

INSPECTION REPORT

RUTHERFORD SCHOOL

South Croydon

LEA area: Croydon

Unique reference number: 101843

Headteacher: Ms R Hills

Reporting inspector: Mr M G Whitehead
21061

Dates of inspection: 16th – 19th October 2000

Inspection number: 223608

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:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	2 to 12 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	1A Melville Avenue South Croydon
Postcode:	CR2 7HZ
Telephone number:	020 8688 7560
Appropriate authority:	Croydon, Sutton and District Spastics Society
Name of chair of governors:	Mr D Mead
Date of previous inspection:	17 th September 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21061	Mr M G Whitehead	Registered inspector	Equal opportunities Special educational needs	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school The school's results and pupils' achievements Teaching and learning Leadership and management Key issues for action
14756	Mr J Lovell	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development Partnership with parents and carers
10753	Ms D Drury	Team inspector		Quality and range of opportunities for learning Pupils' welfare, health and safety

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Rutherford School is an independent day school for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. It is managed by Croydon, Sutton and District Spastics Society. The school caters for children aged between two and 12 years. There are 18 pupils on roll, ten boys and eight girls. Fourteen pupils have statements of special educational needs. Fourteen out of the 18 pupils have some form of visual impairment and 15 out of the 18 have epilepsy. The ethnic composition of the school is predominantly white, there are two pupils of Black African ethnicity, one Black Caribbean, one Asian, one white European and one white Irish/Indian. The school is situated in a residential area of South Croydon and occupies a building that was originally a large house. The building has been converted and extended successfully to accommodate teaching, nursing and administration necessary to run the school. The majority of pupils come from the London Borough of Croydon, but there are now three from the neighbouring Borough of Sutton.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Rutherford School is a very good school which provides very effective, high quality education for all its pupils. The leadership of the headteacher is excellent and the overall management by the headteacher and key staff is very good. The combined efforts of staff ensure that all pupils make very good progress. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The headteacher provides excellent leadership for the school.
- There is an holistic approach to teaching within the school that encompasses the work of the multi-disciplinary team.
- The school provides an excellent quality and range of learning opportunities.
- The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is excellent.
- The monitoring and support of pupils' academic performance and personal development are excellent.
- The reflection of the school's aims and values in its work is excellent.
- The effectiveness of the school's links with parents is excellent.

What could be improved

- The involvement and effectiveness of the appropriate authority in its responsibility for formal development planning for the future of the school could be improved.
- The school's development planning is informal and not clearly documented. This is unsatisfactory as there should be clear and formal identification of priorities for development and use of strategic resources. All of these should be carefully and clearly linked to financial planning.
- Procedures and practice in the monitoring of teaching need further development.

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

Rutherford School was last inspected in September 1996 when it was judged to provide satisfactory value for money. The school has made good improvement overall since the last inspection and now provides very good value for money. The improvement in the quality of teaching is outstanding. At the time of the last inspection, there was a significant proportion of teaching that was unsatisfactory, there is now no unsatisfactory teaching, all the teaching is good or better. The school now makes the best possible use of every available moment during the school day and provides an excellent curriculum that is relevant to the needs of all pupils. At the time of the last inspection, there were some weaknesses in management in that the school managers and staff did not play a full role in the

corporate development of the school. There has been insufficient improvement in this area and although there is now a management committee, it is not fully established nor is it involved in formulating any school development plan.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school. Taking into account the very severe learning difficulties of the pupils, it is inappropriate to make judgements concerning speaking and listening, reading, writing and mathematics as National Curriculum subjects.

Progress in:	by age 5	by age 12	Key	
speaking and listening	N/A	N/A	very good	A
Reading	N/A	N/A	good	B
Writing	N/A	N/A	satisfactory	C
Mathematics	N/A	N/A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	N/A	N/A	poor	E
personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	not appropriate	N/A

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

Pupils work hard every day and cope well with the intensive health-care procedures. Pupils make very good progress in improving mobility skills and gaining the confidence in fine motor skills that enable them to take part in feeding themselves. Within the lessons, pupils take part in musical activities and experience a wide variety of music. Their efforts are rewarded and the teachers and support assistants carefully record the progress they make. There is a great deal of emphasis on the use of information and communication technology and pupils make very good progress in their ability to use switches to activate communicators, in the use of touch sensitive screens and in the use of electrically operated sensory equipment. Progress in all these areas is often very small, but nevertheless it is very good, as pupils work tremendously hard in order to make this progress. Awards for their efforts and achievements are presented by teachers, support staff, physiotherapists and the cook, all of whom play a major role in the education of the pupils.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and often excellent. Parents/carers report that pupils enjoy school and the very positive nature of their attitudes is a strength of the school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is excellent throughout the school. Pupils respond extremely well to the excellent role models of all staff.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are very good. There are excellent opportunities for all pupils to take responsibility and by doing this they increase their self-esteem.
Attendance	Good.

