

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ERESBY SCHOOL**

Spilsby, Lincolnshire

LEA area: Lincolnshire

Unique reference number: 120760

Acting Headteacher: Mrs. Jane Staves

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Sue Aldridge  
8810

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 March 2002

Inspection number: 222510

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 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Eresby Avenue Spilsby Lincolnshire
Postcode:	PE23 5HU
Telephone number:	01790 752441
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. Jim Whittaker
Date of previous inspection:	March 2000

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
8810	Sue Aldridge	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Science. Information and communication technology. Design and technology. Music. Spanish. Post 16.	The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed?
19557	Liz Halls	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils and students? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
28117	Pat Abdey	<i>Team inspector</i>	English. Religious education. Personal, social and health education.	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources. Assessment.
21140	Geoff Kitchen	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics. Art. Geography. History. Physical education. Foundation stage.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
10782	Henry Moreton	<i>Team inspector</i>		Support.

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Eresby is a small, mixed, day special school catering for 33 pupils and students aged from 2 to 19. All pupils and students have statements of special educational need, and all are white. Most pupils have severe learning difficulties or profound and multiple learning difficulties, and a very small number have moderate learning difficulties. There is only one pupil at the Foundation Stage, who attends part-time. The number eligible for free school meals is above average. Attainment on entry is very low. Since the last inspection, when the school was judged to have serious weaknesses in leadership and management, the headteacher and deputy headteacher have left, and an assistant headteacher has been acting as headteacher for two terms. There is a teaching post that has not been filled. Two out of five teachers are employed on temporary contracts, to cover the vacancy and the acting headteacher's class. A headteacher has recently been appointed to take over after Easter.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

Eresby is a rapidly improving school that provides an acceptable education for its pupils and students. Achievement is satisfactory, and teaching is satisfactory, with some good features. Leadership is now good, and the school is well managed. Although the cost of educating pupils and students is rather high when compared with similar schools, the school provides sound value for money.

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

- Pupils achieve well in reading, art, physical education and religious education; primary aged pupils achieve well in mathematics, and pupils in Years 3 to 9 achieve well in English.
- Relationships throughout the school community are very good, and pupils have very positive attitudes to school and their work.
- There is excellent provision to promote spiritual awareness, and very good provision to encourage cultural and moral development.
- The committed, hard-working staff are well led by the acting headteacher in improving provision.
- Numbers of learning support assistants are good. Effective liaison between staff and other professionals ensures that good levels of support and care are provided.

## WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The curriculum, which is not challenging enough for high attaining pupils; the provision of required sex and drugs education for secondary aged pupils.
- Records, which are not maintained for some subjects; annual reviews, which do not set annual targets; individual education plans, which contain some unnecessary targets, increasing bureaucracy.
- Designation of co-ordinators for National Curriculum subjects, some of which have none.
- Accommodation, which is not suitable for pupils of all ages, and current staffing levels, which are unsatisfactory.

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

## HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was inspected in March 2000. Since then there has been a satisfactory degree of improvement. Very little improvement took place for the first four terms, but there has been rapid development since the acting headteacher was appointed. Local education authority (LEA) representatives have provided a great deal of effective support. This has been helpful in improving leadership and management. The school has introduced a commercially produced curriculum; this meets the needs of many pupils, but not higher attainers. An improved school development plan covers a two-year period. Provision to develop spiritual awareness has improved dramatically. Governance has improved, but governors do not yet fulfil all their statutory duties. The curriculum for older pupils and students has improved, and external accreditation is provided. The accommodation and learning resources have improved.

## STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year 2	by Year 6	by Year 9	by Year 11	by Year 14	<b>Key</b>  <i>very good</i> A  <i>good</i> B  <i>satisfactory</i> C  <i>unsatisfactory</i> D  <i>poor</i> E
speaking and listening	C	C	C	C	C	
reading	B	B	B	B	C	
writing	C	B	B	C	C	
mathematics	B	B	C	C	C	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	C	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C	C	C	C	

Pupils' and students' achievement is satisfactory overall. Achievement is good in art, physical education and religious education. Primary aged pupils also achieve well in mathematics, and those in Years 3 to 9 achieve well in English. Achievement in reading is good in Years 1 to 11. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve well

across the school; the curriculum is well designed to meet their needs. A small number of higher attaining pupils do not achieve well enough because learning opportunities are not challenging enough for them. The school has recently set whole school targets for improving achievement; it is too soon to see the impact of this. Since the last inspection, achievement has improved for older pupils and students because they are provided with a more relevant curriculum.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils and students have great enthusiasm for school. They show interest in lessons, and are keen to tackle tasks given to them.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in classes, on visits, and at break and lunchtimes. No oppressive behaviour was seen, or reported to inspectors. Pupils and students respect one another, the staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good relationships between all members of the school community help to create a harmonious learning environment. Personal development is good. Pupils and students have opportunities to become involved in school improvement, and to take some responsibilities. They are caring, and help one another.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Statistics do not compare favourably with similar schools nationally, but most absences are for medical reasons and a very small number of poor attenders adversely affect the figures.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Reception, Years 1 and 2	Years 3 – 6	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 14
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

*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.*

Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is satisfactory in the key subjects of English, mathematics, personal, social and health education, and science. Teaching of art, physical education, and religious education is good. Teaching of communication is satisfactory. Reading is taught well, and the teaching of numeracy is satisfactory. Information and communication technology is used fairly well to help pupils and students learn, but much good practice is recent, and there is some inconsistency. The teaching of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) is good. The most significant weakness of teaching is that teachers do not plan with the National Curriculum in mind. This means that higher attaining pupils do not make sufficient gains in their knowledge and understanding. Their needs are not met as well as those of lower attaining pupils. Pupils apply themselves well in lessons, and those with PMLD co-operate well with adults supporting them.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children at the Foundation Stage is good. Provision for PMLD pupils and students is good, but the curriculum for higher attainers is too narrow. For secondary aged pupils, the curriculum is unsatisfactory because sex and drugs education are not provided as required. The school has good links with the community, and productive partnerships with schools and a college, which enrich the curriculum. There is no scheme of work for writing, and this limits achievement. Weaknesses in the accommodation limit what the school can provide for secondary aged pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for developing spiritual awareness is now excellent, and there are very good opportunities for pupils and students to develop their moral and cultural awareness. The atmosphere and life of the school, and links with the community, effectively promote social development. However, the school's exceptionally large catchment area makes provision of extra-curricular activities difficult, and residential experiences are provided only for those over sixteen.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good levels of medical care are provided. Pupils and students are given good personal support and help to improve their attendance and behaviour. Child protection procedures are very good. There are no qualified first aiders on the staff, and staff do not always use hoists for lifting. The school's database, showing how well pupils attain in all subject areas, is a strength. Staff check carefully on how well pupils and students are progressing. However, records are not kept for all subjects, and this makes it difficult for teachers to plan the next steps in learning. At annual reviews, targets are set for one term, instead of a year. Individual education plans (IEPs) are not securely linked to targets set at annual reviews, and targets in IEPs are not always specific. There is some unnecessary target setting in IEPs, and the quality of IEPs varies.

The school works well in partnership with parents.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The acting headteacher has successfully secured significant improvement in a short space of time. Staff with management responsibilities, including the bursar and some temporary teachers, have worked very hard to improve provision.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors are skilled and supportive. They have improved the extent to which they fulfil their responsibilities by forming sub-committees, with clear terms of reference, to keep the school's work under review. They have a clear understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses, and of how to improve their role as critical friends. However, they do not yet ensure that the school's curriculum meets requirements, and this is unsatisfactory.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. Recently, whole-school targets have been set for improving achievement, and the school has a database of pupils' achievements to help track progress. Comparative information about similar schools has been used for self-evaluation.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the school's budget and additional sources of funding to improve provision, particularly in the accommodation and the grounds, and to supplement learning resources. Financial administration is good. The school development plan is fully costed over a period of two years. However, the Connexions officer's time is not used well.

Although the current staffing is unsatisfactory, a new headteacher has been appointed, and the teacher vacancy re-advertised. The accommodation is unsatisfactory; it restricts learning experiences for secondary aged pupils in particular. Learning resources are now satisfactory for the limited curriculum on offer. The school applies the principles of best value in a satisfactory manner.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff are approachable and parents are welcome in school.</li> <li>• Teaching is good.</li> <li>• Staff have high expectations.</li> <li>• Behaviour is good.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A few would like their children to make more progress.</li> <li>• A few find that their children do not like school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with most of the parents' positive views of the school. They find that higher attaining pupils do not make as much progress as they should, and a very small number of pupils do not attend well.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. Pupils' and students' achievements are satisfactory overall. As they move up through the years, their levels of attainment increase, and these compare satisfactorily with the achievements of those in similar schools nationally. Achievement is best in English at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3 to 9), and in mathematics at Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6). In art, physical education and religious education achievement is also good. High achievement is associated with the breadth of suitable learning experiences provided in these subjects. The most significant factor limiting achievement in other subjects is the narrow range of learning experiences provided.

2. One group of pupils achieves well throughout the school, and these have profound and multiple learning difficulties. For this group, teaching is good, and records show clearly the gains that they make. For a small group of higher attaining pupils, achievement is unsatisfactory because they do not have a broad enough range of learning experiences. There are no differences in the achievements of boys and girls.

3. The school has recently set targets for raising whole school achievements. It is too early to say whether these are likely to be met, and too soon to see any impact of this. Some work has also been done on comparing the achievements of Eresby pupils with those of pupils in similar schools nationally, and this has helped the school to identify areas on which to focus, such as writing skills.

4. Achievement in art is good, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The subject co-ordinator has done much to develop the subject since taking on the responsibility a few months ago. However, there is little scope for further improving the range of artistic opportunities for secondary aged pupils, without the provision of specialist facilities. In physical education, a working party has successfully improved the provision, and this has had a positive impact on pupils' and students' achievements, which are now good. In religious education, provision has also improved since the last inspection, and achievements are now good. The school now bases its planning on the locally Agreed Syllabus, and the purchase of resources associated with faiths other than Christianity has helped to increase pupils' understanding and broadened their knowledge of world religions.

