particularly strong progress in communication, language and early literacy and in personal and social education. This is because of the very detailed planning, the excellent teamwork between teachers and support staff and the careful monitoring of the children's responses to their learning activities. The curriculum is very good (the school's 'Access' curriculum) and is carefully and appropriately tuned to the learning needs and ages of these children. Its planning ensures that all pupils have access to all areas of learning in a planned and progressive way that meets their individual needs well.

92. Children enter the Foundation Stage with very low levels of attainment. Most have attended nurseries elsewhere and occasionally children enter at four years of age to enable their needs to be assessed further. The richness of the learning opportunities offered, the careful use of routines and of activities that engage children's interest, and the very good teaching enable almost all children to make very good progress towards the targets in their individual education programmes. Children quickly feel safe, secure and valued in this environment because of the very strong support, care and concern provided by all staff. This encourages them to 'have a go' at new experiences they might initially find threatening and, because they trust their teachers, they do so, enjoying the sense of achievement when they succeed.

93. The broad and relevant curriculum is strengthened by very good systems being in place to record progress. These provide detailed information that is used very well by the teacher and support staff to plan individual and group support for learning. Teaching is very securely underpinned by these detailed written records of children's progress within the six areas of learning and the individual targets identified in their individual education plans. Staff work very hard to build up the children's self-confidence and self-esteem. Children are grouped appropriately, with a high level of individual attention and, during the wide range of activities, although most of which are adult-directed, they are encouraged increasingly to use their own initiative when selecting materials or activities. Girls and boys are treated equally and all are strongly encouraged to take part in all activities. Children's learning is very well supported throughout the day, including at lunchtime, where there is careful support for children's feeding programmes, their dignity and for their personal, social and emotional needs.

94. The teacher and support assistants work very well as a team and use a consistent approach with the children. The support assistants are involved in the planning of lessons and know exactly what to do during lessons. Staff support children in their play and learning by the constant commentary, praise and encouragement they provide, and spend time at the end of lessons helping the children review their work. This ensures that children develop the ability to be involved in their own learning, making choices and showing what they have achieved.

95. Children's behaviour is managed well through constant support from staff and enthusiastic acknowledgement of their achievements. Staff manage children skilfully and calmly, and provide very good role models for the children in their care. They have excellent relationships with children. Consequently, children's attitudes to their learning are very good. They are very well motivated, think about what they are to choose, and their personal development and relationships with each other are very good in relation to their abilities.

96. Very good opportunities are planned for children's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development and they have good opportunities for multi-cultural experiences. The assemblies that pupils take part in are of very high quality. The themes being well matched to the needs and ability of the children. Every day, time is set aside for quiet reflection and the day ends with a school prayer before the children go home.

97. The leadership and management of the Foundation Stage is highly effective; relationships between staff themselves and between staff and pupils are very strong. Links with medical staff and physiotherapy are very good and the recommendations by therapists and other specialists are carefully followed up. There are very good links with parents, some of whom collect their children at the end of day. Daily home-school notes reassure and inform parents about their children's responses and experiences. Resources within the Foundation Stage are very good. Staff, in general, make good use of a range of computer based technology to support children's awareness, inclusion in lessons and learning.

Personal, social and emotional development

98. Children make very good progress in personal, social and emotional development. Teaching and support from the support staff in this area is very strong. The teacher takes every opportunity to provide experiences in making choices, offering scope to make decisions and they respond well. Children learn to wait their turn in activities such as their music sessions and progress in their interest and concern for each other. They gain confidence through supported role-play as they act out a favourite story or show their object, use their switch. They form very good relationships with adults. Higher-attaining children recognise pictures of themselves and each other and notice who is present. They make steady progress with their self-help skills because of the very good use of time and snack, break, lunch and outdoor play times for support for eating, drinking and dressing skills. This encourages their independence and the more mobile children explore the environment of the classroom and the playground with increasing confidence and interest. Higher-attaining children show a willingness to perform in public; for example, they are happy to sing a favourite rhyme with their teachers as others listen. The clear, but sensitive, messages given by staff, ensure that children are developing an idea of right and wrong and are expected to think about their actions and how others are affected by them. Children with physical difficulties and more complex needs are given carefully thought out opportunities for choice and involvement and opportunities to be more independent. For most children this is enabled well through their communication systems and through ICT, although there could be even more involvement of ICT to support independence, pre-literacy and communication in some individual children's programmes. Teaching is very securely underpinned by the detailed written records of children's progress towards the early learning goals and the targets identified in their individual education plans (IEPs).

Communication, language and literacy

99. Children make very good progress in speaking, listening, communicating and in their pre-reading and writing skills. There is a very strong emphasis in all the work done on supporting children's communication attempts, as well as in the designated sessions, and the quality of teaching in this area is very good with some excellent features. Staff are very quick to notice children's communications and help them sensitively to contribute to whole group and individual sessions. This means children become much more confident communicators and listeners, who know that the adults around them are interested in what they have to communicate. Those children with the most complex needs use a range of means that indicate their interest, needs and wants, and staff are very skilled at interpreting and responding to these. Occasionally, there is a need for signs or symbols and objects to be used more systematically by all staff, but generally these are used well. Some higher-attaining children could make even more progress in their pre-writing skills if ICT and symbols were used more systematically to promote these. Symbols are used well to promote early reading and object recognition skills. Symbol timetables support children's awareness of sequences and very good use of visual aids help children whatever their ability to be involved in stories. Higher attainers are able to anticipate key events in a familiar story and know the names of characters. When they make their marks on paper they do so with increasing shape, form and pressure. They recognise their own and others' names and some key words from the reading scheme. Writing skills are at the very early stages of development, but are systematically supported through the making of class books and colouring and painting activities. Children listen well to stories told by the staff and look with interest at the pictures or objects used to support their understanding. Lower-attaining children enjoy looking at picture books and attempt to turn the pages. All children enjoy action rhymes and increasingly join in parts of nursery rhymes with their teachers. Staff make good use of ICT to promote spoken language. They identify important words to do with ICT but also reinforce the child's spoken (such as when a child says 'again') or gestured response (such as when a child wants 'more') with their own words. For example, children press a large switch to make things happen on the screen such as moving a spider up the spout, based on the nursery rhyme of *Incy Wincy Spider*.

Mathematical development

100. Children make very good progress in mathematics. The carefully planned timetabled activities and the use of finger and number rhymes supports children's counting skills very well. Through regular use of games, such as *One Two buckle my shoe* and *Five currant buns* higher attaining children have their counting skills re-reinforced well. They recognise 2 or 1 from a small group of numbers and are beginning to count to five. Practical work with sand and water supports children's understanding of words like *full* and *empty* well. Higher-attaining pupils are beginning to identify colours and can find a big or a small object. Other children are helped to match similar objects and group and count them. They match according to colour or shape. Children with the most complex needs have a range of sensory experiences that enable them to compare shapes and match objects. Staff help them to count on their fingers and to match these to objects, and the children follow the adults' counting carefully with their eyes. Structured and free play with sand, water and a range of other materials supports their early understanding of words like *full* and *empty* and of *more* and *less*. In construction activities and sorting activities, concepts of size and shape are being constantly reinforced. The careful links between areas of learning through class topics mean that stories reinforce such mathematical understandings very well.

101. Lessons take very good account of the numeracy strategy and the teachers' careful planning ensures that lessons build very well on children's prior experience and previous lessons.

Knowledge and Understanding of the world

102. Children make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. This is because the teaching is very good and teachers are very creative in the ways they present learning opportunities to them. A particular strength is the way staff foster children's awareness, interest and inquisitiveness about events and activities. The children with most complex needs move from very fleeting attention to objects and activities to more sustained attention and increased involvement because of this. For example, in a science lesson about animals, children followed the story of *Noah and his Ark*, choosing pairs of card animals, identifying them, and placing them in the ark. As they did so, they were encouraged to look carefully at the animals and their identifying features. In religious education, children followed the story of the wise man building his house upon the rock. Through their sand tray work they then learn about how things are washed away by water and helped to understand the story better. Similarly, everyday activities are used well to help children develop very early awareness of historical and geographical understandings. Symbol timetables, very good introductions and plenary sessions, weather charts, visits, children's travels within the school environment and careful use of visual aids enable children to become aware of the passage of time and of differences in the environment. Staff talk children through all aspects of their experiences very well in their support for this.

103. The children respond really well to using ICT. They make very good progress because of the very good teaching and, in particular, the teachers' knowledge of how ICT can help them learn. All groups of children are well catered for with work which matches their needs well using well chosen software and hardware, such as a good range of switches. Work with children with PMLD concentrates appropriately on their use of switches to communicate, and to respond to sensory activities such as locating sound and light sources. Occasionally, the location of the computer in an area where there are many other pieces of equipment distracts the children, whose limited attention is part of their SEN. Computer equipment is sometimes too high for these young children and they cannot reach the switch or easily see the monitor. Staff often sit the children on their knee in these cases; whilst this raises the height of the child it does not form a stable base for them to sit on and does not help their control of devices such as mouse.

104. The children are provided with good, carefully planned experiences which help their understanding of how things fit together and the effects of the constructions they make. With large construction bricks they fit one block on top of another and build a high tower until it topples over. They explore how things can fit together and some higher-attaining pupils build simple shapes representing a house or person. They 'interlock' shapes, discovering that this method of construction is stronger than laying blocks directly on top of one another. They sustain their attention well, some becoming absorbed in the activities. A particular strength of the teaching in these activities is that teachers sensitively give children the guidance they need without telling them what to do. The children learn effectively through this approach.