All pupils are very positive about the school. All members of the school are valued highly and all pupils are treated with dignity and respect. Relationships between pupils and staff are very good, as are the relationships between pupils and their peers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-12
24 lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

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

This school is outstanding in the quality of teaching that it provides for all pupils, and is very successful in meeting the needs of all pupils. One hundred per cent of the teaching observed was good or better, 90 per cent was very good or better and 25 per cent of the teaching was excellent. There is excellent co-operative working between physiotherapists, classroom support staff, nurses and teachers. Lessons are very carefully planned in order to stimulate the pupils' imagination and generate very positive responses. In all lessons, teachers promote sensory experiences, they talk continually to pupils about the activities in which they are involved. Excellent work by all staff ensures that all pupils are treated with dignity and are able to take a full part in all lessons. All staff have a very clear understanding of the individual special needs of the pupils. Pupils' learning experiences are very good and all pupils make very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The excellent curriculum provision is a strength of the school. The quality and range of learning opportunities offer a rich variety of well-planned and stimulating experiences.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes excellent provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides a secure, happy environment, which functions as an orderly, very caring community in which every member is valued. Teachers, classroom support staff, physiotherapists, nurses and all other staff work very closely together to meet all of the pupils' needs to a very high standard.

The school's partnership with parents and carers is excellent and is promoted through excellent communication and involvement of parents/carers in supporting pupils. This partnership makes a positive contribution to pupils' development. The curriculum that is offered by the school is excellent. It is based on the nationally recognised Early Learning Goals and is totally appropriate in meeting the needs of every pupil in the school. The teachers are highly skilled in ensuring that the school's curriculum is tailored to fit the requirements of individuals. The school's curriculum caters for every moment of the day from the arrival of the pupils in the morning to their departure in the afternoon.

Every member of staff is totally committed to caring for the pupils and ensuring that each one receives very high quality of teaching and care throughout the day. This commitment is reflected in the way in which very good relationships abound within the school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good overall. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction for the school. The director of services gives good support to the headteacher in her management role.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The trustees and management committee have not yet created a secure framework for the development of the school. Much of the development planning for the school takes place in a semi-formal manner. There is no formal school development plan and this is an unsatisfactory situation.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Procedures for evaluation of performance and taking effective action are satisfactory. However, these procedures are not totally secure as there is no school development plan to establish systems for evaluation of performance.
The strategic use of resources	Strategies for the use of resources are not secured in forward planning. Much of the work of the management committee takes place through reactive procedures rather than proactive planning. This is not satisfactory.

The quality of provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources at the school is very good. Staffing levels are good, there is a well qualified multi-disciplinary team with a comprehensive range of expertise. The building is well maintained, light and airy, with attractive views over the gardens which all pupils and staff enjoy. The classrooms are large, bright and airy and afford very good space and facilities for teachers and pupils. The grounds are extensive and provide environmental areas, trees, wildlife and grassed areas from which all benefit. The school has a wide range of very good learning resources. Specialist seating and frames matched to pupils' needs ensure that they are safe and comfortable. There are numerous appropriate books and toys. Many of the resources are made in school in order to meet the specialist requirements of the staff and the individual needs of the pupils. Some specific resources are developed in-house by staff to promote the sensory approach to teaching and learning.

The school enjoys excellent leadership from the headteacher and strong support from the director of services. However, the role of the management committee and the trustees does not focus clearly enough on the school in its own right. The trustees and management committee do not play any part in the formulation of a school development plan in order to establish priorities for development. The absence of any school development plan means that priorities for development cannot be linked to clear financial planning. This is an area that was unsatisfactory at the time of the last inspection and still remains so. There has been little improvement since the last inspection.

Principles of best value are applied satisfactorily through good practice though they are not included in any formal planning for the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

There was a very low response to the questionnaires that were sent to parents and carers of all pupils. However, the small amount of information received shows that parents believe that the school is very good. The inspection team agrees fully with this judgement.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. All pupils at Rutherford School have very severe learning difficulties and many have associated physical disabilities and medical disorders. The attainment levels of all pupils are very low, however, they learn very well indeed. It is thanks to the help and support of all adults that all pupils make very good progress.
2. The achievements of the pupils are very good. Pupils develop fine motor control as they strive successfully to hold a ball or pluck the string of a violin. Whilst the standards that pupils achieve are very low, they learn well and achieve a great deal. Some pupils communicate by using their eyes to point with and indicate choices that they make. Some pupils manage to use their arms and hands to point at objects, pictures or even towards different letters or words. Pupils succeed in using computers with suitable programs, which enable pupils to learn that they can produce a response from a computer by pressing a switch or by touching a certain part of the screen. One pupil in the school is developing some speech.
3. Some pupils show their interest and involvement through eye movements whilst others use their hands to complete different tasks. Pupils make good progress in their ability to use their eyes and hands to point in order to indicate answers or desires. For example, pupils are given a choice of activities and some pupils choose the objects that they prefer to use in lessons. Pupils succeed in some cases in learning to stand and walk and they learn to hold their heads up as they move around. However, when pupils are in the swimming pool there is the opportunity for a much wider range of activities. Pupils learn to float in the water and blow bubbles to show their confidence in putting their faces in the water. Mealtimes are not wasted opportunities; pupils recognise different foods and learn to indicate the dish that they prefer, or that is most suitable for them. They also develop skills in chewing and swallowing food which for some pupils requires a great deal of effort.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

4. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and often excellent. The amount of effort which pupils put into their learning and the pace at which they work are outstanding. Parents and carers report that pupils enjoy school and the very positive nature of their attitudes is a strength of the school. Pupils show their interest and involvement through eye movements and facial expressions, whilst others use their hands to complete different tasks.
5. Pupils relate very well to each other and to their teachers and all adults working in the school. All staff provide excellent role models and show a caring, professional attitude, treating each pupil with dignity and as an individual. These relationships are reinforced throughout the day and during activities such as the 'good morning' and 'going home' songs when pupils are encouraged to respond to each other through eye contact or by touching. A pupil in Rainbow class enjoyed a creative activity, during which he was involved in icing party biscuits and shared his enjoyment with a support assistant by putting his arm around her neck. Pupils relate very well to their escorts and drivers who know them well and take an interest and show concern for them.
6. Because of the very high standard of teaching and support by all adults working in the school, pupils enjoy their activities. Despite their difficulties, pupils try to concentrate when, for example, focusing upon a candle flame at the end of the day or listening to a teacher play two recorders simultaneously as a prelude to their lunch.