5. In English, achievement is satisfactory overall. It is good at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3 to 9), and satisfactory at Key Stage 1 (Years 1 and 2), Key Stage 4 (Years 10 and 11), and at Post 16. Achievement in reading is good across the school; there are suitable strategies for encouraging the development of reading skills, including phonics, and staff skills in teaching literacy skills have been developed further since the last inspection. Achievement in speaking and listening skills is satisfactory. The staff use signing and symbols to help pupils understand and communicate, but the use of signing is inconsistent. In writing, achievement is best at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3 to 9), where pupils make good progress against the writing targets in their individual education plans (IEPs).

6. In mathematics, achievement is satisfactory overall, but good at Key Stages 1 and 2 (Years 1 to 6). The best teaching was seen at these stages. In general, the National Numeracy Strategy is having a positive impact on pupils' achievements across Years 1 to 11; there is now more time allocated to the teaching of mathematics, and the co-ordinator has been able to monitor and support teaching, and track pupils' progress in the subject. Achievement has improved since the last inspection.

7. Achievement is satisfactory in science, and this represents no improvement since the last inspection. The lack of a subject co-ordinator has meant that there has been little development in the subject. The factor that limits achievement is the narrow curriculum; this results partly from weaknesses in planning, and is not helped by the lack of a specialist facility for secondary pupils. Without a science area, certain practical activities cannot safely be undertaken. Similarly, in design and technology, achievement is satisfactory, but is limited by the narrow curriculum and the lack of a specialist facility for secondary pupils. This means that pupils in Years 7 to 9 are not able to work successfully on a range of resistant materials, such as wood and metal.

8. In all other subjects of the curriculum, achievements are satisfactory. In personal, social and health education (PSHE), pupils make good progress against the targets in their IEPs; progress for students over 16 is satisfactory. The addition of careers education and work experience is an important improvement since the last inspection. However, the lack of a scheme of work for the subject limits achievement, and the lack of a suitable programme of sex and drugs education for secondary aged pupils is a particular weakness.

9. In geography, history, design and technology and music there are no ongoing records showing what pupils know, understand and can do in these subjects. This makes it difficult for teachers to build on what pupils know, understand and can do, or to identify areas that need revisiting, which limits achievement. In information and communication technology (ICT), achievement is satisfactory. Pupils' and students' progress has been slowed by the teething problems presented by new resources in the school, and not all staff maintain a recently adopted record of skill development.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

10. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Many parents commented favourably on how much their children enjoy attending school. As a result, attendance is good for the majority of pupils. Overall attendance is satisfactory because some pupils have had extended periods of sickness which affects the whole school figures.

11. Pupils' enjoyment is reflected in the eagerness they display on their arrival at school and is also indicative of the very good relationships they have with staff. Pupils settle quickly to lessons, participating in a wide range of activities with both confidence and enthusiasm. They display the ability to work well or to focus their attention, and are able to concentrate for lengthy periods such as when using the swimming pool or participating in a careers visit to a hotel. They take pride in their work. For example, a Year 11 pupil was keen to demonstrate how to make a circuit in a design and technology (DT) lesson.

12. The positive attitude to school is further illustrated in pupils' good behaviour in school, and on school trips. Parents all agree that behaviour in school is good. A further indication of this good behaviour is the lack of exclusions and bullying. In lessons, pupils respond well to the clear expectations of staff and take pleasure from the praise given to them, both in lessons and in assemblies. When on school trips, pupils are sensible and polite. This was very apparent on their visits to a hotel and to a recycling centre. On the rare occasions when

pupils lose concentration they respond well to prompts from staff, and return to their work. In Class 4, where pupils in Years 10 and 11 share a room with Post 16 students, concentration is made difficult because of the lack of discrete areas for small group activities, and inevitable noise and distraction caused by the work of other groups. When one group is preparing food, it is difficult for those pursuing a quiet activity to remain focused on this.

13. Pupils' and students' personal development is good. Pupils and students are encouraged to take on small responsibilities, and clearly enjoy these opportunities. Examples include using the digital camera, operating the tape recorder, helping to tidy up, putting away the chairs at lunchtime or taking the register to the office. All pupils and students are encouraged to work together and to work closely with staff. Several examples of pupils and students helping one another were seen, many of these spontaneous. For example, one pupil held a piece of equipment still whilst another used the screwdriver in a design and technology lesson. Tidying up and handing out drinks are done very sensibly, and without fuss, and pupils and students are always pleased to assist when asked to do so. Pupils and students have been involved in making decisions about school life; they have selected decoration for refurbished changing rooms, and been fully involved in the design and construction of a sensory garden.

14. Pupils' and students' growing maturity and sense of responsibility is evident in the way they respond to situations. For example, they fetch help when needed, and they show visitors the routines at lunchtime. All pupils show care and concern for others, and this was very apparent throughout the school. However, there is a lack of opportunity to learn about important issues such as sexual relationships and drugs. There are few opportunities to evaluate individually how well they have been doing during the lesson or day. Older pupils review their personal records and some make clear decisions about their work and behaviour and are very honest about their achievements.

15. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff are very good. Staff value pupils and students as individuals, and parents are pleased with the family atmosphere in the school. There is clear mutual respect, and all members of the school community are on first name terms. The quality of relationships creates a most harmonious environment and helps to promote learning.

## **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

16. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Direct observations of lessons showed many good features of teaching. In fact, of the 43 lessons seen, 26 were good or better. This is similar to the statistics for the last inspection. However, there is a significant weakness in teaching over time; teachers do not plan with the National Curriculum in mind, and this limits pupils' acquisition of knowledge and understanding in several subjects, particularly those that form part of the curriculum area known as knowledge and understanding of the world. They include science, design and technology, history, and geography.

17. The best classroom teaching was seen in Years 7 to 9, where many lessons were good; in Years 3 to 6 all lessons were satisfactory or better. Three unsatisfactory lessons were seen. Weaknesses were seen in Years 1 and 2, and in Years 10 to 14. In general, teaching is best in classes where there are permanent staff, who know pupils and students well, and have good expertise in teaching pupils and students with severe learning difficulties.

18. Teaching of pupils and students with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) is consistently good. Staff make very good use of sensory resources, and ICT to stimulate

these pupils, and they keep detailed records showing pupils' and students' responses, and their emerging preferences. Pupils and students with PMLD are treated with respect and sensitivity. Staff ensure that they are positioned comfortably, and ready for learning, and they are careful to warn them of any changes that are about to be made. As a result, these pupils and students feel secure and are trusting. Staff present stimuli with great patience and skill, and elicit good responses. Learning support assistants make a strong contribution to the quality of teaching and learning for PMLD pupils and students.

19. Teachers are skilled in using methods that help pupils to understand topics and concepts. For example, there is successful use of practical approaches in science, which enable pupils to experience scientific principles, such as forces and motion. Real tasks in design and technology, such as making pancakes or a puppet theatre, enable pupils to become engaged in solving problems and trying things out themselves. Tasks that teachers present usually interest pupils, and some sustain concentration for considerable periods of time.

20. Methods advocated by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been successfully modified and implemented in the school. These are having a positive impact on pupils' progress. For example, some skilful teaching of letter sounds was seen. The school has also adopted a literacy strategy for pupils in Years 7 to 14. This is proving successful too. As part of this, learning support assistants have been trained to take pupils for individual sessions. One session observed, which focused on word and sentence work, was particularly successful. The pupil concerned had done her homework and was able to read correctly all the words she had practised. She was able to suggest a sentence, based on the story in her reading book, using new words, and took this home to learn for the following week.

21. Communication skills, including literacy and numeracy, are reinforced satisfactorily in several subjects. Staff sign and use symbols to support pupils' and students' understanding, but this is not consistent amongst all staff. Suitable use is made of different switches, to enable all pupils to have an appropriate means of communication. In physical education, pupils in Years 3 to 6 were seen counting and taking turns to greet one another during an exercise with a parachute, performed towards the end of the lesson, to include all pupils. Those with PMLD had joined the others from a physiotherapy session. There are regular opportunities to read and write in several subjects. However, the use of ICT, whilst used well for pupils and students with PMLD, is not as widely used as it might be in other subjects. Good use was seen in Years 7 to 9, but little evidence was found of its use in Years 3 to 6.

22. A particular strength of teaching is the effective management of pupils, which is securely underpinned by the very good relationships in the school. There is strong mutual respect, and staff make their expectations of good work and behaviour clear. Pupils and students respond well to this; they make an effort to complete work independently, and a number of lessons were seen where higher attaining pupils helped lower attainers, either by signing to them, or by showing them how to do something. Lower attainers, who need support from staff, co-operate well with those who provide this, and this promotes learning well.

23. Planning is satisfactory overall; it is best for children at the Foundation Stage, where all the required areas of learning are addressed, and suitable learning experiences are provided to assist children in progressing towards the early learning goals. In Years 1 to 11,

teachers plan in a cross-curricular way, which has the advantage of giving coherence to the learning experiences provided. However, lessons do not all have a clear subject focus, and over time there are not enough opportunities for pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding in several subjects.

24. Some good examples of assessment were seen during the inspection. In a science lesson for Years 7 to 9, the teacher checked on pupils' understanding, intervened to clarify a point for one pupil, then later returned to question this pupil again. It was clear that the teacher's intervention had been successful in securing the pupils' understanding. The school has a simple but clear system for marking pupils' work, showing the level of independent working. However, this is not consistently applied by all staff. A further weakness of assessment is the lack of ongoing records in some subjects, making it difficult to plan the next steps. The recent introduction of a record for ICT is an improvement that is worth replicating in other subjects.

25. Pupils and students develop a satisfactory knowledge of their learning. Staff give suitable praise for good work and achievement. Pupils' and students' work is well displayed around the school, and records of achievement are meaningful to pupils because they make good use of digital photographs. However, annotation of photographs is inconsistent. Teachers do not explain to pupils and students what the learning goals are in each lesson, and do not remind pupils and students of their individual targets.

26. When lessons were unsatisfactory, this was because staff did not provide a suitable challenge, so little learning took place. Some weaknesses in the management of pupils and students were seen too. Where temporary learning support assistants play a substantial part in direct teaching, they are not always well briefed enough, or their work monitored closely enough, and this results in tasks being approached that are too difficult or too easy. As a result, no gains in learning are made.