Physical Development

105. Children make very good progress in their physical development. In the planned physical development lessons pupils learn to enjoy and explore movement. As a result of very good teacher and support staff knowledge and skill, pupils make progress in body awareness and control. Staff adapt activities very well to the needs of the pupils and work particularly well to include aspects of children's physiotherapy programmes within these. Teaching and support is very good and this results in pupils developing patterns of movement and extending their control of the bodies. Body awareness, burst of fast movements, slow movements, stillness and sequences of movements are practiced. Time in the soft playroom enables pupils to take risks with their movements and explore the limits of what they can do with their bodies. They are gradually introduced to early water confidence activities in the hydrotherapy pool. Carefully planned practical, creative and pre literacy activities support their development of fine motor skills very well and higher attaining children are able to make marks and begin to draw a line between two guidelines on paper.

106. Children press or squeeze materials and are learning to control some of their movements. Their actions in action-rhymes become more accurate. Children with the most complex needs turn more accurately to sounds and are learning to control their body movements more. Higher-attaining children know the main parts of the body such as *head, leg, arm, fingers*. A range of outdoor climbing equipment and activities enables them to develop their running, jumping and climbing skills, although the school is rightly seeking to extend the access to and range of outdoor play equipment for those children with the most complex needs.

Creative development

107. Children make very good progress in terms of their creative development. Singing, role-play and rhymes are used to great effect to help children to understand their routines and to sustain their interest and attention in group lessons. Individual children have a small repertoire of songs that they happily join in with their teachers. Others move rhythmically to the singing or to the music in their music lessons and demonstrate real excitement when it is their turn to play an instrument or move around the room. The strong support for music and singing supports children's listening and sound awareness very well, as does the school's use of sound therapy with some pupils. The children response in this area is very good. This was particularly so in the timetabled music lesson with children with the most complex needs. In this lesson, the very strong teaching and awareness of the children's needs and interests from all staff enabled all children to be involved, celebrated their involvement and enjoyment and yet challenged them to achieve even more. This meant that children really tried hard to keep time and to move appropriately to the music and were very proud to show what they could do.

108. Children experiment with colour and shape when painting pictures or modelling with play dough. Children with most complex needs handle the material with more confidence and squeeze harder in response to their teacher's suggestions. Other children try hard to make a particular shape. Children have had many opportunities for exploring colour, making collages and producing simple printing. Through play with constructional toys they learn to create new shapes and buildings and pretend that they are houses, garages and so on. Very strong support is provided by the staff for children's imaginative skills, and role

play is used to great effect for supporting understanding in other areas but particularly to support self-expression. Teaching and planning for this area is very strong; a rich and varied range of opportunities is provided and staff strike a very good balance between encouraging children's participation, but still allowing the 'creation' to be the child's own.

ENGLISH

The school's provision for English is **good**.

Strengths:

- Use of drama and role-play.
- Very strong support for almost all aspects of pupils' speaking, listening and communicating skills and pupils' achievement in these areas is very good.
- The setting of English targets in pupils' individual educational needs.
- Good progress in reading.
- Good teaching which has some very good features
- Assessment procedures are good and help teachers know the progress their pupils are making

- **Areas for improvement:**
- Pupils' written work and the opportunities they have for developing their writing.
- The use of information and communication technology to support writing and communication.
- The co-ordinator's role in monitoring all aspects of English.
- Library facilities, which are unsatisfactory.

109. At the last inspection, pupils' progress in English was considered almost always satisfactory and often good. Support for communication and listening was identified as strong. Progress in these areas has improved and good progress has been made in these areas over the last two years. However, progress in relation to the use of information and communication technology (ICT) to support pupils' learning and communication skills in English has been more limited. There is good use of ICT in some classrooms, through the use of switch technology, touch screens and software such as *Clicker 4* (a program which enables pupils to select a picture, symbol or word to place on a text screen) to support reading. However, pupils could make more progress in writing if ICT were used more and a small group of pupils would be more independent in their self-expression if they had technological aids to support this. Since the last inspection, the school's approach to literacy has been further developed and strengthened. The use of 'P' Levels (*the nationally produced Differentiated Performance Criteria*) to assess and monitor progress in English is more established and this is helping in whole-school target setting for literacy and the monitoring of standards in the subject. In addition, the setting of targets for all pupils at their annual reviews and in their individual educational plans (IEPs) for literacy and communication ensures that everyone, including parents, is clear about what the most important things pupils need to learn in English, and what they will learn to do next.

110. Pupils' achievement and their progress in English are good overall. They are strongest in speaking, listening, communicating and watching and pupils throughout the school make very good progress in these areas. The school's aims and English policy stress its commitment to providing pupils with effective communication skills and the emphases within English and within the school's curriculum as a whole reflect this commitment. On entry, pupils' communication skills are wide-ranging, but in all cases are well below what is expected for children of that age.

111. All staff work together to provide effective communication support programmes for pupils, who grow in confidence in self-expression as they progress through the school. By the end of Year 2, higher-attaining pupils begin to remember important ('key') words and sounds in rhymes and stories, such as *The Hungry Caterpillar*, that they have heard and use them when they see objects and pictures related to them. Lower-attaining pupils and those with more complex needs (such as profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and sensory disabilities) use eye contact, vocalisations, symbols, objects of references, signs, gesture or a combination of these to express their meanings. They demonstrate their awareness of something they enjoy through excitement. Pupils generally attend increasingly well for short periods of time, although some need high levels of adult support to remain working. Their awareness, self-expression, confidence and co-operation improve steadily from Year 1 to Year 2.

112. Between Year 3 and 6, pupils' speaking and listening and communication skills are carefully supported and developed. Those pupils with more moderate learning difficulties (MLD) make steady progress in their use of spoken language; they give simple explanations of what they are doing and use terms like *letter*, *word* and *sound* appropriately. They recount the key events in a story they know, recalling elements of the characters' behaviour and listen attentively, enjoying their teachers' expressive story telling of *The Shark with No Teeth*, for example. Pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) use short phrases and have extended their vocabulary of words and symbols; they readily contribute to lessons and answer simple questions about what they are doing appropriately. They listen carefully for longer periods of time and with the help of visual aids can recount the main events of a story. The pupils with most complex needs attend more readily to adults for longer periods and gradually extend their responses and awareness of key objects ('objects of reference'), symbols, words, signs and phrases. They make simple choices and enjoy familiar sounds in stories. They continue to respond well within class routines and within the structure of the literacy sessions and stories - taking their turn in whole group sessions and vocalising or moving rhythmically to the rhymes and songs used. Use of key signs and objects supports their listening and by the end of a story such as *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*, they can identify the key characters.

113. Progress in speaking and listening continues steadily during Years 7 and 8, where more pupils have MLD. These pupils are beginning to give logical explanations and reasons for their views; they talk more fluently about their experiences and emotions and comment on their work or the books they are reading. Pupils show increasing confidence in self-expression, their use of language and vocabulary matures and they make good contributions within English and other lessons at the level of their ability. For example, they use the vocabulary that their teacher has explored in a story such as *Handa's Surprise*, including the rarer fruits and the range of emotional vocabulary and adjectives that have been explored. Others can explain what a book review is and know words such as *author* and *illustrator*, giving clear explanations of their meaning. By the time they leave the school, lower-attaining pupils make their needs and wishes clear, make simple contributions in group discussions, watch and listen carefully to what their teachers have to say. Some continue to need considerable adult help for self-expression. Careful adult support enables these pupils to learn how to rephrase their questions, for example, through the colourful semantics programme and through the use of the *Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS)*. Adults listen very carefully to what pupils have to say and this supports the increased attention that pupils pay to each others' views and opinions.

114. Pupils' progress in reading and early pre-reading skills is good overall. By the end of Year 2, although most pupils have very limited reading and writing skills in relation to their age, individual pupils recognise occasional key words, symbols and the first letter of their

name. All pupils have positive attitudes to books and enjoy sharing books for varying periods of time with adults. Some turn the pages appropriately and point to pictures that catch their attention. Others look carefully at their photographs, touch and explore tactile story books/ cards or objects of reference. They enjoy opportunities to participate in class stories and in class routines. The use of symbols to accompany text and of signs and photographs supports pupils' progress, understanding and involvement in class activities and the literacy hour at this and all other key stages. Pupils make small, but significant, gains in reading and writing areas such as recognising letters and sounds and individual key words or symbols, handwriting and the presentation of their work. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils read simple texts and stories and can explain what they enjoy reading. Most know simple letter sounds and a few can break down an unknown word into its constituent parts, or use the rest of the sentence to work out what it means. Lower-attaining pupils enjoy handling books and have a growing bank of words that they recognise, some with symbols. Those pupils with the most complex needs enjoy handling books, recognise favourite pictures and books; a few match word and object and recognise initial letters of words and names. In Years 7 and 8 pupils make small but significant gains in their reading and writing skills commensurate with their identified abilities. Most have a word bank of significant words and social signs and their use of phonic clues continues to expand. All pupils continue to be interested in their reading material and have a positive attitude to books. The highest-attaining pupils can read simple texts, with expression, use their reading skills to find out about things in books and on the Internet and to follow instructions. They enjoy texts which are appropriate for their age, such as *Harry Potter* and read sections of the text with support. Pupils with SLD and PMLD make good progress in their ability to identify key words and symbols.