7. Pupils at Rutherford School respond well to the very rich curriculum which includes visits to places such as Chessington Zoo or the Buddhist Centre as well as to physical activities such as swimming in the school's pool. Pupils are encouraged to focus upon activities and to try to hold equipment such as a sieve when making icing.
8. Behaviour is excellent. This is the result of motivating and stimulating teaching and good reinforcement of expectations when, for example, at rest time, a pupil moved across the room on his bottom and tried to awaken another pupil who was sleeping. He responded to a firm verbal admonishment from a member of staff, which reminded him of the need to consider the impact of his actions on others, and returned to play with a large ball. There is no evidence of any oppressive behaviour. Staff take every possible opportunity to encourage and praise pupils and they respond to this very positively.
9. Pupils' attendance is good, despite the recorded attendance levels of 79.9 per cent in 1999/2000. Rutherford is a small school and the impact of individual pupils having extended periods of absence for medical reasons has a significant impact upon reported attendance levels. In the last year, one pupil missed all but four sessions for medical reasons, and other pupils had extended periods of absence associated with their medical conditions. In addition, most pupils had periods of absence for medical reasons and hospital clinic appointments. The overall good levels of attendance have a positive effect upon pupils' development and their progress.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

10. The quality of teaching has improved considerably since the last inspection. There are some new members on the teaching staff and the improved curriculum ensures that the lessons are meaningful and well planned to form part of the whole educational experience that the pupils enjoy.
11. Teachers have a very good knowledge and understanding of the subjects that they are teaching. When teaching basic skills of literacy and numeracy, teachers are very highly skilled in being able to make the work and the lessons totally appropriate to the needs of the pupils and their individual levels of attainment. All pupils are working at levels that are well below National Curriculum Level 1. Speaking and listening skills are linked to pupils' ability to make eye contact, whilst numeracy is in the area of spatial awareness and understanding of relative positions. For example, 'in', 'on', 'under' and 'above'. Teachers' planning for all lessons is very good and their expectations of pupils are excellent. They expect the best of these pupils and they receive it.
12. This school is outstanding in the quality of teaching that it provides for all pupils and is very successful in meeting the needs of all pupils. One hundred per cent of the teaching observed was good or better, 90 per cent was very good or better and 25 per cent of the teaching was excellent. There is excellent co-operative working between physiotherapists, classroom support staff, nurses and teachers. Lessons are very carefully planned in order to stimulate the pupils' imagination and generate very positive responses.
13. In all lessons, teachers promote sensory experiences. They talk continually to pupils about the activities in which they are involved and use an excellent and very wide range of teaching methods. Excellent work by all staff ensures that all pupils are treated with dignity and are able to take a full part in all lessons. All staff have a very clear understanding of the individual special needs of the pupils. For example, the patience and persistence of staff is rewarded as one pupil manages to point to his name which is cut from felt and mounted onto cardboard.
14. In one excellent lesson a teacher sang to each pupil in turn. He was accompanied by music from a compact disc. In the same lesson, a visiting musician enthralled the pupils with her playing of the violin. Together, the adults ensured that all pupils in the class enjoyed a moving

experience as they listened to and felt the music produced by the violin. Pupils held the body of the violin whilst it was being played, thus they both heard and felt the music. Pupils were also encouraged to produce notes by plucking the strings.

15. Teachers and support staff make careful and frequent records of the work of pupils. Learning objectives and targets are clearly defined in the individual education plans of each pupil. Within these education plans there are also care plans which detail their personal requirements, for example, concerning washing and changing following meal times.
16. Relationships between all staff and pupils are excellent. All adults ensure that pupils receive constant stimulation and teachers have very high expectations. Staff exercise great care when moving pupils. They use appropriate routine techniques, mechanical hoists and individual slings. Teachers provide excellent opportunities for development of language and communication skills during lessons. For example, during a swimming lesson, pupils are encouraged to make eye contact, create facial expressions and imitate movements.
17. The use of time, support staff and resources is excellent. All staff are very sensitive to pupils' needs. For example, they explain to the pupils that the wheelchair brake will be put on before the 'big bang' happens. This code of behaviour is excellent and prepares pupils for the noises and movements that they will experience, whilst eliminating the fear, shock or surprise element. All adults are totally committed to the well-being and education of the pupils. All staff work extremely well together, they support each other in the interests of the pupils and are very successful. The whole-team approach to education ensures that pupils receive an extremely high quality of education which, in total, is far more than the sum of the constituent parts. In this situation, the pupils benefit from a great deal of 'value added'.

