

INSPECTION REPORT

WOODLANDS SCHOOL

Apsley
Nottingham
LEA area: Nottingham

Unique reference number: 122962

Acting Head teacher: Sarah Fee

Reporting inspector: April Dakin
25441

Dates of inspection: 11th – 15th December 2000

Inspection number: 223698

Inspection carried out under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

© Crown copyright 2001

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	3 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Beechdale Road Aspley Nottingham Nottinghamshire
Postcode:	NG8 3EZ
Telephone number:	0115 915 5734
Fax number:	0115 991 5736
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Paul Lacey
Date of previous inspection:	February 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
April Dakin 25441	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Religious education; Physical education.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? The school's results and achievements; How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed? Leadership and management; What should the school do to improve further?
Christopher Bailey 13346	<i>Lay inspector</i>	Additional special educational needs.	How high are standards? Pupil's 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? Support for leadership; Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources.
Brian Fletcher 20457	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Music; Personal and social development.	Support for curriculum; Personal development; Support for leadership; Efficiency of the school.
Howard Probert 8056	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Art; English as an additional Language.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students?
Jennifer Taylor 17260	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Information communication technology. Equal opportunities.	
Robert Thompson 10781	<i>Team inspector</i>	Humanities; French; Design and technology.	Support for care; Assessment and monitoring and evaluation of academic achievement.

The inspection contractor was:

*Westminster Education Consultants
Old Garden House
The Lanterns
Bridge Lane
London
SW11 3AD*

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
Inspection Quality Division
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	1
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	6
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	9
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	12
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	23
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	26
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	29

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Woodlands School is an average sized day special school with 97 pupils aged six to 16. It is designated as a school for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. However, the actual make up of the school is very complex. About half of the pupils have moderate learning difficulties. The rest of the school population is made up of pupils with severe and complex needs (24 per cent), and pupils with emotional and behavioural needs (26 per cent). The proportion of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) is slowly reducing, although the severity of their needs is increasing. The authority has no other suitable placements for girls, or for younger pupils with EBD. Eleven per cent of pupils have severe communication and social difficulties associated with autism. There is a trend towards more admissions of pupils with autism and complex needs. Eight pupils are from minority ethnic backgrounds and five pupils have English as an additional language. Only one pupil is at an early stage of learning English. A specialist teacher supports this small ethnic minority. The school has a wide socio-economic mix, with almost 60 per cent of pupils in receipt of free school meals. Pupils are organised mainly by age and the range of learning disability within class groups is often wide. There has been a decrease in numbers since the last inspection, and the school currently has 17 places waiting to be filled. All pupils have statements of special educational need. There are approximately two boys for every girl, a typical situation in special schools. Attainment on entry is generally well below the national average when compared to mainstream schools. The majority of pupils are transported to school in buses funded by the LEA, and a few travel up to an hour to get to the school.