115. Pupils' achievements and progress in writing are satisfactory throughout the school, although the support given for writing is inconsistent and some pupils are still very reluctant writers by the time they leave. This is because the school's policy and practice in relation to early writing and to handwriting and spelling are less well defined than other aspects of its English work. Although the oldest higher-attaining pupils make good progress in relation to their starting points, some pupils spend too long on simple pre-writing activities and would benefit from writing programmes more focused on their own ideas, than on hand control and handwriting. Pupils leave the Foundation Stage with some very good early experiences of mark making in all its forms. By the end of Year 2, most have made small steps in tracing over their teachers' writing or tracking lines. Some are encouraged to use ICT software, including touch screens, to draw or write but such opportunities are inconsistent throughout the school. Although pupils' use of pencils to make marks is established during Years 3 to 6, and they make satisfactory progress in handwriting and the presentation of their work in line with their identified abilities, the opportunities for them to write for different purposes is limited in some classes. The oldest and more able pupils experienced a wider range of more challenging writing opportunities – including poetry, letters, news and stories, as well as recording aspects of their work in other subjects - and the work produced was often good, although still below that of the majority of pupils of their age. Pupils with MLD write a short report or description of their work and experiences and complete simple work sheets with minimum support. Lower-attaining pupils would make more progress if ICT, signs and symbols were used more systematically to enable them to express their ideas in writing and/or pictorial form.

116. The quality of teaching in English is good overall and has some very good features. Where teaching is good or very good it has a clear English focus and is tied into the pupils' individual education plan targets. Teachers have a good grasp of the English skills they are supporting and opportunities for extending pupils' language are seized upon. There is often a high level of challenge for pupils, as in a Year 5 fiction and poetry lesson, where every pupil joined in choral reading and offered simple predictions. The teacher's expressive storytelling and sensitive use of questions enabled all pupils to be challenged appropriately, and the

lesson carefully built on previous work. In a lesson where the teaching was weak, the teacher did not take sufficient account of the needs of a small number of sensory impaired pupils in the lesson. They were not included sufficiently in the lesson and learned little. All teachers have good relationships with pupils and promote an atmosphere in their classrooms of mutual respect and listening to others. There is a good balance of supportive praise and comment that identifies weaknesses. In individual classes, there were good examples of support staff being used for monitoring pupils' responses in lessons and some highly effective teaching of groups and individuals by these staff. Homework, and contact with parents, is used well to support pupils' learning in all aspects of English.

117. Pupils' response to the teaching and activities in English is always satisfactory and is mostly good. Most co-operate well in lessons and listen attentively because of good, lively teaching. They respond increasingly appropriately to questions and to the demands placed on them and show progressive interest in what each other has to say. When given the opportunity to be involved, they contribute readily and particularly take up opportunities to play roles in stories or take active parts in other lessons with enthusiasm. Where opportunities are provided for collaboration and discussion, they take these up well - careful grouping of pupils in all year groups, and the effective use of the support available, was seen to facilitate this. Some very positive examples of pupils helping each other were seen in English.

118. The learning opportunities provided in English are good overall. Literacy teaching is firmly established and has led to more systematic coverage of aspects of reading and some aspects of writing, in particular. However, there is a need for medium-term plans to be more detailed and for all teachers' day-to-day planning to be more tightly linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. There is no drama policy and scheme of work, although the school does use role-play and drama very well to support pupils' work in English and across the curriculum. In addition, it is important for the ways in which teachers and speech and language therapists work together to be reviewed, particularly where new initiatives such as PECS and *Colourful Semantics* are being introduced. Currently, speech and language therapy time is inadequate for the very complex and varied needs of the school population and occupational therapy time is even more limited. This restricts the ways in which teachers can support pupils' progress in writing and communication, in particular.

119. Assessment procedures in English are good. . All pupils have English targets within their individual education plans and progress towards these is carefully assessed. Most targets are specific and have clear success criteria. However, some in relation to developing communication skills are too broad or are ongoing. The use of detailed profiles, observations and diagnostic assessment to identify pupils' strengths and weaknesses in English strengthens the school's response to pupils' individual needs. Work samples, video and photographic evidence are used well to detail pupils' progress and demonstrate the small, but significant steps, that they have made. There are sound plans to use the new Performance Indicator and Value Added Teaching Scheme (PIVATS) to strengthen aspects of assessment of pupils and evaluation of the subject as a whole.

120. Resources for English are satisfactory; some recent purchases of books have been of high quality. The range of age-appropriate reading resources and literature to support pupils has been extended and some excellent teacher-made resources were seen. Information and communication technology (ICT) is, however, used inconsistently as a resource to support all aspects of English. It is used as a word-processing aid with higher-

attaining pupils, and in conjunction with the school's reading schemes. It is underused for other purposes, such as to support communication and self-expression and for writing. The library accommodation is unsatisfactory and does not support pupils' library skills, although a good range of books is available in classrooms.

121. English is soundly led by a committed co-ordinator who recognises the need now to detail schemes of work further, particularly in relation to all aspects of writing. Although there has been some monitoring of literacy lessons and of standards overall, there is a need to ensure that the approach to the development of writing skills is consistent across the school.

MATHEMATICS

Overall the provision for mathematics is **good**.

Strengths:

- The implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the way numeracy is promoted in lessons in subjects other than mathematics.
- Pupils make good progress because the teaching is good and they use resources in lessons well.
- Very strong leadership and management and support for colleagues has led to improvements in teaching.
- **Areas for improvement:**
- The progress of some pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties through clearer planning for their mathematical needs.

122. The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully implemented in all classes in the school and opportunities for pupils to improve their numeracy skills are a feature of many lessons. This has ensured that pupils' achievement and the progress they make is overall good. The school has maintained standards and quality of provision since the last inspection and progress since then has been satisfactory.

123. Pupils' progress is good and sometimes very good or excellent because of the good quality of teaching in the school and the strong leadership provided by the co-ordinator for mathematics. Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning as a result of the quality of teaching they receive. When the teaching is good, pupils' interest, concentration and behaviour are also good and sometimes very good. When teaching is weaker pupils' attention and interest are more variable.

124. By the end of Year 2, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) respond to number rhymes and songs which teachers and support staff work hard to bring to life. For example they respond to the sounds they hear when staff drop bottles while singing 'four green bottles'. Other pupils learn to recognise different colours and shapes. They are beginning to master counting as they learn stories and nursery rhymes such as '*Goldilocks and the three bears*' and '*Five little ducks*'. This learning is also supported by practical activities such as visits to the park to see ducks. More able pupils are counting to 20 and adding numbers up to a total of 10. They sort objects by shape, colour and size, and recognise and can name common shapes such as triangles and circles.

125. By Year 6, less able pupils including those with severe learning difficulties (SLD) join in action rhymes and can recognise and order numbers to 10. They learn to exchange money for items in the class shop, and are aware that certain things happen at certain

times, for example that lunch is at twelve o'clock. More able pupils count read and write numbers to 100. Some can add using hundreds, tens and units and carry out simple division. They cut shapes into halves and quarters, are learning to measure and are learning to tell the time.

126. By Year 8 those pupils with the most profound difficulties explore shape and space. Other pupils can sort recognise, name and sort two and three-dimensional shapes. Their understanding of terms such as *more than* and *less than* is growing. The most able pupils have improved the layout of their work and this helps them make accurate calculations. They complete their work neatly in an exercise book. They are able to complete calculations with carrying methods for work addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, some working with numbers with thousands, hundreds, tens and units. Their ability to organise and check their own work improves well.

127. Sometimes, pupils with PMLD or more complex needs make less progress than other pupils, although their progress is satisfactory overall. Teachers' planning does not always identify the mathematical purpose of the lesson clearly enough and this leads to a lack of challenge and opportunities for some of these pupils.

128. The quality of teaching is good overall; in the lessons seen, it was never less than satisfactory and was good or better in two thirds of the lesson; in more than a quarter teaching was very good or excellent. Teachers have a very good grasp of the National Numeracy Strategy and implement it well. Lessons are clearly divided in three sections, the mental starter, main activity and plenary. The pupils enjoy the mental starter and take part readily in the wide range of activities offered by teachers especially when they are both challenging and fun. The transition to the main activity is usually well managed. Teachers carefully design tasks for this element to meet individual pupil needs. In the best lessons this is very well done and demonstrates teachers' detailed knowledge of the pupils in their class. During the plenary session teachers review the lesson and use questions carefully to encourage pupils to recall and reflect on what they have done or learned.

129. Teachers make good, and in some lessons very good or excellent use of resources to aid pupils' learning. In one lesson the imaginative use of a dragon glove puppet totally captivated pupils. Their interest was immediately gained and they were eager to help the dragon learn to count. The co-ordinator is planning the use of further resources. The focus of these should be on expanding the range of practical activities and increasing the level of resources so that each class is equipped to the level of the best. Teachers and support staff work extremely well together ensuring that pupils receive the help, support and encouragement they require.

130. Pupils are very well managed. They behave very well in lessons. The pupils are keen to do well and respond to challenges with enthusiasm. They are especially good where they are given and accept responsibility for certain tasks. They are very supportive of each other and applaud each other's efforts.