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

18. The excellent curriculum provision is a strength of the school. The quality and range of learning opportunities offer a rich variety of well-planned and stimulating experiences. The holistic approach ensures that all activities are integrated into individual learning programmes for each pupil delivered by a multi-disciplinary team of staff.
19. The school uses the Early Learning Goals as the framework to plan the curriculum. This is entirely appropriate to meet the multiple and complex needs of the pupils. All personal care, therapy and learning provision is delivered through this framework. The timetable is organised into the six curriculum areas set out in the Early Learning Goals. These areas are personal, social and emotional development; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; physical development; creative development; and knowledge of self and understanding of the world.
20. The curriculum is delivered using a sensory approach. Every opportunity is taken to communicate with and stimulate pupils, using signs, signals, facial expressions, songs, rhymes and conversation. There is a continuous programme of lively and varied activities. The good level of staffing often enables pupils to receive one-to-one support which ensures that they are stimulated and engaged throughout the school day. Everyone who works in or with the school is involved in interacting with the pupils. For example, when the cook tours the classrooms each day to check on meal requirements she joins in with the activities and speaks with each child.
21. The curriculum statement explains that the school aims to achieve a balance between delivering a broad and balanced curriculum and meeting the individual needs of each pupil. There are curriculum groups who plan developments for each of the six Early Learning Goal areas. These groups represent all staff teams and have been responsible for some of the major developments; like the use of objects of reference and 'cue songs' which all staff use

consistently to signal to pupils any changes in activity. The school uses the Kent County Council 'Crossing the Bridge' programme as a basis for identifying individual goals and specific targets for each pupil's individual education plan.

22. This approach to the curriculum promotes the constructive partnership between the classroom, therapy and care teams which has a very positive impact on the quality of learning that pupils experience and the progress that they make. The care and therapy provision enhances the educational activities. This is seen when pupils need to be drip-fed during parts of the lessons. This does not detract in any way from the learning as staff talk with the pupils, whilst feeding them, about the lesson that is taking place and the activities in which they are involved.
23. The integration of physiotherapy with teaching and learning ensures that the support and care provided for pupils addresses their needs in a holistic sense. Physiotherapists focus most of their activities in the classroom, supporting the class teams and leading physical development sessions. When physiotherapy was observed in the specialist room, the therapists continually interacted with the pupils reinforcing their individual learning programmes. The excellent swimming provision, which is led by the senior physiotherapist, is a further example of the multi-disciplinary approach. Staff are trained and supported to work together by the physiotherapy team. This ensures that the pupils benefit at all times from appropriate positioning for work, regular changes of position and good practice in standing and sitting according to each pupil's individual needs. The swimming session seen provided excellent opportunities for language and communication development. It clearly made a significant contribution to the delivery of planned work through individual programmes. The pupils' delight is evident from their smiles, squeals, facial expressions and excited movements. They are able to anticipate actions to be taken. One or two can enter the water independently, some can kick their legs and splash and all experience some freedom of movement with support from staff.
24. The holistic approach is underpinned by comprehensive planning. There are long-, medium- and short-term plans. These set out activities within the agreed schemes of work. Staff adapt these to provide individual programmes for each pupil. The programmes are designed to meet the targets set in the individual education and care plans. This ensures that the special educational needs of each pupil are met. The termly and annual reviews of these plans inform the monitoring of the effectiveness of the curriculum, as do the feedback forms required from staff to the curriculum groups. This process is supported by the headteacher's daily visits to classrooms and the continuous informal liaison between all staff.
25. Evidence of the richness of the curriculum can be seen in the detailed portfolios of work and the very attractive displays throughout the school. Each classroom has hoops suspended from the ceiling. From these hang artefacts to illustrate pupils' current programmes. These include instruments used in music sessions, 'Mr Men' models and fruits and vegetables depicting the Jewish Harvest festival. The school is full of books, many of them in the form of 'big' books. There are displays throughout the school illustrating the stories. Pupils' portfolios include numerous examples of age-appropriate story work like, 'We're going on a bear hunt', 'Anna's Amazing Glasses' and 'Rainbow Fish'. When an extract from the video 'Winnie the Pooh' was shown, each pupil had a specially designed ticket and programme.
26. Sessions are planned meticulously to stimulate the pupils' senses. The excellent individual attention ensures that each pupil has full access to all curriculum experiences. A wonderful atmosphere is created. CDs and tapes are used. Staff sing to pupils regularly, one teacher plays various instruments to stimulate and encourage them. Pupils respond very positively to the various stimuli. During one of the 'good morning' sessions, a drumbeat and individualised 'hello' songs are used to encourage pupils to greet staff and one another. Some pupils stroke the hand of a classmate to greet them, another bangs the drum, one boy rocks to indicate his part in the session and another smiles and makes eye contact with staff. In another session observed, one pupil firmly grasped the castanets while another responded with facial

expressions and by tapping his tray when the teacher played recorder music to him. He was also able to hold the recorder and put it to his lips despite not being able to make a sound with it.