The school has been subject to major building works, which have caused constant noise and disruption to the normal workings of the school during the autumn term. The school has temporary staffing difficulties. Very recently additional temporary staffing has been provided to enable the school to make an additional class, and to provide an acceptable standard of education. There has been an agreement with the LEA not to take any other pupils until the staffing situation has stabilised. A decrease in the number of full time equivalent teachers from 17.4 to 15.6 since the last inspection has been mainly due to falling rolls. There has been an increase in learning support assistants and care staff. This reflects the changing needs of the school and has brought about a change in the ratio of teachers to pupils from 7.01 to 6.2, giving one adult to 2.5 pupils when support assistants are included.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. The teaching is good overall. The majority of pupils behave satisfactorily, and are making satisfactory progress. The temporary staffing problems have affected the progress of the youngest pupils in the school. Leadership is good overall, and management of the school is satisfactory at the present time. The school has made good improvements since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further. At present it provides satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- Teaching is good overall; this ensures that, by the age of 16, pupils achieve well in mathematics, science, and most other subjects.
- The school provides very good careers and vocational education, and prepares well for life after school.
- Provides very good links with college and other mainstream educational establishments.
- Monitors pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal and social development well, including their attendance. This ensures that pupils have good attitudes to school and have good relationships with others as they move through the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The achievements of pupils in reading and writing, particularly for pupils aged 11 to 16.
- The achievements of a significant minority of pupils with additional needs in communication and social interaction (all aspects of English)
- The overall achievements and progress of a significant minority of pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties.
- The achievements and progress of the small group of pupils aged six and seven, particularly in science, information technology, art and religious education.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There have been good improvements at the school since it was last inspected in February 1998, when it was found to have serious weaknesses. The provision for the health, safety and welfare of pupils is now satisfactory overall. There has been a reduction in the number of pupils with EBD who were inappropriately placed at the school. However, the proportion remains higher than it should be in a school designated for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. The school now plans more effectively for the group of pupils with additional needs identified in the last inspection. However, the needs of pupils with more complex learning and emotional difficulties are still not consistently met. The school now has a comprehensive behaviour policy in place and has provided relevant training for the majority of staff in dealing with, and defusing, challenging behaviour. Proper procedures and sufficient staff are available for the supervision of potentially difficult pupils. Attendance is now satisfactory. The curriculum is now satisfactory overall. There have been very good improvements in the provision for pupils' spiritual development. Plans for performance management are good and training needs are now clearly linked to the school development plan. Financial planning is now very good. The school now fully meets statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	By age 11	By age 16	Key	
Speaking and listening	C	C	<i>very good</i>	A
Reading	C	C	<i>good</i>	B
Writing	C	D	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Mathematics	C	B	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
Personal, social and health education	C	B	<i>poor</i>	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

The school is beginning to set targets based on pupils' prior performance. However, objectives in statements of special educational needs do not always reflect the priority needs of pupils. Targets within individual educational plans are too numerous and vary in quality; this makes it difficult to review the progress of pupils. The majority of pupils aged between seven and 16 are making good progress in science, information communication technology, (ICT) design and technology and physical education, and good progress in humanities between the ages of seven and 14. Good progress is made in French between the ages of 11 and 14. The majority of pupils between the ages of 11 and 16 make good progress in religious education and art. Pupils' achievements in accredited courses are improving year by year. The youngest pupils make satisfactory progress overall in English, mathematics, music, physical education, and humanities. They do not make enough progress in science, ICT, religious education, and art. Pupils aged 11 to 16 do not make enough progress in writing. A significant minority of pupils with complex learning and emotional needs do not make the same progress as others.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils' attitudes to their work and the school are good overall. They enjoy practical tasks, but many are reluctant writers.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is satisfactory overall. It is very good when pupils are out in the community. However, in some classes the challenging behaviour of a significant minority adversely affects the learning of the rest.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships within the school are good. Pupils take increased responsibility for their behaviour and learning, as they get older.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory, and much improved since the last inspection.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 6-11	Aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory overall.	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.

Teaching is good overall. It is satisfactory overall in the core subjects of English and mathematics, and good overall in science and personal and social education. It is satisfactory or better in 93 per cent of lessons, good or better in 64 per cent and very good in 14 per cent. It is unsatisfactory in 7 per cent of lessons and overall for a significant minority of pupils, particularly those aged between six and 11 who have complex and emotional needs. Therefore, teaching does not meet the needs of all pupils equally well. Teaching is very good overall in physical education, and good in art, and design and technology, French and humanities. Communication is taught well in most subjects for the majority of pupils. However, not all teachers have the same confidence to teach basic communication skills or to use alternative means of communication for pupils with more complex needs. Information communication technology could be used more to support learning in other subjects. Not enough is done to ensure all pupils priority literacy and numeracy needs are known by pupils or met. Consequently, not all pupils with additional needs learn to communicate well enough and older pupils do learn to write independently to the best of their ability.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum that meets statutory requirements for the majority of pupils. The speech therapist's skills are underused to support teachers in planning for the needs of pupils with autism. Too little time is spent on science in the youngest class.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	This provision is good. Pupils and parents are well supported by the teacher responsible for this area.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good and much better than at the time of the previous inspection.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares satisfactorily for its pupils. Procedures for monitoring attendance, behaviour and personal development, and for assessing pupils' academic achievement are good overall. However, weaknesses in individual educational plans make it difficult to review the progress of pupils against needs identified in statements. The school works satisfactorily with parents.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The leadership of the acting head teacher is good. Management is satisfactory at the present time. Key members of staff provide good leadership on the whole, but there are weaknesses in the delegation of responsibilities and in the middle management structure.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is a critical friend to the school. It has a good awareness of the strengths and weaknesses of the school's provision. It plans and monitors spending well. All statutory requirements are met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school development plan is good, and is regularly monitored and evaluated. Financial management is secure and forward looking. Good use is made of the various additional grants that the school receives. In all aspects of expenditure, a careful check is made to ensure that the school is receiving best value for money, although this technique is not yet as sophisticated as it might be.
The strategic use of resources	The temporary staffing problems have led to the acting head teacher having to teach 50 per cent of her time. This makes it difficult for her to ensure planning, and teaching, is effectively and continuously monitored. The temporary staffing arrangements for the youngest pupils affects their progress in lessons.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good relationships between pupils and members of staff. • The standard of teaching. • That their children like coming to school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Homework policy and practice. • The behaviour of pupils, particularly amongst the oldest pupils.