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

27. Since the last inspection, the school has made satisfactory progress in developing its curriculum. There has been a 'step change' in the last six months which has seen some really significant improvements. A recently written curriculum statement provides a satisfactory foundation to drive curriculum development forward, but lacks consideration of pupils' and students' personal development. This is a great shame, as the spiritual, moral and cultural provision the school makes is a significant strength. Policy and agreed courses to address statutory requirements regarding drugs awareness, health and sex education are still not in place. This is a significant weakness of the curriculum for older pupils and students.

28. The curriculum for children below statutory school age is good. It is well planned and takes good account of early learning goals and individual children's needs. However, the accommodation is very cramped and does not allow staff to develop all the areas in the class linked to the Foundation Stage curriculum. Nonetheless, staff do make best use of the space and facilities available.

29. For pupils of statutory school age, all National Curriculum subjects are taught, as well as religious education, which is based on the local Agreed Syllabus. Suitably modified Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been introduced, and are having a good impact on pupils' and students' achievements.

30. The school has adopted a nationally recognised curriculum package that provides ready made schemes of work for pupils and students with complex learning needs. Monitoring of the curriculum, and consideration of the schemes of work for pupils with learning difficulties (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, May 2001), have led to a realisation that the current schemes of work limit learning opportunities, particularly for middle and higher attaining pupils and students.

31. The lack of specialist subject accommodation results in a narrow range in some subjects, notably work with resistant materials in design and technology, and access to some relevant programmes of study within science and art. In physical education, the use of facilities, experiences and expertise outside school ensures a good range of opportunities. The curriculum for students over 16 is affected adversely by not having discrete provision. There is no separate recreational area, although the school has plans to rectify this.

32. The post 16 curriculum provides a satisfactory range of experiences, and prepares students adequately for their next stage of life-long learning. The development of accreditation is an improvement since the last inspection; the school is now a recognised centre for delivering Transition Challenge and Towards Independence under the ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) scheme. Staff are fully involved in meetings with other schools to accredit and moderate students' work. This is good inclusive practice.

33. Provision for pupils' and students' individual needs is satisfactory. All pupils and students have statements of special educational need. Objectives set in reviews are linked, in the main but not always, to IEPs. However, at annual reviews, objectives are set for the following term, rather than for a year as recommended in the Code of Practice. When objectives in IEPs are derived from objectives in the school's schemes of work, rather than arising from annual targets set at the review meeting, the IEP does not serve to meet truly *individual* needs.

34. Inclusion within school is a strength, and considerable effort is made by staff to include all pupils and students fully in the life of the school. A modest range of opportunities is developing for pupils and students to have learning opportunities alongside mainstream students. A long established link with a local playgroup is an example of good practice recognised at the last inspection. This has been successfully maintained.

35. Links with the community are good and this is an improvement since the last inspection. Improvements include increased inclusion with local mainstream schools for sporting activities, and a half-day spent in a local primary school for one pupil.

36. Some improvements have been made to extra-curricular activities since the last inspection. A range of sports activities is being offered at lunchtimes; the provision remains satisfactory. One residential experience is planned each year. A programme of day visits to support the curriculum is planned, and these make a good contribution to the curriculum offered.

37. The provision for careers education and guidance is satisfactory, and this is an improvement since the last inspection. A wall display of careers has been provided. However, a careers library or computer based database has not been developed. Support from the local careers service has been patchy, but the school has now addressed this. Links with a specialist further education college provide work experience for older students. Some students progress to this establishment, or to a local college of further education.

38. Provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory. Apart from the lack of drugs awareness and sex education already reported, insufficient time is allocated on timetables for this important area. The school does count some of the lunch break as taught time; teaching staff are involved and PMLD pupils and students have targets set for achievement during this time. However, setting of targets for other pupils and students has not been fully explored. The school is insufficiently prepared to teach citizenship from September 2002 as required, because it has no course or programme. However, targets in pupils' and students' IEPs include some related to personal, social and health education.

39. There is excellent provision for pupils' and students' spiritual development. Religious education and the daily school assemblies, which are Christian in character but provide good reference to other major faiths, very effectively support the development of pupils' spiritual awareness. Assemblies are an excellent combination of interesting themes, events in the Christian calendar, and celebrations of the class work in different cultures and religions. Pupils are encouraged to celebrate the success of others and appreciate beauty, effort, music and drama and the arts. School assemblies are a wonderful community gathering, and a spiritually uplifting end to the school day. Provision for spiritual development has been significantly developed since the last inspection, when it was found to be unsatisfactory.

40. Provision for pupils and students' social development is good. From entry in Class 1, the school focuses upon clear routines with high expectations of behaviour. Pupils and students are taught to take turns, for example when rolling out the marzipan for the top of a simnel cake. They learn to share and work and play as a group of friends. Music is effectively used to enhance pupils' and students' cultural and spiritual development. For example, in an assembly two of the older pupils in wheelchairs did an African dance to taped African tribal music. Music is often used to calm and relax pupils and students as part of the physical and sensory curriculum.

41. The school celebrates a range of cultural festivals such as Chinese New Year, and there are a number of visits to places of worship, such as churches in the town and local area. Grace is said at lunchtimes, and this provides a calming start to the lunch period, which is a relaxed, sociable occasion with pupils, students and staff eating together in a family atmosphere. This successfully develops pupils' and students' social skills as they learn to pass the water jug and talk to fellow pupils, students and staff. The celebration of the local culture also features strongly and the school participates in the annual carnival. Pupils and students support a school in the Gambia and have sent resources, equipment and consumables out to it. They also raise funds for a Russian orphanage.

42. Provision for pupils' and students' social and moral development is underpinned by the very good relationships that exist within the school. Staff provide very good role models for pupils and students. The respect pupils and students receive from adults contributes to their self-esteem and encourages them to respect each other and accept differences. The school provides a very good range of visits, including a residential trip. These, together with the increasing programme of inclusion activities, provide pupils and students with opportunities to work, play and socialise with their peers in mainstream schools.

43. Through circle time, pupils and students are encouraged to understand their feelings and how other people might feel. Staff take every opportunity to reinforce how individuals' actions make others feel, and express disappointment on rare occasions when pupils and students let themselves down. Pupils and students are given opportunities to consider right and wrong, and are regularly reminded of the correct way to behave. Strong emphasis is

given to manners, and the need to apologise when things have gone wrong. Throughout the school, praise is effectively used. In a Class 4 activity, pupils showed high levels of tolerance and respect as they selected costumes to wear for the African dance they were to perform in assembly.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

44. Overall the school has maintained the effective provision for the care of pupils and students since the previous inspection, and makes good provision for the welfare, support and pastoral guidance of pupils and students. The school is an orderly, caring community, which abides by a few rules. Staff quickly establish routines and get to know pupils and students very well. This promotes pupils' and students' confidence to cope effectively with school life. Parents expressed the view that the school provides good support for their children, and is a caring place in which their children feel happy and safe. This results in very positive attitudes to learning, and good behaviour in pupils and students.

45. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good. Staff follow up any absence where no notification has been received, and work closely with the education welfare service where necessary. There are very good procedures in place for child protection, and all staff are most vigilant. There are good procedures for promoting the well-being and health and safety of all pupils and students, and the school has very good links with other agencies that work closely with the staff. A small number of health and safety issues were raised with the acting headteacher, including concerns over the lack of staff holding a first aid qualification (all staff have had relevant training) and some inappropriate manual handling of pupils instead of using the hoist.

46. The school has good measures to promote and maintain discipline and behaviour. Expectations of pupils' and students' behaviour are high, and are consistently reinforced; pupils and students both understand and meet these expectations. Staff praise appropriate behaviour, and address any inappropriate actions firmly and sensitively to ensure a calm working environment. However, whilst staff are aware of the individual needs of pupils and students, and use the casebook effectively to ensure that all staff are aware of what to do if inappropriate behaviour occurs, there are no written behaviour management plans. This is important for staff who do not know pupils and students well, particularly new or temporary staff. All permanent staff have been appropriately trained in behaviour management, holding and restraint.

47. Procedures for monitoring pupil's personal development are very good. Pupils' and students' have personal development targets in their individual education plans. Pupils and students are assessed using the nationally recognised 'P' Levels system. Individual records of achievement are good, containing a good range of photographs, certificates and examples of work.

48. Although the informal promotion of personal development is generally good, the school misses some opportunities to encourage self-help and independence skills, particularly at lunchtimes and when pupils get changed for physical education.

49. Overall, the school makes a satisfactory job of supporting pupils and students in making academic progress. Their academic progress is monitored well. Staff know what levels pupils and students are working at, and the school has a database showing their levels of achievement. Staff with management responsibilities track pupils' and students' achievements in their subjects. However this does not happen in subjects where there are no designated co-ordinators.

50. Whole school targets have been set for improving pupils' achievements, but this is recent, and there is no discernible impact as yet. Targets set in pupils and students' IEPs help them to make progress in areas where they have particular weaknesses, but IEPs are not of consistently good quality throughout the school. For example, targets are not always specific and measurable, and some plans do not give enough detail about the strategies to be used to help pupils and students achieve the targets set. There has been some work done comparing the achievements of pupils and students with those from similar schools nationally, and this has helped staff to identify where more focused support is needed.

51. A weakness of assessment generally is the lack of ongoing records in some subjects, which makes it difficult for staff to plan the next steps in learning. There are no records kept in design and technology, history, geography and music. In information and communication technology, the school has adopted a suitable commercial checklist, but this is not yet being maintained by all teachers.

52. There is good provision to meet the additional needs described in pupils' and students' statements. Speech and language therapists and physiotherapists work closely with staff to ensure that pupils' and students' needs are met. The school purchases careers advice and guidance, but this is not used as effectively as it might be because the Connexions officer attends annual reviews of all pupils and students, which accounts for most of the time allocated. This leaves little time for supporting older pupils and students, and students in their transition from school to adult life.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

53. The school's relationship with parents is good and benefits from the commitment of staff to work in partnership with them. From the response to the parents' questionnaire, and the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, it is very apparent that parents are supportive of the school. In particular they are very supportive of the events organised by the Parents, Friends and Staff Association (PFSA) and special events in the school. Parents comment favourably on the openness of the school. They say they are made to feel welcome and staff are very approachable. They have all signed the 'Home School Agreement'.

54. Parents are encouraged to attend annual reviews, and have appropriate opportunities for both formal and informal telephone discussions with staff. Procedures for the annual review of pupils' and students' statements are good, and the review report is of good quality. It clearly identifies what pupils and students know, understand and can do and is informed by anecdotal records that teachers keep of pupils' and students' responses to activities, and their achievements during lessons.