27. The community makes an excellent contribution to pupils' learning by supporting the work of the school, enhancing the learning opportunities available to pupils and providing equipment and resources. The school has excellent links with the adjoining Lodge and other facilities provided by the Society for people with disabilities. An example of the constructive relationship between the school and the Lodge is that when pupils receive respite at the Lodge, the nurses in both the school and the Lodge liaise on a daily basis to ensure that all necessary information is available to facilitate the provision of the best possible level of care.
28. The school also benefits from the excellent support of a number of volunteers from the local community who come into school to help on a regular basis and these are all thoroughly trained. A member of the local community, whose granddaughter used to attend the school, comes into school once a week to sew. In discussion, she explained how she makes and repairs straps and ties for cushions, covers cushions and padded wedges for special chairs as well as sewing large quantities of bibs. As a result of this excellent work, pupils are always surrounded by furnishings and fittings that are well maintained and usually individually designed to meet their individual needs. Local drivers of black taxi cabs, who form the Croydon Radio Cab Association, get together to provide, at their expense, an annual day's outing for 'handicapped' children in the Croydon area. They decorate their taxis with balloons and garlands and take the children out, as two cabbies described it, 'for a day to remember'. Last year they took the children to the zoo.
29. The school has good links with the local United Reformed Church. For example, on October 5th, all pupils celebrated Harvest Festival. Local businesses and schools raise funds to support the work of the school and purchase specific pieces of equipment. A local driver of a black taxi donated a very good electric organ to the school, which supplements other resources in the music room. The school caretaker ran in the London Marathon last year with sponsorship from the local community to support the work of the school. The school enjoys excellent relationships with the Community Health Trust which provides excellent support to ensure that appropriate care and equipment are available. There are excellent arrangements to admit new pupils and support the transition of pupils to senior schools.
30. There has been excellent improvement in the curriculum provision since the previous inspection. All the tasks related to curriculum development identified in the post-inspection plan have been implemented. The Early Learning Goals provide a legitimate and appropriate framework and every available moment in the school day is used effectively to support the pupils' learning. Parents, carers and staff comment that Rutherford now functions fully as a school. They feel that the emphasis on educational activities has been achieved without losing any of the high quality of care. The headteacher's involvement of all the staff in the curriculum planning has achieved a consensus that learning is the key focus for all school activities.
31. The school makes excellent provision for the personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of the pupils. Personal development opportunities are built into all activities, including the personal care routines of drinking, feeding and toileting. Interaction and conversation are constant throughout the day. Lunchtime is a particularly sociable time. Meals are prepared to meet individual need. They are served in a relaxed and civilised manner with each pupil having specific seats and place mats. The children who are tube fed are integrated fully into the activity. Some pupils are able to use a spoon independently, others co-operate with and respond to staff who help them to feed and continually talk with them. Staff are constantly in dialogue with pupils and working towards the targets set out in the individual programmes. Every achievement is acknowledged and praised. Pupils are continuously complimented with phrases such as: 'good looking', 'nice smiling' and 'well done

with using your spoon’.

32. There is excellent provision for pupils’ spiritual development. Opportunities for reflection are built into all activities. To conclude an energetic across-school physical session, pupils are encouraged to lie still and quiet whilst listening to calm music. Time is set aside at the end of each day to reflect on the activities and the learning that has taken place. Evidence from lessons observed, displays and pupil portfolios demonstrates the wide and plentiful variety of opportunities to learn about the values and beliefs of others. An assembly about Nigeria where staff dress in native costume, play the National Anthem and offer local foods for tasting is an awesome experience. Pictures, books and artefacts of many social and religious festivals are on display in the school’s entrance hall. There are examples of work on religious beliefs like the five Ks of Sikhism and the Jewish festival of Sukkoth. The Nigerian assembly, a music lesson, a music therapy session and swimming activity are all examples where the pupils’ response clearly indicated awe and wonder. In the swimming pool, pupils are able to experience a freedom of movement and sensations that both excite and delight them.
33. Provision for moral development is excellent. All staff show ultimate respect for pupils, treat them with care and maintain their dignity. There is a very strong ethos in the school of valuing everyone. Staff clearly enjoy working in the school with the pupils and one another. They model high standards of behaviour. Emphasis is made during each activity of the need to take turns. Where a pupil acts inappropriately, for example when a boy starts to tear the paper adorning the teacher dressed as a puppet, the teacher explains that this is wrong and praises him when he stops.
34. The school provides a dazzling array of experiences to stimulate pupils’ appreciation of their own cultural traditions and those of other cultures. When a violinist visits, pupils are able to feel the vibration of the strings as the instrument is played. The teacher plays a duet with the violinist while the pupils accompany them on percussion instruments. The intensity of the response of the pupils is most moving. Similarly, during one of the weekly music therapy sessions, pupils are able to listen to and feel a variety of instruments being played. A study, incorporating models and a display of ‘Peoples from around the world’, provides further opportunities for experiencing different cultures. There are examples of study of a range of artists, with work in the style of William Morris, Van Gogh and Monet’s ‘Water Lilies’. Topics such as ‘Transport Day’ and the Rutherford School Colour Election are delivered with lively, yet appropriate style. The election featured individually designed voting slips and there is a photograph of the whole school casting their votes in the ballot box. This gives pupils an introduction to the concept of citizenship and responsibility.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