The inspection team agrees with the parents' views of the school on the whole. Homework is not given consistently or often enough, and many teachers have low expectations as to whether or not homework is given or completed. There is a new homework policy for teachers, parents and pupils to adhere to.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. *The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.*

2. Pupils' achievements are improving. The majority of pupils make at least satisfactory progress in all subjects. Pupils achieve best when they are aged between 11 and 16. There is no significant difference between the achievements of boys and girls, and pupils who have English as an additional language in any subject do equally well. However, a significant minority of pupils with additional needs do not make enough consistent progress, particularly in the primary department.

3. Achievements in English are satisfactory. The overall picture of progress in English is similar to that seen at the last inspection, but there have been some improvements. Pupils aged between seven and 11, and between 14 and 16, are now making better overall progress in English, because of the satisfactory implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and because of the very good teaching of English Literature for the oldest pupils. However, pupils with more complex communication needs could achieve better if there was a consistent policy for the use of alternative means of communication, such as signs, symbols and information communication technology. Where alternative approaches are used, pupils with complex needs make better progress, in the Blue class, for example. The majority of pupils' achievements in reading in relation to their prior attainment are satisfactory. However, achievements could be better if there was a consistent practice of allowing pupils to take books home to practice their reading with their parents. Many teachers give opportunities for reading in lessons. However, not all teachers, particularly those of pupils aged between 11 and 16, are confident in the teaching of the basic reading skills and strategies. Very few teachers plan to improve pupils' individual literacy skills in subjects other than English. These shortcomings slow pupils' overall progress in reading.

4. By the age of 11, pupils have made a satisfactory start in learning to write, but they make unsatisfactory progress in writing independently by the age of 16. Teachers in many subjects do not give pupils enough opportunities for writing or ensure individual pupils' priority needs in literacy well enough planned. There is an over emphasis on worksheet completion as pupils get older and many pupils have unsatisfactory attitudes to recording their work because of this. Targets within individual educational plans need to be much clearer in this aspect of English, and be reviewed more regularly.

5. Achievements in numeracy are satisfactory overall, and good for pupils aged between 11 and 16. Ninety three percent of pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement in 2000 gained a pass in the subject. The good teaching these pupils are presently receiving is ensuring continued good progress. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when

achievement for older pupils was found to be only satisfactory. Pupils now know how to use their numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the use of mathematics across the curriculum was described as limited. Pupils now use their numeracy skills well in design and technology, art, music, information communication technology, geography and physical education.

6. Pupils' achievement in science is good overall. Pupils aged between seven and 16 make good progress, mainly because of good planning, and the good specialist teaching in the secondary department. The highest attaining pupils are now gaining accreditation in the subject and are doing well. However, the youngest pupils continue to make unsatisfactory progress in science, as still not enough time is given to the subject at that age. No photographic evidence and little annotated work were available to show progress of these pupils over time. Planning to ensure progress for pupils with complex needs is also insecure, particularly, but not exclusively, at that age.