131. The curriculum in mathematics is good. It offers pupils a broad and balanced base for learning mathematics. The school's implementation of the Numeracy Strategy is very successful. Opportunities are taken in other lessons to support learning in mathematics. For example, in a geography lesson the teachers use the story of *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* to improve counting and to introduce the pupils to measurement by discussion using terms *near* and *far*.

132. The assessment of pupils' work in mathematics is good. The school uses both 'P' Levels and National Curriculum Levels to monitor and record pupil progress. This is used to aid teachers' planning. Reports in annual reviews are very informative stating what their children know, can do and understand in mathematics. The 'Performance Indicators for Value Added Target Setting' (PIVATS) should improve the monitoring of pupil progress over time.

133. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. This has ensured the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy. The co-ordinator has had time to monitor and support teaching and this has led to improvement. Where necessary, she has led training for colleagues and allowed them to observe her teaching. From September 2002 her role is changing so that she can spend even more time supporting the development of mathematics within the school. This should lead to the continued improvement of the subject. Teachers use ICT to support pupils' learning in mathematics from time-to-time. At present, however, it is not consistently or sufficiently used to have the impact it could have on the pupils' progress.

SCIENCE

Overall the provision for science is **good**.

Strengths:

- The sensory approach and practical way teachers make the activities meaningful.
- Pupils' progress is good as a result of good teaching.
- A good programme of work, which caters well for all pupils' needs.

Areas for improvement:

- The use of information and communication technology to support learning.
- The monitoring of teaching.

134. The pupils' achievements are good across the whole school from Year 1 to Year 8 and they make good progress. The science curriculum is good; it is broad and balanced. It starts with the youngest pupils following a sensory and tactile approach to science, and links in well with National Curriculum targets and programmes of study as it progresses through the school. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in science. The sensory approach and practical way in which teachers make the activities meaningful are good and particularly relevant for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). This helps them, too, to make good progress. As the previous inspection did not report on science in detail, it is not possible to make a judgement on progress since then.

135. By the end of Year 2, pupils build on the good scientific experiences they had in the Nursery and Reception classes in the school. The most profoundly disabled pupils carry out investigations experiencing a range of familiar and unfamiliar spices and scents. Staff observe carefully for responses from the pupils order to gain an indication of pupils' learning. Staff observe and record a blink of their eyes, facial expressions, and body movements, such as the mouth movements in response to the smells. Evidence shows that most responded well to lavender, as they had experienced this smell in their sensory garden. Staff constantly talk to pupils, reassuring them of what is happening to them and what is about to happen next. When the pupils smelt 'ginger', staff related the smell to their story of the *Gingerbread Man*.

136. By the end of Year 6, less able pupils investigate 'plants'. They show a good understanding of parts of a plant, such as roots, stem, petals and leaves. They use trowels or their hands to re-pot plants, observing the root formation carefully as they re-pot them. They discuss why the plants need to be in larger pot and predict what will happen to the plant now it has more room and more soil. More able pupils experiment by putting plants into 'blue' (dyed) water, observing over a period of time and recording their results. They examine plants in great detail, observing the changes to the stalk and the outer edges of the leaves. They further examine plants and their leaves looking for similarities and differences such as the shape of the leaves.

137. By the end of Year 8, more able pupils investigate the conditions needed for plants to grow. They carry out controlled experiments to identify conditions plants need, such as water, light, soil and heat. They show a good understanding of how plants grow, and record their work carefully. Less able pupils investigate the properties of 'fruit'. They use their senses of touch, taste and smell to classify the fruit. When naming the fruit they try to establish the country of origin and whether or not it would grow in conditions in our country. They establish the sequence of growth, such as, seed, young tree, growing into large tree, flower or blossom giving fruit, which is then harvested.

138. The quality of teaching and learning is good across all year groups. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject content. They know their pupils very well and plan lessons in great detail, with different tasks for pupils of different abilities. Support staff are effectively involved in supporting pupils during lessons, and in teaching individual pupils on occasions. Staff have very good relations with the pupils and class management is good. All of these features ensure that pupils are actively engaged in suitable activities during lessons. Good use is made of discussion in group time, and pupils' understanding is well supported by signing and communication.

139. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills. Most sentences are written in symbols with appropriate words beneath. Linking of science with other subjects is a strong feature of lessons, although little use of ICT was seen during inspection week. In general, science lessons capture the interest of pupils, who show considerable enthusiasm and quickly become actively engaged in activities. They are co-operative and develop commendable levels of concentration. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning. They are encouraged to appreciate the wonder of science, which they find exciting. This brings a spiritual dimension to the subject.

140. As a result of the schools re-organisation, the permanent co-ordinator of the subject has recently taken up a new post in another school. A temporary co-ordinator is in post and a new, permanent co-ordinator has been identified for September 2002. At present, the leadership and management of science is satisfactory but from documentation, previous leadership and management of science appear strong. Teachers' planning and pupils' work is being monitored, but the actual teaching of science is not. The school is aware of this and has suitable plans to introduce classroom monitoring from September 2002. Assessment procedures are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

The provision in art is **good**.

Strengths:

- The subject is well led and managed by an experienced and enthusiastic co-ordinator.
- The school considers art as an important subject as well as supporting pupils' learning; activities permeate other subjects.
- High quality displays of pupils' work enhance their self-esteem.
- Computers are used well in art lessons.
- Teaching, learning and pupils' progress are good and teachers use resources imaginatively.

Areas for improvement:

- The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in art.
- The limited storage and space for presenting three-dimensional work.

141. Pupils' achievement and their progress in art are good throughout the school. Pupils develop a range of skills through handling a range of media from pencils and paints to printing and collage materials, as well as some three-dimensional items. Art is a high-profile activity and there are good quality displays related to field work and competition entries around the school. Pupils develop motor skills allowing them to make both large and fine movements with the tools and media and equipment is adapted to take into account pupils' physical needs. By Year 6, they demonstrate an increasing awareness of colour and form. Pupils in Year 7 and 8 make careful observations and the more able pupils make use of digital cameras to record work and afterwards talk about what they saw and did not see. In general, information and communication technology (ICT) supports pupils' painting and drawing skills well, and as pupils progress through the school they show an increasing ability to use art software for creating images.

142. Art is included as a part of many lessons in other subjects. Although only four lessons of art were seen in the inspection, judgments about teaching and learning are based on all the art activities, which feature widely across the school, including those outside lessons. The teaching and learning of art are good. Lessons are well planned with stimulating activities, which often support the work of other curriculum areas; for example, the design and realisation of clay shields in work on Roman Britain.

143. Teachers use resources imaginatively and integrate ideas from other subjects such as art. For instance, in one lesson, Year 6 pupils were making representations of Roman shields from clay. Learning support assistants work well together as a team, supporting pupils and emphasising the historical ideas and importance of their work. Activities are varied and stimulating for all pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). Good use is made of ICT; for example, pupils use digital cameras to record still life and other subjects as a basis for future art work. The importance of learning and participation in the subject is strengthened by the willingness of the school to enter competitions. Sunningdale has had a recent success in the 'Northumbria in Bloom' event and received a number of commendations.

144. Most pupils enjoy their art lessons as a response to the good teaching. They listen carefully and follow instructions, and many sustain concentration for fairly long periods of time on tasks which interest them. For example, an autistic pupil working on the creation of a composition of fruit to contribute to display work focusing on the story of the *Hungry Caterpillar* concentrated exceptionally on the activity.

145. Leadership and management are good and contribute well to raising the enthusiasm both of staff and pupils for work in this area. The co-ordinator is experienced and enthusiastic. Well-considered schemes of work are in place, which ensure that the key elements of the National Curriculum are covered for each age phase on a two yearly cycle. The schemes are reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Displays around the school are of a good quality and reflect the sustained and well-focused interest in the subject by the co-ordinator, who manages this aspect.

146. Accommodation is good, although the facilities for storing pupils' ongoing work are limited and the specialist art room can only cater for relatively small groups. Space for presenting three-dimensional work is also at a premium. Examples of pupils' work are kept in portfolios and very good photographic evidence of pupils' work and previous displays contributes well to a record of pupils' experience and progress.

147. Satisfactory improvement in the provision for art has been made since the time of the last inspection. Information and communication technology (ICT) is beginning to be used more consistently in the subject. Assessment procedures are satisfactory. The pleasure which pupils derive from their art lessons and art around the school is obvious in the pride with which they talk about their work and respect the work of others. To improve further, structured opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the school should be planned, as this is a relative weakness in the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall the provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory**, at present.

Strengths:

- Very good progress in Years 7 and 8.
- Teachers of older pupils find interesting ways to provide activities to motivate and involve pupils in design and technology activities.
- The co-ordinators' perceptiveness about what needs to be done to improve the subject.
- Good assessment procedures.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum for pupils in Years 1 to 6 is narrow.
- Teachers of younger pupils do not always understand what constitutes a design and technology activity.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the subject and the time available for the co-ordinator to do this.

148. Staff changes, as a result of school re-organisation, have meant that a new co-ordinator has been in place since November 2001. Staff with expertise for teaching and co-ordinating design and technology for pupils in Years 7 and 8 have now left the school. This loss of staff has affected the school's ability to deliver a full programme of work. Although there has been less of an emphasis on resistant materials work in recent months, it is clear that the programme of study was consistently followed previously, and that some particularly good work in textiles and food technology has been produced.