35. The school provides a secure, happy environment which functions as an orderly, caring community in which every member is valued. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is excellent. The information gained from the monitoring of pupils' achievements and progress is used in an excellent manner to guide the planning of the curriculum. This ensures the appropriateness of the planned activities. Teachers, classroom support staff, physiotherapists, nurses and all other staff work very closely together to meet all of the pupils' needs to a very high standard. Pupils are treated with dignity. Teachers and staff set very high standards for pupils and act as excellent role models. They have an excellent understanding of pupils' progress and development and are very effective in promoting a sense of community. Every possible opportunity is taken to reinforce the very good relationships, to sustain the excellent standards of discipline and behaviour and to make pupils aware of each other's particular needs. For example, as seen in Sunshine class, which also happens in the other classes, when pupils have their lunches, they are encouraged to relate to each other and to staff and to be aware that sometimes it is necessary to wait their turn. The very high standards of support encourage the development of independent skills, although the pupils are highly dependent upon adult support for their personal care.
36. Arrangements for health and safety are satisfactory and staff have a good awareness of safety issues. Faulty or broken equipment is taken out of use immediately and electrical equipment and fire extinguishers are checked regularly. The school's procedures for child protection are good. Fire evacuation procedures are appropriate and the school has consulted with the fire brigade to secure their advice to ensure procedures meet requirements. Further consultation is due to take place this term to review current practice. There is insufficient understanding of the practice of conducting risk assessments and very few have been recorded. The school has begun to consider the need to formalise risk assessments to cover such activities as lifting and the transport of pupils, and is working with the physiotherapists and transport department of the local education authority to draw up a comprehensive range of assessments which will be reviewed regularly. However, arrangements for taking pupils out of school on visits are very good and, in conjunction with the school nurses, appropriate equipment, including oxygen, and individual pupil records are taken.
37. The school's procedures for monitoring the progress of pupils and their personal development are excellent. All staff are involved in the monitoring and it takes place at all times of the day. Staff work closely together and ensure that the very small steps that are stated on their targets within individual education plans are observed and recorded as and when they happen. Thus, there is a clear picture recorded that gives irrefutable evidence of very good progress by the pupils.
38. Three nurses are employed and there are always two of them on site or accompanying pupils on whole-school visits. Arrangements for providing medical support and monitoring pupils' personal and physical development are excellent. External health care specialists provide very good support and advice is readily available from the local nursing practice adviser. Pupils are looked after very well and facilities and equipment for dealing with routine care and any problems are very good. The recording of accidents is excellent and parents and carers are always advised. In addition, the headteacher is made aware of all incidents, enabling any potential risks to be informally identified and addressed.
39. The physiotherapy support available for pupils is excellent and is fully integrated into daily routines and activities. For example, those pupils requiring chest physiotherapy receive treatment early in the day to minimise their distress and to ensure that they are able to gain from activities in the classroom. Physiotherapists also work with pupils in classrooms, helping all pupils to enjoy and participate in activities such as decorating biscuits for a party.
40. The support provided very successfully links the Health Trusts and other external agencies with parents and carers and the school for the benefit of pupils. Links with home reinforce

the ongoing work with pupils.

41. The school's child protection procedures ensure that best practice is incorporated into its work in this area. The school uses the local area protection committee's guidelines and these comply with requirements. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and has undertaken appropriate training. All adults working in the school are aware of the procedures to be followed in the case of any concerns. The school has appropriate strategies to protect pupils from harming themselves or others and staff have received training, with particular emphasis on avoiding the need to use physical intervention. The school is vigilant and sensitive in exercising its responsibilities and has excellent liaison arrangements with outside agencies.
42. Attendance is recorded accurately and the school has excellent procedures to monitor attendance, involving parents and carers if notification is not received of the reason why a pupil is absent. The headteacher regularly reviews and analyses the attendance records.
43. Drivers and escorts are sensitive to the needs of individual pupils, displaying a great understanding of their needs and the importance of reliability and stability in the service which they provide. For example, the black-taxi drivers form a close relationship with pupils and their escorts and are very willing to assist in whatever way they can, as well as involving themselves in a voluntary association of drivers which provides an annual outing for the children.
44. The quality of monitoring pupils' learning and personal development is excellent. The school uses the 'Crossing the Bridge' framework and the 'Equals' baseline assessment procedures to determine the starting point for planning for each pupil. The benchmarks used by the school provide a specialist and appropriate approach to assessing progress.
45. There are procedures for recording progress in all aspects of pupils' experience in school. Appropriate staff record progress with learning, care and therapy. The visiting professionals such as the music therapist, teacher of the visually impaired and speech and language therapist also record progress. Parents and carers have the opportunity to contribute to the process through the daily home/school diaries. These detailed records inform the termly review of individual education plans that act as the central co-ordinating mechanism. The annual review of statements formalises the process.
46. The records are kept meticulously by staff. All pupil responses to all activities are noted and outcomes measured against planned learning objectives. Staff share a common understanding of each pupil's needs and the activities planned for them. They enjoy every achievement made and are keen to record them. All members of staff are clear about their specific role in the recording process and they all take responsibility for ensuring that the records are kept up-to-date daily. The home/school dairies contain a wealth of information shared daily between home and all staff. Teachers, physiotherapists, nursery nurses, classroom assistants, nurses and visitors all contribute to these. There are weekly recording sheets for classroom activities, care profiles, records of seizures and physiotherapy records, as well as details of work undertaken with the visual impairment teacher and in the sensory room. These records feed into daily and weekly reviews, and into the termly reviews of individual education plans. This, in turn, informs the setting of new targets and planning for curriculum activities.
47. In addition to these formal procedures, there is continual informal dialogue between all staff and with parents and carers. Achievements are consistently celebrated with the award of an array of certificates. Pupil portfolios contain awards from nurses, physiotherapists, the music therapist and all other internal and external staff. The school is working towards each pupil having a 'pupil passport' which will provide details of individual communication strategies. The very detailed pupil portfolios provide a record of all activities undertaken.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