7. Standards of achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) are satisfactory overall for pupils aged between seven and 14. However, the youngest pupils and those with more complex needs or severe behavioural needs could make better progress. The majority of pupils aged between seven and 14 make good progress overall. Lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, but could make better progress if teachers were more knowledgeable about the use of ICT for this group of pupils. Most pupils have good access to computers and follow a comprehensive scheme of work. However, the scheme does not support teachers well enough in their planning for the youngest pupils with more complex needs.

8. Pupils' achievements and progress in physical education are good overall, and very good in games by the age of 16. Specialist teaching, which has been extended into the primary department, ensures that pupils' progress in this subject is better than at the last inspection. Similarly, improved teaching and planning, and opportunities to be consistently taught by specialists, are improving or maintaining a good rate of progress for the older pupils in art, design and technology, French, humanities and religious education. Progress in religious education, humanities and personal and social education is good for the older pupils, but less well planned and organised for the younger pupils with more complex needs. Progress in music throughout the school is now satisfactory for all pupils.

9. Pupils with additional needs make unsatisfactory progress overall, as the needs of about 14 per cent of pupils are not consistently met. Mixed ability classes with a wide range of needs make it difficult for many primary aged pupils with complex needs to make the progress they should. Pupils in Years 7/8 with additional needs associated with autism are making satisfactory progress overall in the secondary department. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when this group was identified as making slower progress than the rest of pupils when they were of primary age. This is mainly because the class is mainly based with and supported by a teacher who knows their individual needs well. However, progress in their communication, and of other pupils with complex communication needs, is variable throughout the school. Pupils with this disability who have conquered the skill of reading print make at least satisfactory progress, but others have not been consistently offered alternative methods of communication. This affects their personal development, and is slowing their progress in most subjects. The speech therapist's very good skills and knowledge are underused by the school to support and guide teachers in this aspect of teaching and learning. There are still about 8 per cent of pupils with severely challenging

behaviour whose needs are not consistently met; half of them were excluded during inspection week. The temporary provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs in the Green classes is ensuring those who are at school, that is, those who are not excluded, are making at least satisfactory progress, and sometimes good progress, in lessons.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to their work and the school are good overall. Many pupils show positive attitudes to learning and, according to parents, are keen to come to school. They take pride in the school and are enthusiastic about their own achievements and interests. The great majority of pupils are friendly and courteous to each other, staff and visitors.

11. In lessons pupils are attentive and the majority undertake all the tasks required of them. Most pupils are able to sustain their concentration for at least short periods of time so that tasks can be completed. They respond best in lessons involving practical activities, such as design and technology, art, science and physical education, but older pupils' motivation and interest diminish when they are asked to write. In some classes the difficult behaviour of a small number of pupils adversely affects the learning of the rest. This is mainly where teachers lack expertise in dealing with pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour, or are not completely familiar with the provisions of the school's behaviour policy.

12. Pupils' behaviour overall is satisfactory, and this represents an improvement since the last inspection. Behaviour and attitudes to mathematics have considerably improved since the time of the last inspection, when they were unsatisfactory. However, attitudes and behaviour still vary across subjects. In lessons they range from excellent in one physical education lesson, to unsatisfactory where priority needs are not being met in the mixed disability classes. In 94 per cent of lessons, behaviour and attitudes to work are at least satisfactory, and in 67 per cent they are good or better. Behaviour is best in the oldest classes where the school has had time to instil a sense of right and wrong, and where alternative and relevant programmes of work are set to meet individual needs. When older pupils make visits outside school, their behaviour is very good and this enables staff to organise a wide range of stimulating visits and learning opportunities for them. These include work experience, a residential week, and visits to local places of interest, as well as learning opportunities provided at a local college.

13. Relationships in the school are good between pupils and between pupils and staff. In particular, the members of the support team give pupils a high level of care and guidance, encouraging their social development and minimising racial disharmony and bullying. Pupils say this is a calmer school now and that others do not bully them in school. However, the behaviour of a small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties still causes concern.