55. The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory. Parents are kept well informed through regular letters about school life. The school prospectus has several omissions and needs updating but the governor's annual report to parents contains all the required information. Annual written reports to parents on pupils' progress were being written at the time of the inspection. These were an improvement on previous years' reports, as they clearly identified attainment and progress. Individual education plans are shared with parents during annual reviews. Home school diaries are provided by the PFSA and are used as an effective communication tool. The transport escorts also provide a valuable home school link. The school uses electronic communication resources to assist communication between home and school where parents need this support.

56. Parental involvement in their child's learning at home and in school is good. Parents are appreciative of the opportunities they have to see special celebrations, at Christmas for example. Parents support their children's work in literacy at home, and there is effective dialogue between home and school.

57. The school has successfully maintained its good relationships with parents since the previous inspection.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

58. When the school was inspected in 2000, there were serious weaknesses in leadership and management. Since then the deputy headteacher and headteacher have left the school, and an assistant headteacher is now acting as headteacher. She has been in post for two terms. At the time of her appointment, there had been limited progress in addressing the key issues identified at the last inspection. Since her appointment there has been very rapid development, despite considerable staffing difficulties that culminated in the suspension of a teacher. Advisers and school improvement officers from the local education authority (LEA) have provided significant support, as the assistant headteacher had no formal training in management, and had been given a very limited management role by the previous headteacher.

59. Leadership is good. The acting headteacher has been particularly successful in improving communication within the school, and staff now work well together to effect improvement. She has also led well improvements to the accommodation; these have helped to create a better learning environment. All have worked extremely hard to rectify the many weaknesses that existed at the last inspection, and in a small school the workload has been significant. Good teamwork has been instrumental in auditing, improving and organising learning resources. There is a strong, shared commitment to improvement, and the school's capacity to improve further is now good.

60. There are few staff with management responsibilities, and the management structure is unsatisfactory at present. However, others have shown initiative and a willingness to tackle development. For example, the bursar, who has expertise and enthusiasm for information and communication technology (ICT), has worked with the LEA adviser to draw up a development plan for the subject, and she has almost completed an audit of ICT resources. A temporary teacher has developed the curriculum for pupils and students from 14 to 19; it is now more relevant, and provides external accreditation for those leaving school at 19. Where there are subject managers, they have led developments in their subjects well. A new headteacher has been appointed to take up the post after Easter, and this is likely to allow for the creation of a senior management team, but the school is still short of one permanent teacher, which limits the scope for allocating subject responsibilities.

61. All the key issues identified at the last inspection have been addressed to some extent. Fairly soon after the last inspection, the school adopted a commercially produced curriculum rather than develop the existing curriculum into schemes of work. The result is that pupils from six to sixteen have a narrow range of learning experiences, and this limits achievement, particularly for higher attaining pupils. The curriculum is divided into areas of learning rather than National Curriculum subjects, and the school has attempted to manage the curriculum under these area headings too. This has been successful for English and mathematics, but there are far too many subjects in the area known as *Knowledge and*

*Understanding of the World*, for one person to manage. As a result, there has not been enough improvement in some of the subject areas. Sex and drugs education are not provided for secondary pupils as required, and this was a weakness at the last inspection. Overall, improvement in the management of the curriculum is unsatisfactory.

62. School development planning, unsatisfactory at the last inspection, has improved considerably, and is now satisfactory. There is now a suitable plan that extends over a two-year period, and this is fully costed. The plan is inevitably based very much on the key issues identified at the last inspection, but also includes developments that the school has identified itself, such as enhancement of the literacy strategy. A weakness of the plan is that it does not identify staff training needed to support developments. However, the school has used professional development very effectively to support improvement, and all staff have had access to suitable courses. Staff are in the process of drawing up subject development plans, and the intention is that these will be used as the basis for governors to consider budget allocations. Several of the school's policies are in need of updating, and action on these does not feature in the plan either. The LEA, in consultation with the previous headteacher, drew up the current improvement plan, and governors were not involved in its formulation. However, since the appointment of the acting headteacher, governors have started to monitor the progress of the plan.

63. More recently, the school has identified whole school targets for improving achievement. It is too early to say whether these targets are likely to be met, but the action taken to support achievement of targets is satisfactory. Teaching and learning are monitored well, through checking of plans, and use of the school's database to identify the effectiveness of teaching. The acting headteacher does a daily walkabout, and there is also formal observation of lessons, and feedback given to teachers. All permanent teachers, apart from the acting headteacher, have had their performance objectives reviewed as part of the performance management process. Overall, monitoring and evaluation are satisfactory.

64. Governors are a skilled and supportive group. With two retired headteachers and an expert in educational law amongst them, they have strong expertise in education. Since the last inspection they have established a committee structure, with clear terms of reference, and started to use this as a means of keeping the school's work under review. With the appointment of a new chair, they have begun to develop their role as critical friends to the school. They have also developed more efficient management of meetings, and this has helped to recruit governors. Their intervention has been successful in creating safer working conditions in the hydrotherapy pool area, and they keep a close check on health and safety matters. One governor has been a member of the working party that has so successfully developed the provision for spiritual awareness, an issue at the last inspection too. However, governors do not yet fulfil their responsibility to ensure that the curriculum meets requirements. Through their self-review, they are aware of their weaknesses, and have drawn up a suitable action plan to address them.

65. Staffing difficulties have had a considerable impact on the rate of improvement since the last inspection. At present, the staffing structure is unsatisfactory, as there is no senior management team, and the school has not been successful in its first attempt to fill a teaching vacancy. There are no qualified first aiders on the staff.

66. The provision of support staff is good; it compares very favourably with similar schools nationally. However, support staff absence through illness has led to a lack of continuity in support for some pupils and students.

67. The school's accommodation is unsatisfactory overall. There is a good-sized sensory area, with ball pool, soft play equipment, and white and black rooms. Outside, there is a very

pleasant sensory garden, and an area for younger or more vulnerable pupils to play, fenced off from the footballers. There have been some significant improvements made to the changing areas, extra storage space has been created, and the kitchen has been refurbished. However, the building is not well suited for secondary pupils and those over 16. There are no specialist areas for science, design technology or art, and this restricts the range of activities that can safely be offered. Pupils and students in Years 10 to 14 share one classroom area, and this is distracting when different activities are going on, particularly if one requires quiet reflection and another is a practical activity. There is no common room for students over 16, although one is planned. The classroom used by the youngest pupils is not large enough for more than five pupils, and the room does not provide sufficient space or flexibility to allow for the creation of different areas. To some extent this is overcome by using a covered outside area for sand and water play, but this is not an option all year round. The changing area linked to this classroom is not large enough to allow for the use of a hoist. This means that pupils have to be lifted manually.

68. The quality of financial administration is good, and the school is well provided with administrative and clerical staff. Good use is made of additional sources of funding to support developments. For example, additional funds have been used to provide extra administrative support, improvements to the accommodation and resources for ICT. The LEA has contributed financial resources to assist in improving staffing. Staffing difficulties have prevented the school from taking advantage of a funded place on a course providing a qualification in careers education and guidance.

69. The principles of best value are applied in a satisfactory manner. Staff seek to obtain the best value for money when placing orders. The school has taken part in a national project to compare its pupils' achievements with those in similar schools nationally, and this has begun to help staff identify areas in need of further attention, such as writing. It also uses comparative data provided by the LEA to analyse expenditure patterns. This enabled the school to identify excessive expenditure on water, which resulted in the discovery of an underground leak. This has been repaired, thus saving money. However, there has been little use of other available national comparative data. The school does not make the most effective use of the Connexions officer's time, purchased as part of a service level agreement.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. The headteacher, staff and governors should:

- improve the curriculum by:  
(*Paragraphs: 8, 14, 30, 38, 81*)
  - \* ensuring that schemes of work reflect National Curriculum programmes of study;
  - \* implementing a planned programme of PSHE, including sex and drugs education, at Key Stages 3 and 4;
  - \* developing a scheme of work for writing.
  
- improve the link between assessment and planning by:  
(*Paragraphs: 9, 33, 50, 51*)
  - \* maintaining suitable records in the subjects of design and technology, ICT, history, geography and music;
  - \* ensuring that targets set at annual reviews are annual targets;
  - \* ensuring that the structure of IEPs reflects the recommendations in the Code of Practice;
  - \* ensuring that targets on pupils' and students' IEPs are linked to targets set at annual reviews;
  - \* ensuring that targets on IEPs are specific and measurable.
  
- improve staffing by:  
(*Paragraphs: 60, 61, 65*)
  - \* creating a suitable senior management team;
  - \* appointing subject leaders for all National Curriculum subjects and religious education;
  - \* ensuring that there are qualified first aiders on the staff.
  
- liaise with the LEA with a view to improving the school's accommodation and so address the weaknesses identified in this report;  
(*Paragraphs: 31, 67*)
  
- governors should consider including the following minor points in their action plan:  
(*Paragraphs: 45, 52, 62*)
  - \* ensuring that time allocated to the Connexions officer is used more effectively to support the oldest pupils and students;
  - \* ensuring that staff use hoists for lifting pupils and students;
  - \* ensuring that all policies are regularly updated.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	43
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	21

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
<b>Number</b>	2	2	22	14	3	0	0
<b>Percentage</b>	5	5	51	32	7	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than two percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	33
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

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

### Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	10.7	School data	0.5

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

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)***

Numbers of pupils are below 10 so results are not reported here:

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)***

Numbers of pupils are below 10 so results are not reported here

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)***

All pupils at this stage are disapplied from National Tests. As numbers of pupils are below 10 teachers' assessments are not reported here.

### ***Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)***

As numbers of pupils are below 10, results are not reported here

### ***Attainment at Post-16 (Year 14)***

As numbers of students are below 10, results are not reported here.