48. The school's partnership with parents and carers is excellent and is promoted through excellent communications and involvement of parents and carers in supporting pupils. This partnership makes a positive contribution to pupils' development.
49. Parents and carers express very positive views of the school and do not identify any areas of concern regarding the way in which the school works with them and keeps them informed about progress. Parents and carers are comfortable in approaching the headteacher or staff with any questions or problems and are unanimous in the view that pupils enjoy school.
50. The information provided for parents and carers about pupils' progress on a daily basis is excellent and in particular, the school/home book is used exceptionally well. This book is sent home each day with pupils and contains very extensive narrative and excellent information from the class teacher and classroom assistants. It is written in a friendly and informative way and may include information about what a child has done during the day, how well he/she responded to a particular stimulus or task or advice that the child's clothes became a little dirty during the course of an activity! Very often, the comments end with good wishes that the parents and carers should have an enjoyable or pleasant evening. Many of the parents and carers use this book to respond and the school seeks to ensure that it is used to establish an ongoing dialogue and partnership. The headteacher and all staff work within a truly multi-disciplinary team, for the benefit of pupils, and a strength of the school is their accessibility to parents and carers to discuss any concerns.
51. Parents and carers are fully involved in reviews of individual education plans and target setting. The team of physiotherapists involve parents and carers in programmes to integrate physiotherapy into everyday activities and the nurses keep parents and carers fully informed about any incidents or concerns. The cook liaises with parents and carers to find out what foods pupils enjoy. The excellent level of communications with parents and carers is directed to meeting and supporting individual pupil's needs in the best possible way and, through the school's involvement with external agencies, to secure support and advice for parents and carers.
52. The school seeks to involve parents and carers in activities which are partly associated with fund raising, but also with strengthening the partnership between parents and carers and the community in working together for the benefit of pupils through the development of very good relationships. The school organises events such as a barbecue, a summer fayre and a bonfire party as well as selling Christmas cards in support of work to benefit those with disabilities in the Croydon area.
53. Most parents and carers are very supportive of the school and encourage their children in their learning and personal development. The support of parents and carers has a very positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The headteacher provides excellent leadership and direction for the school and is well supported by staff who work in the school and by the director of services. However, the headteacher does not attend meetings of the trustees and reports are provided through the director of services. The headteacher does not have any role to play in the budget preparation for the school, but she is invited to provide written reports concerning the work of the school to the trustees, primarily through the management team.
55. Since the appointment of the headteacher there have been several changes in staff. This has resulted in positive and planned moves on the whole, to ensure that the demands made by the curriculum and the needs of the pupils are met appropriately.

56. Rutherford School is only one facet of the work of the Croydon, Sutton and District Spastics Society. Consequently, responsibility for the management of the school has been delegated very largely to the director of services and the headteacher. At the moment, the headteacher has no direct involvement in long-term planning for the future of the school. She has insufficient involvement in financial planning. This situation is unsatisfactory as it means that without this knowledge, she is unable to make realistic and achievable plans for the future of the school.

57. The trustees of the school also have a responsibility to make sure that future plans for the school are based on sure foundations. They have a responsibility to develop and establish a formal and clearly written school development plan which contains priorities for development, success criteria and contains clear elements of financial information. The formulation of such a plan is a joint responsibility held by the trustees, the director of services and the headteacher. It is also important that teaching and other support staff within the school are involved and consulted. The personnel and skills are already present within the staffing structure of the Society.

58. Procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching and the effectiveness of the school overall are underdeveloped. There is some monitoring of teaching by the headteacher and there is some monitoring of the school's provision by the director of services. However, these monitoring systems are informal and sometimes irregular. This is an unsatisfactory situation. The monitoring of the school's provision should feature in the development plan, as should the monitoring of teaching.
59. The office staff provide good support to the smooth running of the school. They are unobtrusive but efficient and support the work of the school and its communication with parents and outside agencies.
60. The work of the office staff is supplemented by that of the accountant and his assistant who provide support for the school under the management of the director of services. The weakness in this area is that the headteacher does not feature sufficiently in the chain of management of finances for the school.
61. The quality of provision for staffing, accommodation and learning resources at the school is very good. Staffing levels are good ensuring that pupils can have one-to-one attention, when appropriate. It is a multi-disciplinary team with a comprehensive range of expertise including teachers, nursery nurses, classroom assistants, physiotherapists and nurses. A family support worker has recently been appointed and other visiting personnel like the speech and language therapist and music therapist add to the expertise available.
62. The caretaker came to the school about eight years ago and has responsibility for the school, the coach house and the Lodge. He looks after the grounds and the internal decoration, as well as making many pieces of equipment in the small workshop which he has at the rear of the coach house. He has a budget which he may spend under delegated authority. Additional resources are available to him and, for normal expenditure, he has never encountered any difficulties in securing additional funds.
63. The level of teamwork is very high and staff clearly enjoy working together and with the pupils. The high quality of their work greatly enhances the ethos of the school. The level of care for the pupils and commitment of staff contributes significantly to the progress of the pupils.
64. The school is housed in an old building with three floors. Classrooms and facilities are located on the ground and first floors, with a lift to assist in the movement of pupils to the first floor. Despite the age of the property, it is well maintained, light and airy, with attractive views over the gardens which pupils and staff enjoy. The classrooms are large, bright and airy and afford very good space and facilities for the delivery of the curriculum. The grounds are extensive and provide environmental areas, trees, wildlife and grassed areas on which, during the summer and autumn, a large canvas gazebo is erected to afford shade and shelter from the elements.
65. Within the building, there are several rooms providing special provision. These include a laundry, a small kitchen area, for which an extension is planned, a staff dining and rest area and a physiotherapy room. The nurses' room can be separated from a sensory area by a dividing curtain. Although this is not the best arrangement, it makes the most effective use of the available space. As well as the sensory room, there is a music and sound room and generous storage space. Some storage still takes place in other areas because of the nature and size of some of the equipment. This is managed positively. For example, the store of costumes and hats enhances the attractive display.
66. Besides the ordinary office accommodation, there is accommodation for the family support worker and private meeting and interview rooms; these are on the third floor. On the ground floor there is an attractive and well-maintained hydrotherapy pool.
67. Very good use of displays is made to stimulate pupils' interest and to develop a sense of

community within the school and with parents, carers and escorts. For example, there are pictures of each child outside classrooms, together with brief descriptions of them. There are details of the curriculum being covered and there is other information about events and activities.