14. All members of staff provide very good role models for pupils and the great majority of pupils respect them. The oldest pupils take some responsibility for their own learning and for the learning of others, especially in physical education where pupils engage in peer training activities. There were many examples of pupils getting out and putting away equipment, and showing safe practice in practical subjects. However, opportunities for pupils to learn independently are few, and they are not given enough opportunities to collaboratively, although they can when asked. In a science lesson at a local college, pupils worked

successfully in pairs, observing and recording what happens to magnesium powder when burned, for example. Older pupils are given good opportunities to consider how well they are progressing. Written pupil reports show that they are able to make clear judgements about the progress they are making, particularly in reference to their personal development and their attitudes to different subjects. Most of these comments are very revealing and show pupils do have the ability to think about their own actions and learning.

15. Over the last year there have been no permanent exclusions, although 11 pupils have been excluded for fixed terms. Pupils are excluded for physical assault and very disruptive behaviour, and sometimes these pupils continue to commit these acts on their return to school. The high level of fixed-term exclusions for physical violence indicates that a small minority of excluded pupils are not appropriately placed in the school. The governors' reluctance to exclude permanently any pupil accounts for the relatively high number of fixed-term exclusions.

16. Pupils' attendance has improved considerably since the last inspection. In the current term, unauthorised absence has reduced significantly so that now attendance is in line with average attendance for this type of school.

17. Many pupils travel to school by buses and taxis and this means that sometimes pupils are late for school. Some pupils make their own way to and from school and work experience placements using public transport. Lessons start on time.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

18. Judgements about teaching are based on the 96 lessons seen and the scrutiny of work and records of pupils at the school. The quality of teaching is good overall for the majority of other pupils in the school. However, the teaching of pupils with additional complex communication needs is unsatisfactory overall. Statistics show a slight overall improvement since the last inspection. It is at least satisfactory in 93 per cent of lessons, good or better in 64 per cent, and unsatisfactory in 7 per cent. Around one in ten lessons are very good or excellent. Teaching is satisfactory overall for the majority of pupils aged six to 11, when scrutiny of work and individual work plans are taken into consideration. It is good overall for secondary aged pupils. However, a significant number of unsatisfactory lessons were taught by supply teachers in the class for pupils aged six and seven.

19. Individual subjects show better improvements than the overall statistics imply. The teaching of English has improved and is now good in junior classes and for the oldest pupils. It is sound in other classes. The structure of the literacy framework is supporting teaching and learning in the subject. The teaching of mathematics has improved for the oldest pupils, and the good teaching for pupils aged between 11 and 14 has been maintained. Again the national numeracy initiative is adding structure and purpose to lessons and improving teachers' knowledge of the subject. The teaching of science has improved for pupils aged between seven and 16 and is now almost always good. Although the teaching of science is satisfactory for the youngest pupils, there is still not enough work planned, and this is

slowing pupils' learning in the subject at this age. The quality of teaching has been maintained in all other subjects, with some improvement in the teaching of the knowledge and understanding of geography. However, teachers do not always plan sufficiently well for those pupils with priority literacy needs by linking pupils individual educational plans to daily lessons, for example.

20. More supportive schemes of work have helped teachers to improve their teaching. Teaching has also improved as a result of training, in the management of behaviour, for example. Planning is effective in most lessons. Teachers remind pupils at the beginning of the lesson of how they are to behave or how they must participate, and the review of targets at the end of lessons is good. This ensures pupils know how they are to behave and ensures pupils know what they have to do to improve. Teachers now have clear learning objectives in their planning, although most are focussed at the middle attaining pupils, or on behaviour, rather than individual academic needs. Too many teachers are still over reliant on worksheets that are not adapted to meet pupils' literacy needs. This makes it difficult for teachers to assess and report on pupils' priority needs in literacy and numeracy at the annual review.

21. All the very good teaching occurs in classes that are taken by experienced specialist subject teachers who have very good subject knowledge and high expectations. This is shown in the high quality of questioning and the emphasis placed on pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in lessons. For example, in one high quality English lesson, pupils learnt about the poetry of Thomas Hardy, and reflected on and discussed the moral implications of marriage and relationships. In contrast, in high quality physical education lessons, pupils reflected upon the effectiveness of their own coaching skills, whilst others considered what their peers had helped them to learn. There are no behaviour management problems in these high quality lessons. In the best lessons, younger pupils with complex needs are given opportunities to make mistakes and are helped and guided to learn by them, in physical education, for example. In the unsatisfactory lessons pupils are over prompted and learn little. In art with the youngest pupils, for example, there are few opportunities for choice, a narrow range of materials provided, and too little time given for pupils to practise their fine motor skills. Consequently, pupils make little progress in the acquisition of skills, find it difficult to make choices, and put in little creative effort.