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	<b>No of pupils</b>
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	32
Any other minority ethnic group	0

*The table shows pupils of compulsory school age only.*

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	<b>Fixed period</b>	<b>Permanent</b>
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	5	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:

YR – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.8
Average class size	8

#### Education support staff:

YR – Y14

Total number of education support staff	16
Total aggregate hours worked per week	458

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### Financial information

Financial year	<b>2000/2001</b>
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	£
Total income	467726.00
Total expenditure	462345.00
Expenditure per pupil	13201.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	8420.00
Balance carried forward to next year	13801.00

### Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	1

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out  
Number of questionnaires returned

33
14

### Percentage of responses in each category

	<b>Strongly agree</b>	<b>Tend to agree</b>	<b>Tend to disagree</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>
My child likes school.	62	23	15	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	23	62	15	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	46	0	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	31	23	8	8	31
The teaching is good.	62	23	0	0	15
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	38	8	8	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	62	38	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	54	38	0	0	8
The school works closely with parents.	46	38	8	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	46	38	8	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	38	8	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	31	31	0	15	23

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

### **ENGLISH**

71. Since the last inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in the provision for English. Pupils' achievement in reading is good; at Post 16 Level, achievement is satisfactory. Provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) across the age range is good. There is no significant difference in achievement between boys and girls.

72. The school has implemented a suitably modified form of the National Literacy Strategy, and this impacts positively on pupils' achievement. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1), Years 10 and 11 (Key Stage 4) and at Post 16 Level. It is good in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2) and in Years 7 to 9 (Key Stage 3).

73. Teaching is satisfactory overall; it is good at Key Stages 2 and 3 (Years 3 to 9); one unsatisfactory lesson was seen at Post-16 Level. In all classes, teachers make sound use of 'circle time' to provide essential speaking and listening opportunities for pupils. Throughout the school, very good support is provided by learning support assistants, who help PMLD pupils encounter and respond to language, through use of signing, pictures or concrete objects. A good example of this was in a well-structured lesson, where sensory cues enabled PMLD pupils to develop increasingly more responses and smiles to the resources provided.

74. Teachers and learning support assistants have a good understanding of pupils' needs. Support for all pupils is good. For example, Year 10 pupils who had been on a work experience visit to a local hotel were recapping on their visit before preparing a "thank you" letter. Use of a digital camera at the placement was invaluable in recalling the visit, prompting speech, and extending pupils' knowledge about the roles of the various staff. Pupils across the ability range listen well, answer questions and enjoy making contributions to lessons. For example, one pupil lifted an arm to signal an answer, and PMLD pupils eye-pointed to indicate choice. Use of outside story tellers is good. One session seen was well paced, with good multi-sensory resources. Stories involved lots of repetitive sounds that enabled pupils to practise and improve sounds, and build up new ones. After familiar stories, a new story was added, and pupils were invited to choose the final story. Speech and language therapists assess new pupils, and work co-operatively with staff and parents to implement programmes. However, signing is inconsistently used by staff; some sign better than others, and signing is not always as frequent as it is might be. This means that some pupils are not as well included as they should be.

75. The structured and systematic teaching of reading is successful in raising pupils' achievements. At all key stages, pupils' achievement in reading is good. At Post 16 Level, it is satisfactory. All pupils have reading targets, are assessed and have their progress monitored. They all have reading homework. This impacts positively on pupils' progress. Lessons are mainly well planned, and teachers strive to adapt materials to meet the differing needs of their pupils. There is a designated teaching room with the range of reading books well displayed.

76. A good example of phonics teaching was seen in Years 1 and 2, where pupils encountered initial sounds for classmates' names. The teacher held up a large multi-sensory "E", made in fabric. She made the sound and asked whose name, for example, began with "eh". All pupils were encouraged to say the sound. The process was repeated for each pupil's name. High attaining pupils moved on towards building up a range of initial sounds.

77. The literacy strategy is supported well by individual reading work. Learning support assistants are confident and competent in carrying out 1:1 teaching. During one good reading session, a Year 7 pupil put a sentence together from given words, stuck it in her workbook then moved on to her reading book. After reading it, she gave the learning support assistant a sentence to write, using the story line. The learning support assistant omitted the full stop. "What is missing?", she asked the pupil. "Full stop", came the reply. The sentence was then cut up and the student had to put it together. Words were taken out one at a time and the student had to say what was missing. The pupil then took her new sentence home for homework, along with a new book. By Year 11, higher attaining students can look for and find items in the newspaper, and relate them to their work. Higher attaining pupils from Year 9 reach Level 1c in the National Curriculum. PMLD pupils look at and show recognition of items. For example, a learning support assistant showed and named a small range of everyday items, including a cup and fork, to a Year 12 student. The student was prompted to touch and eye-point in response to "That's a cup." By giving more correct responses, the student was reinforcing and extending knowledge. The learning support assistant then extended the vocabulary to the use of objects, and, in referring to a cup, commented, "You have your drink out of that." Homework is very successful in promoting reading skills, successfully involving parents in teaching and learning. Pupils go to the new library to select from a good range of books, large and small, covering the full age and ability range.

78. Most pupils make sound progress in writing, and their achievement is satisfactory. At Key Stages 2 and 3, achievement is good. Here, pupils' work is linked clearly to the objectives in their individual education plans. During one lesson, a pupil moved from hand-over-hand writing to overwriting independently. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils are able to use a computer by themselves for writing, across several subjects. School display boards show good written work across the age and ability range. Pupils' work is valued.

79. For PMLD pupils, there is good provision for pupils to progress, using a range of multi-sensory stimulation including different fabrics, lights, textures and media such as paint. In one good example, a large bowl of bubbles was placed on the tray in front of a Year 9 pupil. With minimal help, the pupil splashed his hands vigorously in the bubbles. He showed even greater surprise and pleasure when some splashed his face. As pupils progress through the school, the change of emphasis in the nature of writing is notable, becoming more purposeful. For example, a Year 12 student had to prepare a shopping list for the items needed for lunch. Ideas were generated with a learning support assistant, and drafted out in rough, with support, after which the student worked alone to produce the list. Staff generally record the date, and the amount of help needed by pupils on a 0-4 scale. However, there is inconsistency, as some work is not dated or graded. The needs of PMLD pupils are very well met, and as a result, they make good progress. Teachers deploy learning support assistants well to support pupils in their work, either in small groups or on an individual basis.

80. A key feature of English is the very good relationship between pupils and staff. Pupils are encouraged to talk about their experiences, enabling them to extend their language skills. Pupils use their literacy skills across all areas of the curriculum. For example, there

was good written work on a religious education display about Easter. This reinforces learning. Most lessons include tasks in pre-reading and pre-writing that reinforce literacy targets. For example, teachers use pictures, signs and familiar words to express meaning, and encourage active manipulation of materials and forming of letter shapes.

81. A weakness in some classes is the limited use in pupils' work of (ICT). There is no planned progression for the use of ICT to support pupils' in learning English. There is no whole school policy or scheme of work for writing. This limits pupils' achievement, as there is no clear progression through key stages. There is some inconsistency in pupils' individual education plans. Some targets are quite specific and measurable, others merely descriptive. Some pupils have no individual writing targets. Teaching of phonics is clearly embedded at Key Stage 1, Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. Consideration should be given to its further development at Key Stage 4 and Post 16 Level.

82. Management of English is good but temporarily not fully effective as the co-ordinator is the acting headteacher. As a result, improvement since the last inspection has been limited, although it is satisfactory. For example, the literacy strategy has been enhanced, with the support of the LEA. Planned ongoing changes are beginning to impact upon pupils' progress. There are good systematic assessment procedures to monitor pupil's progress in speaking and listening, and in reading and writing, but each of these needs to be reflected in pupils' individual education programmes. Resources are good and the provision of communication aids is satisfactory.

## **MATHEMATICS**

83. Achievements in mathematics are good for pupils from Year 1 to Year 6, and satisfactory from Year 7 to Year 14. This is significant improvement since the last inspection. Better achievement is linked to the increased time allocated for the mathematics co-ordinator to carry out management tasks; she has been able to monitor and support colleagues and track progress made by individual pupils. The good impact of a modified National Numeracy Strategy was observed in all lessons except one seen for older students. Resources for mathematics have improved and are now good. New equipment has been purchased, and staff have made imaginative resources to ensure access and inclusion for lower attaining pupils and students in numeracy sessions.

84. By Year 2, higher attaining pupils recognise numbers from zero to five, and sing number songs. They can count grapes and cut buns in half. They can use a simple number line from one to three. Lower attaining pupils experience data linked to weather charts, and participate in number work appropriately linked to songs and rhymes. Creative and imaginative approaches are made to number work, such as the use of glitter and sandpaper spots that pupils can touch, to reinforce the link between number and quantity. Teaching is good. Effective use is made of guitar playing to assist pupils to anticipate and sequence events of the day. Staff work well as a team, creating a secure and pleasant early years environment. However, they could make a greater use of key words to support learning.

85. By Year 6, pupils are involved in numeracy warm up sessions, where they count in twos, fives and tens to 20. Teaching is good and demonstrates a good level of knowledge of the subject. Good use is made of selected approaches from the National Numeracy Strategy. Staff ensure mathematics skills are made relevant for pupils by linking them directly to their experience. When counting in tens, the teacher asks, "How many of us are

ten years old?”. Lower attaining pupils have materials made by staff to ensure their participation, For example, in a session about shapes, cardboard, carpet, and sandpaper shaped into circles, triangles and squares enabled pupils to explore different shapes through their senses.

86. Good teaching ensures links between areas of mathematics, for example, counting shapes by putting them into groups. Staff know individual pupils well. Good planning and focussed teaching results in well paced sessions with plenty of opportunity for pupils to consolidate and build upon their mathematical knowledge and understanding.

87. At Key Stage 3, achievements are satisfactory. A good feature of teaching is that it ensures inclusion for all students by carefully planning work that is tailored to individual need. However, scrutiny pupils’ work suggests more needs to be done to ensure numeracy is placed in real situations, and pupils need to have more challenging opportunities to solve number problems. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils can independently add amounts such as  $18+2$ , and  $13+4$ . The most able are using number lines to 100 to complete additions and subtraction to 30. They can check their answers using a calculator. Lower attaining pupils generate their own sums up to five. Some students use pre written stickers to create sums such as  $5-1=4$  and  $2+3=5$ .

88. In Years 10 to 14, achievement is satisfactory; pupils and students have adequate opportunity to develop their numeracy skills, linked to external accreditation. Higher attaining pupils and students create shopping lists, and show understanding of the need to stay within a budget. Students use acquired skills in numeracy to weigh ingredients and prepare meals. They handle real money in a meaningful way.