68. The overall quality and adequacy of accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum is very good.
69. The school benefits from a wide range of very good quality learning resources. Specialist seating and frames matched to pupils' needs ensure that they are safe and comfortable. There are numerous appropriate books and toys. Resources are developed in-house by staff to promote the sensory approach to teaching and learning. For example there are 'objects of reference' and cue songs designed to indicate the next activity. The staff are currently developing a bank of number rhymes. 'Personal passports' are being created for all pupils to indicate their preferred method of communication. The pupil portfolios are full of examples of tailor-made quality resources.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

70. In order to improve even further the quality of provision at Rutherford School, the headteacher, director of services, and the trustees must:
- Improve the development planning for the future of the school by contributing to the creation of a formal, written school development plan. (Paragraph 57)
 - Ensure that the development planning for the school shows clear priorities, details the use of resources and is carefully linked to the school's financial capabilities. (Paragraph 57)
 - Introduce more rigorous procedures for the monitoring of teaching in order to acknowledge formally the very good practice of the staff and to support their professional development. (Paragraph 58)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	24
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
25%	67%	8%	0%	0%	0%	0%

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	18
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	11

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	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	1

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	20	School data	0

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	2
Black – other	1
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	12
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.5
Average class size	6

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	13
Total aggregate hours worked per week	282

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
	£
Total income	41100
Total expenditure	371390
Expenditure per pupil	20633
Balance brought forward from previous year	0
Balance carried forward to next year	39610

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	18
Number of questionnaires returned	3

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

There was a very low response to the questionnaire that was sent to parents and carers of all pupils. However, the information received shows that parents believe that the school is very good. The inspection team agrees fully with this judgement.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN

71. Teachers and support staff provide a curriculum that is totally appropriate and which meets the individual needs of all pupils extremely well. Schemes of work are being developed and used for each area of the curriculum based on the 'Equals' scheme for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. The termly whole-school topics also ensure a breadth and coverage of all the school's curriculum areas and are adapted at a relevant level and degree by each class. The quality of teaching throughout the school is outstanding. All staff work very well together and have excellent knowledge of all pupils' special needs. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent and all staff treat all pupils with great respect ensuring dignity at all times.
72. Individual targets for language are set for all pupils in their individual education plans. Pupils make very good progress towards these as they develop early communication skills. The morning 'hello' sessions make a very good start to the day in which all pupils take part. The teachers and support assistants work very well together, ensuring that all pupils take a full part in the session. Pupils work according to a very well managed routine that is carefully punctuated with musical and picture cues. Adults sing songs to introduce different activities. These are recognised by the pupils who display their interest and enthusiasm using facial expressions.
73. Pupils also benefit from very good teaching of basic numeracy skills and mathematical awareness. Teachers help them to understand relative positions of 'near to' and 'at the side of' during movement sessions which helps not only their physical development, but also with development of number through the songs that teachers and assistants sing as they work together. Teachers devise very effective mathematical games for the pupils.
74. Pupils' knowledge of different cultures is enriched by the work of the staff. One notable assembly included a medley of songs, dance and music from Nigeria. A wide variety of Nigerian foods had been prepared for the pupils to taste. To make the experience complete, the staff dressed in traditional Nigerian costume which was provided by one of the staff. Teachers, classroom assistants, nursery nurses and the physiotherapist all took part in the assembly that was greatly enjoyed by all. Through this work, the pupils' cultural experience develops well and pupils' social awareness also improves. This and other similar session are invaluable in helping the pupils to gain knowledge and understanding of themselves and of the world. The very high quality of teaching in all areas enables all pupils to make good progress.
75. Throughout the school, music plays a vital part in lessons and in free, recreation time. The school is fortunate to have the skills of a part-time music therapist and also a musician amongst the staff. Other members of staff are very willing and able to augment recorded music with songs and tunes that they know or have made up. Music is also used extremely well to set the mood for the day to help pupils and staff to relax. Whilst a great deal of pre-recorded music is used, one teacher works extremely skilfully and plays a treble recorder in accompaniment to the music as he moves around the classroom from one pupil to another. The use of music helps to create moments of awe and wonder as pupils touch the belly of a violin as it is being played and feel the music coming from it.

76. Pupils' physical development is addressed at all times of the day. Teachers, nurses, classroom assistants and physiotherapists all work closely to ensure that the physical development of pupils is considered in every setting, be it the hydrotherapy pool or the classroom. With the help of the adults, pupils also have an interesting variety of creative activities. They work with colour, do hand painting and work with paper and tissue to make collages. The work they produce is very well displayed around the school and makes every room bright and cheerful.
77. Pupils' behaviour is always excellent, both in and out of lessons. This helps pupils to make very good progress and enjoy being at school. The excellent behaviour of the pupils and the great respect and dignity with which they are treated by adults makes the lessons and break-times into very happy and productive sessions that are enjoyed by all.