149. Given the pressures of re-organisation and her focus on the development of the art curriculum, the co-ordinator has had little time to review the design and technology programme. She has used the comprehensive guidance provided by the local education

authority for planning for the pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD). This has been successful and detailed planning is in place for these older pupils. She also has appropriate plans to review the relatively new curriculum planning for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD), although she is well aware that individual teachers throughout the school have modified and extended this because they have found it limited. Her vision for the development of the subject is good and she recognises the need to be allocated time to monitor fully teaching and standards. Overall, given the circumstances of the school and what has been attainable in the short time the subject has been led, co-ordination is satisfactory overall.

150. Overall, the progress made by pupils is unsatisfactory. The progress of the older pupils in Years 7 and 8 is very good as a result of the detailed planning and the way some teachers have integrated the work in design and technology with other subjects, making it particularly meaningful for their pupils with MLD or SLD. However, the progress that pupils make in Years 1 to 6 is limited. The curriculum for these pupils is narrow and although there has been a good attempt to make the activities relevant and interesting, what is taught does not go far enough. Some activities are repeated too frequently. This restricts what they can learn and the progress they can make. Although it is not consistent across the school, some teachers have been very adept at modifying the work. Particularly good work has been undertaken on packaging, for instance, in Year 4, which has offered a full range of design and technology experiences.

151. Pupils build on their good experiences from the Foundation Stage and by Year 2 lower-attaining pupils identify fruit such as apples and teachers' strong emphasis on literacy results in pupils gaining a good idea, for instance, of the parts of the fruit and recognise pips as seeds. Signing is combined with a verbal commentary and pupils respond to the different colours they see by signing in response. They respond to sliced fruit and notice it is different. By Year 6, pupils have gained a range of skills in food technology, resistant materials and textiles. They consider effects of different mixtures for buns and how they will decorate the final product. They often use ICT to prepare designs before competing these in practice. However, it is used little to support those pupils' whose spoken language is limited and who need help to use equipment because of their physical disability and this limits these pupils' progress. Pupils produce objects with levers and consider the effect of the layout of different axles on movement. Pupils are well aware of the principle and use of these features in their constructions. By the time they leave the school in Year 8, they produce foods with cultural themes such as '*rumpledethumps*' and can relate the historic nature of these. In this respect, the subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. They are well skilled in using safely food preparation implements, such as potato peelers, and have improved their cutting techniques with sharp knives. Pupils designed and planned carefully masks in connection with rainforest work, and the animal masks show very good attention to detail and skill in assembly. Pupils use a range of joining techniques and choose the correct tools to prepare the join.

152. The teaching of design and technology overall is satisfactory. Only a small number of lessons could be seen, but evidence from pupils' work and from teachers' planning support this judgement. However, in the lessons seen it ranged from very good to unsatisfactory. The teachers' planning for a series of lessons in Year 8 related superbly well to science and pupils constructed paddle boats, considering designs based on scientific testing. Photographic evidence showed systematic analysis by pupils, using fair test principles, of aspects such as bow shape. Teachers' planning varies from detailed planning, stating clearly what the pupils are to learn and the skills they will use, to very broad documents that say little about what they are to do and learn. In one lesson, weak planning, coupled with a lack of demonstration, unclear instructions and weak management of pupils, led to unsatisfactory teaching by a temporary teacher. Teachers' knowledge of design and technology is

strongest for the oldest pupils and some have an excellent understanding of how it can be integrated into work in other subjects. It is more limited for those pupils with the most complex needs. Teachers frequently only organise activities which have limited design and technology content and little is planned for higher attaining pupils who, consequently have only limited challenge. By contrast, the opposite is true for older pupils. However, most teachers make the learning interesting, activities are varied and the pace of teaching is brisk; this is a very strong feature of the teaching and pupils' respond by showing considerable interest in what they do.

153. The school's way of assessing what pupils' learn and tracking the progress they make is good. It is weakened when some teacher's planning lack clear objectives, because the assessments are made in relation to these. However, good information is provided which identifies the level to which something has been achieved. It is satisfactorily used to plan subsequent work.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall the provision for geography is **satisfactory** but strengths only just outweigh weaknesses.

Strengths:

- Good provision for activities which support pupils' geographical understanding including use of the local environment.
- Good use of ICT for primary pupils in Years 1 to 6 to support their learning and finding out of information.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum for primary aged pupils with severe learning difficulties, and particularly those in Years 3 to Year 6.
- Leadership and management of the subject, especially the monitoring and evaluation of teaching.

154. Pupils' achievement in geography is satisfactory and they make sound progress. Although there are weaknesses in the curriculum for younger pupils following the 'access' curriculum, some teachers have recognised this and have modified their plans accordingly. This means that progress is satisfactory for the younger pupils, but strengths only just outweigh weaknesses. During Year 1 to Year 6, pupils make satisfactory progress in their understanding of place and location, particularly more able pupils. These pupils can identify areas around the school, and, Years 3 to Year 6, have an awareness of their wider environment through the identification of local topographical features and different types of building and homes. By the end of Year 8, which represents the oldest pupils now on roll, pupils have a growing knowledge of appropriate geographical vocabulary. Overall, pupils' skills in using information and communication technology (ICT) for geographical learning and research are good for pupils of primary age and satisfactory for those of secondary age, where opportunities for applying their skills are more limited.

155. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory. Individual lessons are effectively planned and the management of pupils is good. Teachers' expectations are appropriate for pupils of secondary age but some expect too little of younger pupils, mainly because of the limitations of the curriculum planning. There are good extra-curricular opportunities with pupil visits to Hartlepool Marina, local wetlands sites and a variety of urban locations in

Newcastle. These field trips are well appreciated by pupils, the more able of whom recall significant details, particularly relating to regional transport. Attitudes and behaviour are

generally good and pupils are keen to learn as a result of the interesting way teachers present activities. In the lessons observed, pupils worked as individuals and in groups in a focused and purposeful way and co-operated well in orientation exercises in the school grounds.

156. Although the whole range of learning opportunities for pupils is satisfactory, the curriculum is narrow for younger pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) (the 'access' curriculum). There are clearly articulated schemes of work which meet National Curriculum requirements for pupils of secondary age but the planning for primary age pupils is insufficiently broad and balanced and does not adequately reflect all aspects of the National Curriculum. In particular, planning of the curriculum has not acknowledged sufficiently the skills of geographical enquiry and processes. There is insufficient focus on skill development and an over-emphasis on certain topics, such as weather and transport. However, some teachers have recognised the problem and have modified their curriculum planning accordingly.

157. Leadership and management are not currently satisfactory and there is insufficient liaison between staff responsible for co-ordinating the curriculum for younger and older pupils. This is a casualty of re-organisation. The school is aware of this transitional problem and arrangements are in hand for more coherent subject co-ordination from the beginning of the autumn term 2002.

158. The marking of work is generally satisfactory, though in the work scrutinised not all assessment for primary aged pupils is fully up-to-date. Co-ordinators do not have sufficient time to monitor teaching and learning across the school to ensure that planning enables pupils to gain in knowledge and skills as they become older.

159. To improve further, the school need to revisit the curriculum for primary age pupils, particularly in Year 3 to 6 and ensure that it reflects more closely the requirements of the National Curriculum and align assessment arrangements to such changes in the curriculum. The co-ordinator needs more structured opportunities to monitor and evaluate teaching and learning across the school.

HISTORY

Overall the provision for history is **unsatisfactory** for the majority of primary aged pupils and **good** for those in Year 7 and 8.

Strengths:

- Pupils' progress is monitored well and pupils make good progress in Years 7 and 8.
- Teaching was good in the small number of lessons seen.
- Good use is made of educational visits.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum for primary aged pupils.
- Overall management of the subject.

160. During the inspection, it was possible to observe only three lessons in history, two in Years 2 to Year 6 and one in Year 8. Judgements about pupils' progress and achievement have, therefore, been made from the work pupils have produced, records of their performance and displays. Overall, their achievements are unsatisfactory in Years 1 to 6

because the curriculum is limited. Progress is good in Years 7 and 8. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) make sound progress because the curriculum, although limited for some, is appropriate for them.

161. For many of the pupils in Years 1 to 6, history is taught as part of the school's 'access' curriculum rather than as discrete subject. This curriculum is designed for pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) and, as such, the work the pupils undertake is not always directly related to the National Curriculum programmes of study for history. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils can report on activities contained in the home-school book. They know facts about their families, can check their daily timetable and are aware of the stages of growth from childhood to teenager to adult. This lack of focus on the National Curriculum restricts pupils' achievements in terms of making gains in knowledge and understanding of different periods of history.

162. By the end of Year 6 more able pupils actually following National Curriculum history can order objects and events, examine photographs and artefacts and recognise the distinctions between past times and the present. When studying World War II, they are able to recognise the reasons for, and implications for the population of, rationing. They are aware that the Romans invaded Britain and identify key elements of a Roman fort. Those with lesser ability following the 'access' curriculum improve their knowledge of the language of history. They can use vocabulary such as *today*, *yesterday* and *tomorrow* appropriately, and identify objects as old or new.

163. By the end of Year 8 more able pupils show an awareness of different periods of history. They know the names of famous people in history, for example Christopher Columbus and Adolf Hitler. They are aware of the lives of evacuees during World War II and of life during the Blitz.

164. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but in the lessons seen it was at least good. It is best where planning takes account of individual pupils' needs and work is carefully differentiated. Teachers make good use of carefully graded questioning. This ensures that pupils make gains in knowledge. This attention to detail means that pupils are clear about what they are required to do and this supports their learning. For example, pupils learn to place events in chronological order using photographs from their teacher's life. They learn to use *before*, *after*, *a long time ago* correctly and use this knowledge to develop a 'history' of the class goldfish.

165. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good. They are best where they build upon previously acquired knowledge, can relate to the task under discussion and are praised for their efforts. The school makes good use of educational visits and borrows resources from a local centre to aid pupils' learning and sustain their interest in the subject. However, it would be useful if the school made a wider range of artefacts more readily available to pupils. This would enhance teaching in the school and extend the practical, hands-on, approach to history.

166. The management of the subject is satisfactory for those areas for which the co-ordinator has responsibility. However, this only relates to those classes that follow the National Curriculum in history. In these classes, the schemes of work are sound and follow all aspects of the Programme of Study for pupils in Years 3 to 6. The co-ordinator carries out an audit of the subject annually and this review forms the basis for further development. All other pupils follow the 'access' curriculum. This has limited objectives and provides a limited range of experiences for pupils to develop knowledge of different periods of history, although it is appropriate for those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The school has realised the implications of the weaknesses and, following the

change in designation of the school, the new co-ordinator will have responsibility for history across the school. Appropriate plans are in place to introduce a programme of study more related to that of the National Curriculum from January 2003. Pupils' progress is monitored well through the use of a good tracking system. The annual review reports note the areas pupils have studied, and indicate clearly what pupils know, can do and understand about the subject.

167. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on how far the subject has improved since the last inspection, as the subject was not reported on at that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall the provision in ICT is **satisfactory**.

Strengths:

- Good development in the provision for older pupils with moderate learning difficulties, who receive systematic support to learn ICT skills.
- The use of information and communication technology targets in pupils' individual educational plans supports their learning of skills well.
- The use of information and communication technology for the pupils with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The work of support staff in helping pupils learn information and communication technology.
- The strong commitment to improve information and communication technology provision.

- **Areas for improvement:**
- Teachers' knowledge of information and communication technology and its use to support pupils' particular needs.
- The information and communication technology suite, which is too small and cramped.
- The curriculum, which is narrow for pupils with severe learning difficulties.
- The use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning and communication, and the access to equipment for pupils with physical and with sensory disabilities.
- The work of the co-ordinator in developing the subject and providing a coherent programme for all pupils.

168. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress in developing the subject since the last inspection, although strengths only just outweigh the weaknesses. The school has generally worked hard to improve its provision in relation to helping pupils' learn the skills of using a computer. It has a strong commitment to improve, but not always the knowledge of how to do this in relation to ICT. However, it has insufficiently addressed the key issue, which, although separate from the subject itself, relates to the school's use of ICT to support pupils' learning or the communication of pupils who would benefit from technology. Progress has been slow, partly because of the long-term illness of the co-ordinator for alternative and augmentative communication (AAC), but mainly because there is no cohesive approach involving all staff and therapists, which systematically reviews and monitors pupils needs, access to, use of and benefits from technological support.

169. Pupils make sound progress in ICT. The introduction of an ICT target in pupils' individual education plan has really helped teachers focus on the specific skills pupils need to learn in relation to their particular special educational need. However, mainly with the exception of pupils with the most profound needs, not enough thought is given to how ICT can be used in ways which help to support learning, how it can support pupils' access to equipment or how it can aid their communication. Therefore, for instance, little opportunity is provided for pupils to use computers for their written work, to produce symbols, individual pictures or words or simple phrases, even though the school has good quality software to do this. Little use is made of communication aids and in particular, ICT is used little with pupils with sensory disabilities.

170. The school has been most successful in developing the skills of the older pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) where they have been systematically taught aspects such as word processing and desktop publishing. This has resulted in them making good progress. For those pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) or profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) in the other classes, the picture is patchier. Where teachers have good knowledge themselves, pupils have had good opportunities and a breadth of experience; for others, because the subject planning is not detailed enough, teachers have had little material to work from and some pupils' opportunities have been fairly narrow. Overall, their progress is satisfactory but would be strengthened by a systematic and detailed programme of work. Teachers of pupils with the most PMLD (in the Yellow classes) make good use of computers, and the ICT work provided for their pupils is appropriate, although some teachers use an insufficient range of software and hardware and the work for some pupils can be repetitive. Overall, these pupils' progress is sound.

171. Pupils build on the very good opportunities they have for learning the use of ICT in the Foundation Stage and by Year 2 some use a large keyboard to produce letters, copying text given to them by the teacher of the *Hungry Caterpillar*, a text they are reading in their English lessons. Some pupils are beginning to select a picture to go with their text and are following the steps to import clip art, which is very good achievement. By Year 4, they use a 'painting' program to create simple shapes and know that 'shape tools' can be used for quickness. Some (with help) select the correct network printer. They have a good understanding of the background and foreground colours which should be chosen for good presentation and some higher attaining pupils can go through the correct procedure to shut the computer down when they have finished the session. By Year 6, they are confident in using more 'advanced' ideas in their picture presentation and can use 'flood fill' to good effect, knowing that the lines surrounding the area must be continuous. In their work with text, they give good attention to layout and embolden words and have different font sizes, where necessary. By the end of their time in the school, pupils in Year 8 use a digital camera with confidence. They take pictures, accurately positioning their subjects in the photograph and can load pictures from the disk in the camera to the PC.

172. Some individual pupils achieve very well through the careful step-by-step approach some of the staff have to teaching skills and the high expectations they have of their pupils. However, at times, pupils' learning is weakened because they are expected to use equipment which is inappropriate for their weak physical skills or too confusing for their learning difficulties. In one case, a pupil struggled to use a mouse because the movements required were too small and in another the keyboard was too cluttered and a pupil became confused because there were too many things for him to choose from. Pupils with the most PMLD from an early age begin to learn to use switches to make things happen. For some this process takes a long time and, as they progress, some pupils can intentionally select

items from the screen or to switch in equipment such as a fan. However, opportunities need extending and widening to aid progress. More creative use of ICT in drama or role-play situations by pupils with the most complex needs could help them understand better the relevance of the use of ICT.

173. The teaching of ICT is satisfactory. A weakness is the variability of the teachers' skills and knowledge, although it is satisfactory overall. The national ICT training programme has helped strengthen this over the past 12 months, but staff knowledge is still a major factor in the quality of the teaching of the subject. The training programme, being largely undertaken in teachers' own time, has meant that due to pressures of work and anxiety over the changing role of the school and their own positions, it has not always been completed yet. Most staff recognise the value of computers and their importance in the curriculum and some are really enthusiastic, taking every opportunity to use ICT in 'real life' situations such as finding out about ice-cream production on the Internet as part of design and technology work. Other teachers, however, teach the 'basic skills' of ICT with little extension of ideas or application of these and some have not yet developed sufficient skills to teach pupils in the ICT suite. Pupils are often well supported by support staff and in one lesson taught by a support assistant, a group of Year 8 pupils made good progress because of the high quality, systematic, and knowledgeable support they received, and the way she effectively managed the pupils. In one lesson during the inspection, the teaching of ICT was unsatisfactory. This was due to weaknesses in the management and organisation of the pupils in the restricted space in the ICT room, rather than to any weaknesses in the teacher's ICT skills and knowledge. This resulted in pupils waiting too long for the teacher's attention, not doing sufficient work and not learning enough. Some of these weaknesses in management were present in some other lessons which were judged otherwise satisfactory.

174. Pupils' usually watch and wait patiently for their turn during the teachers' demonstrations. However, in one lesson the awkward positioning of pupils to view a program on the large computer screen meant that some could not easily see. One or two of the more difficult pupils became restless and one pupil was inappropriately placed on the member of staff's knee to pacify him. Pupils generally tackle the work with enthusiasm and try their hardest. Sometimes, the teachers' choice of software designed for adult use resulted in too much 'clutter' on the screen and some pupils (especially those with visual impairment) could not easily see. This was not the case with software designed for pupils' own age groups and learning needs.

175. There has been insufficient focus on all aspects of ICT by the co-ordinator, although he does offer help and support to teachers through staff training and his availability after the school day for advice. He has focused well on the skills part of the subject for older pupils, but there has been limited support provided for teachers who teach pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties. Not enough review and development have taken place of the new curriculum and how it can best be delivered to these pupils. Assessment is satisfactory overall. The strength is the recording and tracking of pupils' skills as they progress through the targets set in their IEPs. Good assessment is made of the skills of pupils with severe or profound learning difficulties at the end of each half term in relation to what it was intended they should learn. In addition, for pupils with MLD there is a skills checklist, although this is inconsistently completed. A weakness exists in the assessment of pupils' use of ICT for other aspects of their school work. Teachers generally respond positively to what their assessments reveal and modify the work in lessons, although the ICT programme overall has not yet been adapted.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French

The provision for French is **satisfactory**. The subject ceases to be taught from September 2002.

Strengths:

- French has been taught in a meaningful and relevant context.
- Pupils have gained experiences and French culture and language from a teacher who is a French national.

Areas for improvement:

- None.

176. A 'French assistant' taught French to pupils in Years 7 and 8 until the middle of the summer term this year. At that time, the assistant left and, as the school is in a period of transition to become a primary school from September 2002, a temporary teacher, who has also acted as a temporary co-ordinator, has taught French.