89. Lower attaining students benefit from a specialist approach utilising a commercially produced scheme. This is wholly appropriate, and ensures meaningful inclusion for these students by adopting approaches that engage the senses by beating time, or fanning students to a rhythm. They respond well to these approaches. Higher attainers collect information about important features in their lives, such as their food preferences, and display them in graphic form.

90. Some teaching for older students is unsatisfactory. For example, in one session planning provided no key words for learning support assistants to use and resulted in confusing students, because concepts of mass and weight were interchanged. Another weakness seen was the use of meaningless tasks, such as measuring the length of pencils and spoons. This was in marked contrast to real measurement tasks that had been undertaken by students in their project to create a sensory garden.

91. Across the school, pupils and students enjoy their mathematics. Of the four lessons seen during the inspection, their response to lessons was never less than good, and in one lesson it was very good. Pupils and students show great enthusiasm. Relationships between them are very good and they demonstrate genuine care and mutual respect.

92. Recording of progress and assessment in mathematics is good. Every pupil and student has a record of current attainment and what needs to be taught to move them on to the next level. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The accreditation of areas of mathematics for the older students through ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) is a significant improvement.

93. The co-ordinator has worked hard to improve mathematics teaching in the school. She has provided good leadership. Outcomes from monitoring of teaching are reported to governors, so are staff training and development opportunities. The school has set targets for 2003 related to newly introduced nationally agreed 'P' Levels. The school is well placed to use national data on the performance of pupils and students with similar needs as this becomes available.

## SCIENCE

94. Achievement is satisfactory across the key stages. Pupils make clear progress in attainment levels, but for a small number of higher attaining pupils, achievement is limited by the narrow curriculum. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties achieve best, as staff use sensory methods very successfully to evoke responses.

95. Teaching and learning in science are satisfactory across the school. Teachers ensure that pupils have a variety of learning experiences across the attainment targets of the National Curriculum, but plan a narrow range of activities from the National Curriculum programmes of study. This limits pupils' knowledge of science. The accommodation does not allow for teaching of some science topics as there is no specialist facility.

96. Lower attaining pupils in Years 1 and 2 (Key Stage 1) show interest and curiosity when they explore different textures, and they develop preferences for certain materials, such as fur and chiffon. Higher attaining pupils notice differences between baked clay and wet clay, and they select a colour to change dough they have mixed from ingredients. Good use of scientific language at this stage helps pupils to understand the meanings of terms. For example, when pupils are having their morning drinks, staff emphasise the difference between a *wet* bib and a *dry* one.

97. There is good use of practical approaches, and these appeal to pupils and help them to understand scientific concepts. Very good relationships, and good support from adults, ensure that pupils participate in all the activities provided. In a lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6 (Key Stage 2), pupils explored the changes that occurred when eggs were heated. Again, staff used language well to help pupils understand the meanings of terms, such as *liquid*, *runny* and *solid*. By Year 6, higher attainers are able to use scientific terms to describe the changes in materials; they describe dough as *stiff*, for example. In the lesson seen, one pupil made a spontaneous observation, exclaiming that he could see a *circle*; this was the rim of an eggcup! In this lesson, much of the heating had to be carried out on a small hob, and pupils could not see changes directly, although staff ensured that they saw the state of the egg before and after heating.

98. In a lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 9, pupils were learning about the wind. The teacher enabled them to experience its effects by setting them the task of using a hand-held fan to move a paper 'fish' across the floor of the room. They were then encouraged to trace the direction of movement with their finger. A washing line had also been strung up outside the classroom and pupils were able to see how the clothes billowed out in the same direction as the wind was blowing. Pupils are enthusiastic about science, and enjoy their lessons, which helps them to learn. The digital camera is also used effectively to help pupils recall what they have done or observed, and as a means of recording. By Year 6, higher attaining pupils notice changes in a wide range of contexts, such as changes in volume, intensity of light and shadows on walls. Several are able to describe materials using phrases such as, *hard*, *rough* and *black*, for coal.

99. Literacy and numeracy skills are promoted in a satisfactory manner in science. For example, pupils counted eggs, and timed the length of heating. Teachers use symbols and signs to help pupils understand the topic, and pupils read and write about the topics they investigate. Other than using the digital camera, though, there is little use of ICT.

100. In teaching about living things, staff encourage pupils to have caring attitudes. Pupils show concern for the welfare of animals, and treat all living things with respect. In this way the subject contributes well to pupils' personal development.

101. In Years 10 and 11, no direct teaching could be seen during the inspection. However, pupils' work and teachers' records show that pupils extend their scientific learning. For example, higher attainers in Year 11 make observational drawings of bulbs and other plants, and they measure the height of bulbs as they grow. Some pupils are able to predict changes using scientific language. They say that chocolate will *melt* when heated, for example. They understand about forces and direction, and can show, by drawing in an arrow, what direction an object will move when a force is applied. They begin to understand how air pressure can be used to make a syringe and a bicycle pump work.

102. Assessment is satisfactory. Teachers keep records that show clearly how pupils progress over time. Teachers know what levels pupils attain, and these are recorded on the school's database. However, the setting of individual targets for science in pupils' IEPs is not necessary, and adds to the bureaucracy associated with assessment procedures.

103. Leadership in the subject is unsatisfactory. The subject has no co-ordinator, and there has not been enough improvement since the last inspection. Although a scheme of work has been introduced since then, it does not draw well enough on all the National Curriculum programmes of study. Learning resources are satisfactory for the limited curriculum on offer, as teachers use their initiative by exploiting everyday objects and classroom resources to teach the subject.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

104. Art is a strength of the school. Standards of achievement are good, and so is teaching. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, when achievement was satisfactory. The co-ordinator has achieved much in the six months she has been in the role, and is committed to continuing improvement. She has appropriately identified the development of ICT to support art. Accommodation for art is unsatisfactory. There are no specialist facilities such as an art room, kiln or dark room. This will make it difficult to improve significantly the learning experiences, and achievements, of older students.

105. By Year 2, pupils have experienced a range of simple painting techniques. They understand how colours play a part in our everyday lives, and they make books about the colours red, blue and yellow. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to increase their engagement through involvement in making imaginative interactive pictures, such as fish made from bubble wrap. These approaches, which focus directly on the senses, strengthen pupils' understanding of the way art features in the world, and are giving them a good foundation experience of the art curriculum. Art work is displayed well in the cramped classroom, creating a stimulating, bright and colourful learning environment. Art is used to support work in numeracy and literacy.

106. By Year 6, colour themes have progressed to the making of collages, where pupils work with each other. In one lesson observed during the inspection, pupils constructed a rocket. Higher attaining pupils were able to choose materials suitable for the task, and

expressed ideas about what might be used to assemble the components of their rockets. They discussed with staff and each other their preferences for the design of their rocket. Lower attaining pupils were assisted to select materials that stimulated their senses, encouraging their awareness and attention, and promoting positive responses. Learning support assistants rolled a variety of materials, such as holographic gift wrapping paper, foil, netting and cloth round the body of a plastic drink bottle to form the body of a rocket.

107. By Year 9, art is linked appropriately to themes such as Neolithic cave pictures, where challenging images such as Picasso's Minotaur and Nude are discussed. Art makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development and to the excellent spiritual development the school promotes. Students are encouraged to make detailed observations of kiwi fruit and grapes. Mod-rock clay is used to make simple bowls and clay tiles.

108. In a lesson observed during the inspection, pupils explored African artistic heritage. Higher attaining pupils increased their understanding and knowledge of colours used in African art, and the patterns created. The lesson encouraged pupils to consider visual art and place it in the broader context of African music and rhythms. Lower attaining pupils took part in the lesson through sensory approaches, including face painting. Pupils recorded this arts experience on video and digital cameras.

109. The co-ordinator accepts the need to further develop this work by considering learning objectives that are linked more directly to programmes of study of the National Curriculum in drama, visual arts, media arts and music. A task students were given, to draw and paint an African wood sculpture, missed many opportunities for more able students to strengthen their skills in developing painting techniques to represent the play of light on the carving, and to explore its texture and qualities.

110. Students involved in the video work used the equipment with confidence and listened well to instructions, thereby making a useful contribution to their literacy.

111. By Year 11, and until students leave school, students make further gains. They consolidate their work and incorporate their skills, knowledge and understanding into their accreditation under ASDAN.

112. Teaching in art is good overall. Good teaching is evident when lessons are well planned around the individual needs of the pupils and students, and the support staff work effectively with the teacher. Where lessons are less successful, too much is attempted, resulting in learning objectives linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study which are less focussed. A strength of all teaching seen is the good team work between teacher and learning support assistants, ensuring pupils and students are well supported and behaviour management is good.

113. Pupils and students are very enthusiastic about their art, and through themes such as African artistic heritage, they develop very good respect for others cultures and beliefs. Art makes a valuable contribution to the excellent spiritual development of pupils and students. The use of evocative African music encouraged reflection at the start of an art lesson seen.

114. There have been good improvements since the last inspection. The appointment of a named teacher responsible for its development, and the adoption of a nationally recognised curriculum, has helped to ensure that pupils build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. These are significant improvements. The co-ordinator has shown good leadership of the subject since taking on the role, and has a good grasp of how the subject can be further developed.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Achievement in design and technology is satisfactory. There is a scheme of work, which places the subject as a component part of knowledge and understanding of the world. The units of work are implemented faithfully, and teaching in a cross-curricular way helps to give meaning to tasks. However, tasks do not always have sufficient subject focus. Nonetheless, it is possible to see pupils' skills developing across the school, and there is a sound range of designing and making activities associated with other subjects. However, the accommodation for secondary aged pupils does not allow for work on resistant materials, and this limits achievement for higher attaining pupils.

116. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. As part of other subjects, pupils often design and make artefacts and parts of displays. They acquire skills in assembling and fixing parts. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 have made designs on cloth, using a tie-dye method. During the inspection, pupils in Years 3 to 6 made a model rocket in art, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 were busy making a puppet theatre. In the latter activity, higher attainers were able to use their knowledge of electrical circuits to make sure that all the bulbs on their theatre lit up. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have made an impressive three-dimensional dragon as part of a wall display about the Chinese New Year.

117. Relevant tasks motivate the pupils, who work well together, and persevere to complete tasks to the best of their ability. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have contributed to school improvement by helping to plan, design and build a sensory garden in the grounds. They developed skills in selecting plants, pricing materials, digging out, laying slabs and hanging mobiles. Smaller scale projects have included a design brief to make tableware for a party. Well annotated photographic evidence shows that pupils experimented with ink stamps, hand drawn designs and clip art motifs. Using their selected decoration, they made a cup, paper plate and serviette featuring their chosen design.

118. There is a suitable emphasis on food, and this approach appeals to pupils. Younger pupils have made pancakes, older ones made a Spanish dish as part of their Spanish lesson, and students over 16 make their own lunch one day each week. In this way the subject contributes well to pupils' and students' personal development.

119. As there are no records kept showing which skills pupils have acquired, it is difficult for teachers to ensure that pupils systematically develop their skills in design and technology. There is no co-ordinator for the subject, as the previous headteacher took on this role, and this is unsatisfactory. There has been some improvement since the last inspection; there is now a scheme of work, and resources are satisfactory for the limited curriculum on offer.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

120. Pupils' and students' achievement in geography is satisfactory. There has been modest improvement since the last inspection in including themes that involve students in the world beyond the local environment. Useful links with Russian orphans in need, and the Baku School in Gambia, give an insight into global issues and man's impact on the planet. However, these are areas that should be developed further for higher attaining older students.

121. By Year 2, pupils have visited Machin's Farm, Boston and Skegness station as part of a theme on transport. They have participated in forest trails and considered forms of transport. On a regular walk to the local playgroup, they meet familiar people and take a familiar route. They are gaining early geographical skills related to observing and investigating what people do in the local area. They pass buildings such as Spilsby Theatre, schools, government

offices and shops. The subject contributes to important areas of learning, such as safety on the roads. Teaching is good within the curriculum offered. However, more emphasis should be placed on planning and the use of key words to focus learning objectives in geographical skills and understanding.

122. By Year 6, visits extend to Lincoln Cathedral. Teaching is planned to look more closely at building materials, such as brick, wood and metal, and how these materials are used in the environment, for example for telegraph poles. Pupils record crops grown locally, such as wheat and rapeseed. A lesson seen during the inspection focussed on the seasonal pattern of weather and growth. It satisfactorily built upon the work seen in the previous class. Teaching was accompanied by music from the Spring theme from Vivaldi's Four Seasons, which gave an excellent spiritual dimension to pupils' consideration of the wonders of renewal at springtime. Higher attaining pupils produced a spring tree using lime green and pink tissue paper. Lower attaining pupils were assisted to stick fleece onto pre-cut shapes of lambs. The subject contributes to the school's approach to literacy, with the use of big books depicting cherry blossom in Japan. However, higher attaining pupils were not challenged by this lesson. This is due to teachers having to plan for a far too disparate range of learning objectives across several National Curriculum subjects. The result is a lack of challenge for some pupils. However, pupils enjoy their lessons, show good behaviour and apply themselves to the tasks well.

123. No lessons were seen in Years 7 to 9. However, pupils' work revealed a satisfactory progression of learning to include the mountain ranges of North and South America, routes through these areas, and the flora and fauna, as well as physical features, such as waterfalls. Pupils consider the concept of the height at which trees stop growing in mountainous regions. Teachers make satisfactory use of scanned photographs of settlements in mountainous regions, and leisure pursuits such as skiing. It is not possible to see what students have gained in terms of their skills, knowledge and understanding, as assessment is unsatisfactory and not yet securely linked into QCA guidance (May 2001) for assessing pupils with learning difficulties.

124. For older pupils and students, geography forms part of their work-related curriculum. Opportunity to consider the lives of people in other countries is a strength. Areas such as the weather, extending into consideration of environmental change and what it might mean for us all, are within the curriculum planning but are not evident in students' work as yet.

125. Careers guidance contributes to this subject as students consider different jobs people do, and they get involved in visits to further education colleges.

## **HISTORY**

126. Pupils' and students' achievement in history is satisfactory. There has been no discernible improvement in this subject since the last inspection. As the school correctly focused its attention on other more pressing areas, history has had little time devoted to its development.

127. History is taught as part of a programme that looks at knowledge and understanding of the world. Some topics, such as the discovery of America and a comparison between the reigns of Elizabeth I and our present queen, provide satisfactory areas to find out more about aspects of the past. The use of assessment is unsatisfactory, as teachers do not record the skills, knowledge and understanding that pupils acquire.

128. Topics taught are, to a large extent, enjoyed by pupils and students but do not appear to form part of a cohesive and progressive body of knowledge based upon guidance provided by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for planning, teaching and assessing the curriculum for pupils with learning difficulties. However, work based on a local history video of Spilsby between 1938-1941 does bring history alive for students in a way which they can link to the present day. Visits to Boston, Lincoln and Skegness are well recorded using digital photographs.

129. For younger pupils there is an appropriate emphasis upon the passage of time. On a walk to a session at Spilsby Primary School playgroup, pupils are encouraged to observe seasonal changes, such as the demise of snowdrops, and the emergence of leaves on hawthorn and blackthorn. They observe clumps of daffodils, which were not flowering the previous week.

130. By Year 6, pupils recognise signs of growth in the spring. Higher attaining pupils produce a spring tree Easter card with lime green spring growth and blossom. They look at pictures of cherry blossom. With skilful questioning by the teacher, they observe and make comparison of freshly cut flowers and those which have been in the class for a week. Lower attaining pupils make spring lambs by sticking fleece to pre cut cardboard shapes of lambs. Higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged by these activities. No teaching with older pupils and students was seen, and the lack of records makes it difficult to identify pupils' and students' attainments.

131. The school accepts that a more subject-focussed leadership is required for history.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)**

132. Achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. There are no differences in achievement between boys and girls. However, achievement is best for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, who are provided with a broad range of experiences; ICT is used well to support the development of pupils' communication skills. Achievement is unsatisfactory for a small number of higher attaining pupils. Much of the recent improvement in the learning resources for the subject has yet to have an impact on the achievements of higher attaining pupils.

133. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Teachers introduce the youngest pupils to a variety of everyday equipment, sensory apparatus and computers. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin to understand the purpose of machines such as the tape recorder. A practical approach is used, and is successful in enabling pupils to experience the recording of sounds around the school. The digital camera is used well to remind pupils of the different locations they visited to record sounds, and provides a meaningful way of recording what they have done. Lower attaining pupils smile when they hold a vibrating ball, and hold onto a bubble tube in the sensory room. Higher attainers attempt to operate a tape recorder by pressing the switch, and they successfully activate a computer and bubble tube, also by pressing a switch. In the past, pupils have sent email messages to pupils at a similar school, but this could not be continued as there were difficulties with the operation of the system.

134. No teaching of ICT could be seen at Key Stage 2 (Years 3 to 6), although the subject is timetabled weekly; there was no use of computers in other lessons seen during the inspection at this stage. Records show that lower attainers in Year 6 operate simple switches, to activate lights and a bubble tube in the sensory room, for example. Higher attainers use a roller ball to work programmes on the computer.

135. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, expectations are high, and work in several subjects shows good use of ICT. The digital camera is used well, and higher attaining pupils operate this with confidence. They also print out pictures from this independently, then use a word processing package to annotate pictures. They have also used a scanner to produce pictures, which they have annotated. Pupils enjoy using the computer and take a pride in their work. Lower attainers use a pad or a mouse to print pictures, using cause and effect software. No ICT lessons could be seen in Years 10 and 11, but pupils' work shows that they build well enough on the skills they have acquired at Key Stage 3. For example, they use clip art as part of the design process, and extend their word processing skills. Higher attaining students at Post 16 Level use word processors to write formal letters to employers who have provided work experience or hosted visits. Lower attainers make decisions by using ICT. For example, one student eye-pointed to a card to select a software package of his choice, then used a switch to activate that programme.

136. Teaching of ICT promotes pupils' and students' literacy skills in a satisfactory manner, and makes a very strong contribution to the promotion of communication skills. Use of the digital camera is a particular strength across the school, as it helps to give pupils an awareness of their learning, jogs their memories about what they did in previous lessons, and enhances their self-esteem. Although the school has recently acquired a suitable checklist to enable teachers to record skills in a way that will help them to plan the next steps in learning, this record is not yet in use across the whole school.

137. Leadership in the subject is good. Although no member of the teaching staff has felt able to take on this role, the bursar has. She has worked well with the LEA adviser to draw up a suitable development plan for the subject, and almost completed an audit of the school's resources. There is now a scheme of work, and learning resources have improved significantly since the last inspection; they are now good. Improvement has been assisted by the recent use of the services of a consultant, who has been successful in ensuring that the hardware is up and running. Staff have acquired further skills through additional training, and this is ongoing. The capacity for further improvement in the subject is good.

## MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

### Spanish

138. Provision for modern foreign languages has improved since the last inspection, when French was taught only once a year as a French day. Spanish is now taught as a weekly lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 9, and all pupils in Years 10 and 11 are disapplied from the subject. Pupils have only recently started learning Spanish. Achievement is satisfactory overall. A particular strength of the provision is the inclusive nature of lessons; pupils of all abilities have experience of the language, in an appropriate manner.

139. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. There is a suitable emphasis on listening and responding, with some opportunities to read and write in Spanish. However, there is no scheme of work at present, so coverage of all the areas of learning is not assured. Teaching emphasises cultural knowledge of Spain, and so the subject makes a good contribution to pupils' personal development. In the single lesson seen, pupils were able to experience Spanish dancing, suitably accompanied by music, and a good range of resources was used to enable them to simulate a day at the beach in Spain. The teacher had provided sun hats and dark glasses, and a large blue cardboard 'sea' was placed on the floor. Pupils with complex needs were able to experience the feel of sand, presented in a tray. There was good repetition of Spanish words and phrases, and opportunities for pupils to practise these. Signing by the teacher helped pupils to understand the language. By the end of the lesson, higher attainers were able to respond to a greeting by saying *Hola senora*, and lower attainers responded with a smile. Pupils tried hard to pronounce words correctly, and showed interest. Higher attainers were challenged well by the teacher's explanation of masculine and feminine words, and one recalled spontaneously that the correct way to say goodbye is *Adios amigos*. A suitable range of extension activities followed the whole class session, including preparation of a Spanish dish, and perusal of travel brochures to find pictures of *el mar* and *la playa*. Although the teacher assesses pupils' understanding and use of language during lessons, there are no records to show pupils' attainments, making planning the next steps more difficult.