177. No lessons were seen during the week of the inspection, the penultimate week of term, but from discussions with the temporary co-ordinator and pupils, scrutiny of teachers' records, pupils' records and work, annual reviews and reports to parents, achievement and progress of the pupils is satisfactory.

178. Pupils follow a satisfactory scheme of work and their work shows an understanding of a range of French topics and use of associated vocabulary; these include greeting each other, vocabulary associated with special occasions such as birthdays, the weather, shopping, numbers and colours. Single words and short phrases have been used in conversation and in their written work. There is good evidence relating to work on major cities in France, map work and leisure activities that reinforces their knowledge of French culture and gives a meaningful context for the development of the language. As well as written work, there is evidence to show good use of the digital camera recording events pupils participate in, such as French cooking.

179. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' cultural development through pupils studying similarities and differences French and English customs and traditions, such as food, music, clothes and hobbies.

MUSIC

The provision in music is **good**.

Strengths:

- The school views pupils' musical experiences and learning as an important part of the whole school curriculum.
- The subject is very well taught by a specialist teacher.
- Resources, drama and light and sound are used to good effect.
- Access to musical opportunities for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and those who have complex needs is good.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum should be consolidated, with planning included for non-music specialists and all aspects covered in adequate depth.
- A programme of staff development needs to be put in place to non-music specialists.
- Acoustics in the hall are poor.

180. Pupils' achievement in music is strong and they make good progress. Pupils have many opportunities to become involved in musical activities and normally a number of classes are taught together, rather than in separate classes. Most of the teaching is undertaken by a specialist teacher who has worked hard to develop the curriculum. However, the planning of the curriculum still needs further development to ensure that all aspects of the subject are fully represented in the planning. This means, that although the teaching is very good, the impact of this is reduced and pupils make good progress overall.

181. Pupils throughout the school in Years 1 to 8 enjoy music and make good progress. Younger ones are keen to play simple percussion instruments; pupils of all abilities can recognise some by the sounds they make and more able ones know the names of others such as *tambourine* and *triangle*. They have a good grasp of simple rhythms and join in familiar songs and rhymes with evident pleasure, not only during musical activities but also as part of other lessons such as the literacy and numeracy sessions. They play their instruments at the right time, concentrate well and listen to others in the group when it is their turn. Music and musical experiences pervade the whole curriculum.

182. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Lessons are well paced and carefully planned and activities are well timed and designed to expose pupils to a range of listening and performing experiences. Input from the lead teacher is animated and motivates pupils. Very good subject knowledge is translated into effective teaching strategies, where skills of listening and performance are well consolidated, particularly for higher ability pupils. More able pupils of all ages spoke positively of their experiences in lessons and there was facial pleasure and good eye contact from pupils with PMLD. Lighting, and artefacts such as a parachute are used to very good effect in creating mood which is identified by pupils and deepens both their knowledge and understanding of particular pieces of music such as *Raining Men*. Understanding of multi-sensory experiences is well grasped, not only by teaching staff, but also by learning support assistants, whose impact is to increase the access of less able pupils to musical activity and experiences.

183. Leadership and management are good, albeit that the subject is currently co-ordinated by a part-time member of staff. Progress since the last inspection has been good. There are well considered schemes of work and these address the needs of pupils well, including younger pupils with PMLD. However, because of re-organisation, the co-

ordinator leaves at the end of the summer term. To improve further, support for music in the curriculum should be consolidated, so that all teachers are able to use it, and a programme of staff development is needed to ensure that the school is ready to take on the challenge of teaching music by non-music specialists.

184. Accommodation is satisfactory but the school hall, where much of the teaching takes place, has poor acoustics. This is recognised by the school and arrangements are in hand to increase the soft surface area, which will reduce reflected sound.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

Overall the provision for PSHE is **very good** when taking into account all the opportunities pupils have.

Strengths:

- Very good achievement by pupils and school's determination that pupils become as independent as possible and are well prepared for the life ahead of them.
- The way the subject pervades all aspects of school life.
- Strong teaching with very good and excellent features in Years 7 and 8.
- Good systems for the assessment of pupils' skills and tracking of their progress.

Areas for improvement:

- Resources for pupils with complex and profound needs, including equipment to aid their access and communication.
- Budget planning.

185. Pupils' achievement in personal, social and health education (PSHE) and the progress they make during their time in the school, are very good. This is the result of good and in some cases very good teaching in lessons and in the wider opportunities provided. All staff promote personal development both in the PSHE lessons and in all experiences provided by the school. This ensures that children experience many real-life learning situations, for example sharing toys at playtime, eating at lunchtime and social communication at snack time. Pupils' self-care, social and emotional development are central to the work of the school.

186. As well as being taught as a separate subject, PSHE is successfully taught across a wide range of other subjects and activities. Additional taught time is also set aside for PSHE at the beginning and end of the day. Activities at morning break and lunchtime and during many other experiences around school are well used to support pupils' learning in aspects of PSHE.

187. From a very early age, pupils are expected to do things for themselves and they are encouraged to become as independent as possible. By the end of Year 2 pupils begin to have some idea of self, and learn to notice other people. They fix their eyes on others, and learn to focus on bright objects. Higher-attaining pupils help others to collect equipment, and show sadness when one of their group is distressed. By the end of Year 6 most pupils know some of their care and learning routines. They make choices, and sometimes predict what will happen next. They can recognise and communicate that they are happy or sad. Higher-attaining pupils have a good knowledge of care and learning routines and can recognise whether others are feeling happy or sad. They are confident in communicating their feelings to a range of adults. They undertake their responsibilities with pride and enthusiasm.

188. By the end of Year 8 some pupils use non-verbal means of communication, such as eye contact, to communicate and to ask for what they need. They co-operate very well with personal care routines. Higher-attaining pupils have developed very good social skills and are confident in knowing how to go about making new relationships. They also understand about healthy eating and personal safety. Some pupils have made very good gains in independence and can make choices about what to wear, what to eat, how to spend their time. They help and support each other and offer good suggestions to help. As part of the preparation for a residential visit to Edinburgh, pupils maturely described possible similarities and differences between English and Scottish people. Some have learned about how decisions are made and how a representative of a group can act for the group. Very good teaching using work about the General Election has resulted in one group voting for their own representative. This pupil takes the group's decisions and requests for improving the school to the deputy headteacher and reports back to the group. Through this, they understand more about the democratic process.

189. Some pupils with profound or complex needs do not always have the access to ICT equipment or communication devices to help them be as independent as they can. This means they make less progress than the rest of the pupils, although overall their progress is good.

190. The quality of the teaching is good throughout the school and in some Year 7 and 8 lessons the teaching is very good with some excellent features. Very good teaching involves the use of well-planned practical experiences; for example, selecting clothes and packing for the visit to Edinburgh. These lessons are structured in such a way as to teach the pupils to consider information, weigh up advantages and disadvantages and then to make their choice, followed by checking out if this was the best choice to make.

191. Teachers and support staff know their pupils well, and there is a high level of trust. Pupils' responses are regularly assessed and recorded and good individual pupil records are kept. Varied and stimulating teaching encourages pupils to listen well in lessons, and to try very hard to achieve their targets. Most pupils sustain activities for extended periods of time. Individual needs are well planned for, with further learning securely based on previous progress. Teachers and support assistants provide very good models of listening, respecting and valuing others and working hard. As a result, behaviour and pupils' enthusiasm to learn is good and in some lessons seen it was very good. The very good teaching results in real life experienced being used.

192. Individual welcome sessions at the beginning of the day and 'goodbye' sessions at the end of the day, circle times, breaks and lunchtimes, movement around school out on visits are all used to consolidate and extend learning. This is carefully planned on an individual basis. Detailed assessments are made and information shared regularly with parents. This helps parents and school to follow the same approach to develop a particular skill. Record keeping is good and shows the progress made by pupils over time.

193. Currently, subject co-ordination is broadly satisfactory. The co-ordinator is strongly committed to developing PSHE across the school. The curriculum fulfils statutory requirements with regard to sex education and the basics of drugs education are covered. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and a thorough understanding of appropriate teaching and learning methods. The co-ordinator rightly, is seeking information about providing a more detailed drugs education course for pupils with SLD as the school prepares to admit those pupils with severe and profound needs. Good links with school nursing services enhance PSHE provision. Similarly, visits by the police and fire service help pupils learn about others who can help. The school makes good use of these additional opportunities to extend pupils' skills.

194. This year the monitoring of teacher's planning and teaching has not been undertaken sufficiently to ensure consistency in the provision. The school is aware that the impact of the teaching and wider provision needs to be monitored to ensure that pupils' learning is built upon, that all aspects of PSHE are covered and that teaching improves further. Although resources are purchased when requested by the co-ordinator the annual subject budget is not pre-planned. Resources for the subject are adequate for the present population but not yet sufficiently developed to meet the needs of all the pupils in the 'new' school. It is not possible to make a judgement on the improvement in the provision of PSHE since the last inspection, as this subject was not fully reported.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is a significant strength of the school and is **good**.

Strengths:

- The way the subject makes a strong contribution to the aims of the school.
- Some pupils reach national expectations in some aspects of the subject.
- Activities are adapted well to meet the wide range of pupils' needs.
- Teachers' knowledge of the subject and pupils' needs is very good.
- The contribution the community make to pupils' sporting achievements.