140. The subject is led well by a relatively new co-ordinator who has been at the school for two terms. There is a clear rationale for changing the modern foreign language from French to Spanish; most pupils who take holidays abroad go to Spain. Although the school has few resources for Spanish teaching, the teacher is aware that these need to be built up, and good use is made of artefacts and everyday objects to bring the subject alive.

## MUSIC

141. Achievement in music is satisfactory. Since the last inspection, a scheme of work has been adopted, and music resources have been supplemented. Music continues to play an important part in the life of the school.

142. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Pupils are given a suitable range of learning experiences, and have opportunities to perform, and listen to, a variety of types of music, some provided by visiting musicians. For example, when musicians visited the school, pupils in Years 1 and 2 looked at the different instruments, and some tried to play them, plucking guitar strings. Lower attainers shake bells and maracas without help. Singing is a

popular activity, and pupils join in with action songs. They all enjoy repetition, and greetings and 'goodbye' songs help lower attaining pupils to develop their communication skills. Those in Years 3 to 6 have performed in assembly to a song about tossing pancakes, and marched in time to music played by a visiting saxophonist and pianist, and higher attainers have tried their hand at conducting.

143. Pupils are given a good range of different types of music to listen to and appraise. For example, in an art lesson, pupils listened to several different recordings as they worked, and at the end established which was most popular. During the inspection, a music lesson for pupils in Years 7 to 9 featured a performance to a tape of African music, familiar to pupils from their work in geography. Pupils followed the lead of the teacher, and played along with the music, to a beat of three, gradually getting louder. Ultimately, they were to perform this in an assembly.

144. Through opportunities to see live performances, to contribute to church services, and to listen to music from other cultures, the subject contributes well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. However, the policy remains out of date and there are no records showing pupils' achievements in music.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

145. Achievements in physical education are good. Since the last inspection, a working party has been set up and this has had a good impact on the range of activities offered to pupils and students. The inclusive links the school has made with other institutions have raised the expectations staff have of pupils, and the auditing of resources, and plans for seeking further funds to fill the gaps identified are outcomes from the work of this group. This working party has provided good leadership for the subject.

146. By Year 2, pupils participate in an appropriate warm-up session in 'circle time', where they explore dance movements with staff. This prepares pupils for their learning, by establishing a familiar routine. A timetable made from photographs reinforces pupils' anticipation for the session, and a supplementary series of photographs, depicting dance movements, further prepares pupils for the session in the school hall. Pupils are gaining in the skills of jumping and running, and can stop on request.

147. By Year 6, pupils have developed and broadened the range of their skills. Higher attaining pupils can imitate actions shown to them by staff, and a few follow spoken instructions in pre-audio taped lessons. Good inclusive practice ensures lower attaining pupils have learning support assistance to help arm movements. With assistance from adults, pupils attempt challenging role play, such as pretending to carry a heavy tea tray around the room, or to toss a pancake.

148. By Year 11, pupils benefit from links the school has established by being a partner school with a local specialist sports college. One of the learning support assistants in Class 4 has a particular interest in sport and disability, and has forged many useful links beyond school. During the inspection week a gymnastics instructor worked alongside school staff, enabling the teaching of a very good lesson in which students learnt gymnastic presentation skills, and starred and squat jumps. These initiatives are raising expectations of staff and students. Staff from the college have coached school staff and greatly extended the range of sports offered to students. Plans to increase accreditation for gymnastics and swimming form part of an ambitious long-term plan to improve sport at the school.

149. Improvements to the school hydrotherapy pool have addressed the issues raised during the last inspection. The modest increase in the use of facilities outside school is an improvement. However, the school needs to ensure these experiences are monitored for quality. A fortnightly link to a local secondary school for a basketball lesson did not allow students to change clothing for suitable sports wear and provided limited inclusion, with only two of the secondary school pupils attempting to participate with the Eresby students.

150. By the time students have left school they have experienced a good range of sports including football, cricket, bowls, gymnastics, hockey, netball, rugby, swimming, tennis and volleyball.

151. Pupils and students enjoy their lessons in physical education. Their behaviour is never less than good, and is sometimes very good. However, opportunities for developing personal responsibility and dressing skills are not always fully used, as pupils did not change for some lessons. The school should consider developing a policy on this.

152. Six lessons of physical education were seen during the inspection, and half were good or better. The less successful lessons were based on listening to a pre-recorded audio tape, and presented more challenges to listening and understanding than objectives related to physical education. The best teaching observed was where school staff worked alongside a trained instructor, who provided very good subject knowledge which school staff were able to modify using their knowledge of the pupils. Lessons are well planned and organised. Physical development sessions in the well equipped sensory room provide a good opportunity for lower attaining pupils and students to maintain the range of their physical movement, with a good variety of bending, stretching and staff-assisted sequences of movement.

153. The school hall is totally inadequate for older students: it is too small, and doubles as a dining room so that storage of tables reduces the type of activity which can safely be carried out. The school goes some way towards addressing this unsatisfactory situation by using outside facilities.

154. A recent audit of resources, and the acquisition of sports equipment from local and national sports initiatives, mean that equipment resources for physical education are good. The efforts of the physical education working party have impacted well on the subject, ensuring good improvement since the last inspection. Risk assessments have been introduced since the last inspection. However, lifting by staff of pupils and students needs re-assessing, as some inappropriate lifting was observed during the inspection.

155. Because of its new inclusive links with local schools, and the expertise and commitment of the working party, the school is well placed to improve further physical education for all its pupils and students.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

156. Achievement in religious education is good across the school. Teachers provide a good range of well-planned learning experiences. These are drawn from the locally agreed syllabus, although there is no scheme of work. Lessons were observed in all classes during the week. An examination of pupils' work and lesson planning shows that teaching is good. Pupils are very caring and develop a thorough understanding of right and wrong.

157. A particular strength of teaching is the practical experience provided to enable pupils to understand the differences between different religions. For example, by the end of Year 2, pupils extended their knowledge of Easter through making hot cross buns, and linking and matching the cross on the bun to the palm cross which they had put in their religious education books. By Year 6, pupils have learned about the existence of other faiths, and their artefacts. For example, they know that Muslims use prayer mats. To reinforce the teaching, pupils made colourful textured prayer mats of their own design for inclusion in their religious education books. The school displayed good religious education wall displays, for example of a big bright gold Buddha and an Easter board, with contributions from all classes across the ability range. Pupils' work illustrated extending experiences of themes in both Christianity and other faiths. For example, by the end of Year 9, pupils had encountered and developed ideas on Mendhi hand patterns, mosques and Islamic scripts. These pupils were also helped to come to terms with their grief after the death of a student, by looking at sad events in peoples' lives, and by the opportunity they had been given to talk about them, and to move on to identify sad things in their own lives. Teachers provide a good range of religious education experiences. For example, older pupils and students from Year 10 to Year 14 were working on a combined project as part of aid to Gambia. Pupils and students are developing knowledge, skills and understanding about cultural differences, and understand that some people are much less fortunate than they are. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good, and they learn well.

158. Planning to meet the needs of pupils and students with (PMLD) is good. For example, by Year 9 the higher attaining pupils had developed ideas, and were sequencing events, about the crucifixion, whilst learning support assistants used sensory methods with PMLD pupils, including touching and tasting ingredients, to make cakes for the class to share. Religious education is enhanced by the spirituality policy of the school, combined with the caring ethos of both pupils and staff.

159. Although religious education provision is good, there is no scheme of work. The school would benefit from visitors in other faiths to help with celebrations, so providing pupils with first hand experience and a valuable opportunity for staff to develop subject knowledge in this area.

160. Since the last inspection there has been good progress made in improving the provision, particularly in developing knowledge of other faiths and by the purchase of artefacts and music of other faiths. Good teacher planning meets the needs of all pupils across the age and ability range. However, assessment arrangements are weak, being based only on teacher records. Leadership and management of the subject are good; staff are aware of the need to develop certain aspects of the subject further.

## **PERSONAL SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)**

161. Satisfactory opportunities are provided for the PSHE of pupils in Years 1 to 6. Throughout the school day staff assist pupils to gain independence and social skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils have learned to take drinks together, work co-operatively and take turns in circle time. Pupils are pleasant, courteous and confident enough to initiate conversations, both in and out of class. They form friendships and have good relationships with staff. Pupils help one another. For example, one pupil prompted another who has (PMLD) with arm actions during action rhymes. Pupils' and students' attitudes and behaviour are good.

162. Teachers' files, wall displays and pupils' and students' records of achievement show the wealth of opportunities pupils have to build up a range of PSHE skills. As pupils progress through Years 1 to 6, teachers provide satisfactory age-appropriate curricular opportunities that meet the needs of all pupils. There is opportunity to encounter and respond to visitors; for example, outsiders come in to read stories.

163. In Years 7 to 14, there are similar experiences, and pupils and students make satisfactory progress towards the targets set in their individual education plans. These help them to improve their attendance and behaviour, and to gain social and independence skills. However, the programme is unsatisfactory overall, as it does not provide pupils and students with sex and drugs education as required.

164. Pupils and students make educational and residential visits. Students over 16 participate in work experience, and have outside links, with colleges, for example. They make shopping lists, go shopping and prepare simple lunches. By Year 11, students are made aware of some of the issues of adult life. For example, a high achiever identified and cut out newspaper items on "no smoking day", and the class discussed health risks and made a classroom display.

165. There is evidence of at least satisfactory record keeping, with some good practice. Targets on IEPs are monitored, and progress is recorded centrally at the end of each term. Pupils make satisfactory progress against targets. Staff help pupils to gain confidence and social skills, for example by prompting them to make movements independently in action rhymes. Pupils are encouraged to show curiosity and interest. PMLD pupils are encouraged to respond consistently. However there is some inconsistency in target setting. Some are specific and referenced, whilst other are broadly descriptive.

166. Teaching and learning in discrete PSHE lessons is satisfactory. However, there is no policy document or scheme of work in place. Lack of an appropriate sex education policy is a weakness, and the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements. The only limited sex education pupils had encountered was in response to the needs of one pupil who was experiencing personal problems. Generally, students have no opportunity to develop the skills, knowledge and understanding they require in preparation for adult life. Resources are satisfactory. Funding is in place for the co-ordinator to work with a colleague from a similar school to develop a suitable sex education policy. Leadership and management are unsatisfactory due to the shortfall in statutory provision.