Areas for improvement:

- The curriculum needs further development.
- Whole school co-ordination.
- Health and safety awareness.
- Transfers from one part of the lesson to another, and the range of challenging activities in Years 7 and 8.
- Budget planning.

195. Physical education makes a strong contribution to the aims of the school. Pupils' achievements are good throughout the school. Progress within and across all year groups is good. However, as a result of their SEN, the attainment of most pupils is below that expected nationally, for all pupils. There are a small number of pupils, however, who reach the national expectations in some aspects of games and swimming.

196. During Years 1 and 2 pupils regularly respond to stimuli and gain increasing control over their movements. By the end of Year 2 most pupils respond to the voice of a known adult and produce some actions in a consistent manner. Most pupils perform single actions; for example, they can roll a large ball, a few pupils can throw a ball to an adult. Pupils control a small range of movements and change the speed of their movement in response to a drum beat or piano when assisted by staff. In the hydrotherapy pool, pupils jump and splash, kick their legs or move their arms when this is modelled and partly assisted by a familiar adult. They are developing confidence in the water. Fine movements, to grasp a large object and place it near another, have developed. Higher-attaining pupils can work in pairs to roll a ball between them, they can become still and hold their balance when the music stops, they can find free space to practice their movement, climb on, over and under apparatus in a more planned and controlled way. Some of their actions in the hydrotherapy pool are carried out independently.

197. By Year 6 most pupils can send a ball or beanbag to a partner by releasing it, pushing, rolling or throwing it. They can move into space and move their bodies in time to music. In the hydrotherapy pool they confidently take part in water activities and float on the water with adult assistance. Higher-attaining pupils throw and catch balls with increased accuracy, strike a ball with a bat and knock down skittles with a ball, work in pairs. Most go to the leisure centre for swimming and can propel themselves forward using floats and arm bands. Most know to keep away from the water until told by an adult. A small number can swim 25 metres.

198. By Year 8 pupils with PMLD turn towards the voice of a known adult and sustain their eye contact, they pass equipment by releasing it, pushing it or giving it to a known adult. Pupils with SLD work in pairs or threes to pass a ball to move towards a goal, can move in time to music, know about warming up before and slowing down after activities. Higher-attaining pupils develop their games and swimming skills by visiting a local sports centre and swimming pool. They use their skills to play small competitive team games and learn basic positional play in *Kwik* cricket, and some do this in rugby activities. Those pupils with a flair or interest in sport are encouraged to play in the sports festivals such as the regional *Kwik* cricket competition, the recent tennis, cricket and football festivals with the local cluster of schools where they do well.

199. The teaching of physical education is good with very good features. Teachers and support staff have a good knowledge of physical development and physical education. They work well together to adapt the activities to meet the needs of all pupils. Good teaching involves very careful planning of activities and the support the pupils need to gain most success. For example, the support for a pupil in a wheelchair enabled her to direct the pusher to go faster or slower in response to the drum beat. Lessons are well organised, with the necessary equipment prepared and ready for the start of the lesson. Support staff have planned tasks to help individual pupils or pairs of pupils. They do this very well resulting in some pupils who are anxious about trying new movements overcoming their fear. Staff encourage pupils to be responsible by collecting in equipment and putting it away. Several activities are planned, each one building well on the previous one. This makes sure pupils practice something they can do and then extend their learning to something new. For example, in a very good swimming lesson all pupils very successfully improved their skills.

200. Pupils are given opportunities in controlling parts of the lesson; for example, banging the drum to stop and start movements, change the speed of actions, select the light sequence and music in the hydrotherapy pool for them to move to. Pupil's behaviour is well managed. Staff are clear about what they want pupils to do and, because they observe well, they react quickly to redirect any behaviour before problems occur. These skills were used well when an autistic pupil was having difficulty coping with too much noise. The teacher reduced the noise of the drum, slowed the pace of the activity and provided more space for him with the result that he calmed down and continued to be engaged in the lesson. Signing is used to help pupils to understand what it is they need to do, to provide praise and to confirm that the pupil is doing the right thing. The skilful support provided by teachers and support staff means that pupils control of their movement is increased.

201. The pace of work is usually well controlled to provide faster activity to improve fitness and slower activity to improve control and balance. Ongoing observation and assessment during lessons is generally good. This means that teachers and support staff respond quickly to pupils having difficulty and to pupils who will benefit from extra challenge to

extend their learning. However, in lessons for pupils in Year 7 and 8, transfers from one part of the lesson to another were not sufficiently well organised to maintain pace and pupils sometimes lost focus. In another lesson the work was not sufficiently challenging to extend the skills of some of the higher-attaining pupils.

202. Staff know pupils well and want them to succeed. Staff have appropriate high expectations of all pupils and, because of very good staff-pupil relationships, pupils trust that the challenge is achievable and work very hard towards it. Increased challenges by the teaching ensure that pupils are taken to the edge of their capabilities. Pupils arrive at the hall or pool keen to begin the lesson and enjoy physical education. They work hard to maintain and to increase their concentration and perseverance over time.

203. A healthy and active life style is encouraged and many pupils take part in the very good range of additional physical activities at breaks and lunch times, for example the 'Fit for Fun' club with exercise to music, and the youth club with skittles, darts, pool.

204. Many good opportunities are created to practice oracy and numeracy in physical education lessons; for example, naming colours, counting aloud the number of jumps in the pool. Undressing and re-dressing for activities is used well as part of the pupils' personal development programme. For the pupils with severe and profound learning difficulties, staff use their knowledge about each pupil's physical development in other lessons, so that movement, co-ordination and attention is practiced in many situations, for example, in music lessons.

205. Subject leadership is broadly satisfactory. The co-ordinator currently leads the subject mostly for activities related to Years 7 and 8. The monitoring of teaching and planning across the school is limited. There are good links with the local cluster of schools and this has resulted in good opportunities for some older pupils to be involved in competitions. Co-ordination across the school is less effective, though plans have been made to improve it from September 2002. Resources are improving with the provision of a wider range of games equipment and the *Tops Sports* activities bag. Although resources are purchased when requested by the co-ordinator, the annual subject budget is not pre-planned to match a subject development plan. Resources to assist teacher's planning have been purchased, but some have not yet been made available to the staff. The scheme of work is underdeveloped and does not sufficiently assist teachers with their planning. In some situations, staff are not sufficiently aware of the precautions they need to take to guard against potential risks; for example, placing a rubber mat on the floor near the hydrotherapy pool became a slip hazard when it got wet from water splashes. It is not possible to make a judgement on the improvement in the provision of physical education since the last inspection, as this subject was not fully reported.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall the provision for religious education is **good**.

Strengths:

- Pupils' achievements are good.
- Teaching is good and staff understand pupils' needs well; relationships with and between pupils are excellent.
- Assessment procedures, and a modified program from the locally Agreed Syllabus, are good.
- The subject enhances pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

Areas for improvement:

- None.

206. Pupils' achievement in religious education is good in all year groups across of the school. Pupils in the primary department of the school develop a curiosity about stories from the Bible. By Year 6, they know that the Bible is a special book and they compare similarities and differences with the book of Islam, the Qu'ran. They know that there are similar stories in both books, such as the story of Noah and the Ark. They have many opportunities to share in special times and enjoy birthdays, Christmas and Easter celebrations. They experience times of quiet and reflection in the classroom and end the day by saying and signing together a prayer. They have many opportunities to touch Christian symbols and those of other beliefs such as Buddhism, Judaism, Sikhism, Hinduism and Islam, and are beginning to understand that these are special. Throughout Years 1 and 2, pupils begin to understand the meaning of some of the stories they hear. In one lesson about the Bible and the Qu'ran, pupils clearly understood the importance of these books to different people, and treated both books with equal respect when touching them.

207. By the end of Year 8, pupils recall the traditions of different religions. They recall facts about previous work. More able pupils know and understand the significance of different religious traditions. During Years 7 and 8, pupils study a wide range of religions. They are involved in visits to local places of worship. They hear stories about important religious figures, and experience festivals such as the Christian Harvest, Divali, Eid and the Jewish festival of Hanukkah. They begin to understand about people who help them, and to be aware of people and places that are important to them.

208. Teaching and learning are consistently good across the school. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject, and the needs and abilities of the pupils. They encourage the use of communication skills as they ask questions and encourage discussion and co-operative work. The use of multi-sensory resources is imaginative and lessons are well organised and planned in great detail. A positive feature of good teaching is the strong team approach across the school. Learning support assistants are fully involved in lessons and make a positive contribution to the progress pupils make. All staff are aware of the desired outcomes of lessons and work together to enable success. This good teaching has a positive impact of the quality of learning and ensures that pupils enjoy their work. Learning resources are used effectively and well-timed changes of activity ensure pupils are motivated and participate fully in lessons. Relationships in classes are excellent, resulting in pupils' attitudes, behaviour and responses being very good.

209. Leadership and management of the subject are sound. Pupils follow a modified Local Authority Agreed syllabus. This works well and has good built-in assessment procedures, which allow staff to report to parents the progress and achievement of pupils. Pupils attend

regular assemblies, which enhance the progress they make in religious education and also to their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Parents fully support the religious education of their children. This was clearly illustrated during the week of the inspection when celebration assemblies took place and were very well supported by parents. It is not possible to make a judgement on the improvement in the provision of religious education since the last inspection, as this subject was not fully reported.