22. Most unsatisfactory teaching and learning occurs where supply staff are managing the youngest lower attaining pupils with complex needs associated with autism. Medium and long-term planning does not support and guide supply teachers' daily planning. Routines are not well enough established, so pupils are unsure of what is to happen next or when an activity is finished. Limited use is made of symbols to signal changes as they happen in the classroom. Work set is often at too higher level and this makes it difficult for them to show what they know, understand and can do. Not all teachers are aware that the lowest attaining pupils need real objects and or symbols or photographs to help them to attend to what the teacher is explaining to them or to help them to communicate their needs. The many changes in teaching approaches throughout the week causes pupils to feel insecure and they communicate this by exhibiting challenging, or obsessive, or very passive behaviour.

23. There is occasional unsatisfactory teaching or learning in the mixed disability primary classes, where priority needs cannot be met without further training of teachers, additional support or reorganisation. Some teachers find it difficult to switch from one style of behaviour management for pupils with emotional and behavioural needs to another style that is suitable for pupils with autism. Again, routines are not signalled effectively and pupils do

not always have opportunities to use a suitable means of communication. For example, one pupil who has worked hard with the speech therapist to use symbols, as a means of communication, does not have these means readily available in the classroom, and teachers are unsure of how this system works. Consequently, pupils do not make the progress they should in communicating their needs, managing change, or showing what they know understand and can do. Where teachers have better knowledge of providing alternative means pupils make better progress, in the Blue Class, for example. Even so, their management of pupils would be better if pupils were organised separately into disability groups. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs provide poor role models for pupils with more complex communication needs and their behaviour often makes it difficult for pupils with autism to concentrate fully in lessons.

24. The management of pupils on the autistic spectrum is better as pupils mature and become more flexible in their thinking. Pupils with complex needs are mainly based with one identified teacher who has a secure knowledge of the pupils' individual needs in terms of personal and social development. This teacher shows a better understanding of what they are communicating through their behaviour. He often acts as a support when other specialist teachers teach these pupils. However, the teaching of communication in all its forms is unsatisfactory for a significant minority of pupils on the autistic spectrum, and also for a few pupils with complex needs associated with language difficulties. Previous communicative behaviour is often not built upon in lessons taken by specialists, and pupils do not always understand what they read and write, or what is to happen next. Many teachers do not have the confidence to use and promote alternative methods of communication, including the use of information communication technology, symbols and signing. Pupils with additional needs therefore make slower progress in learning to receive information and to communicate it through reading and writing.

25. The teaching and learning of pupils in practical subjects such as science, physical education, design and technology and art is at least good, and learning in these lessons is on the whole good. The vast majority of pupils are also generally motivated to succeed in French. Specialist knowledge of these subjects, enthusiastic teaching and good ongoing assessment ensure that pupils learn the right things on the whole. The majority of pupils are enabled to join in discussions and practical tasks. Demonstrations, well-established routines, and good visual clues are used very effectively to teach basic skills in design and technology, art, and ICT. These methods also work well in physical education, for older pupils with autism and enable pupils with additional complex needs to stay focussed for longer. Consequently they learn sequences of movements for a gymnastic performance over a period of weeks. They are very proud of their accomplishments, and show greatly enhanced self-esteem.

26. The management of around eight per cent of pupils with more severe emotional and behavioural difficulties is variable across the school, although it has improved since the last inspection. Where management is least effective it slows all pupils' personal and social development and academic progress. This is reflected in the number of recorded incidents of disruptive off task behaviour at the time of the inspection, which often resulted in these pupils missing parts of lessons. Four pupils are excluded from school and are not being taught. Although the pupils who are at school are often made well aware of their specific targets for improvement in behaviour and attitudes to work, and the sanctions for not meeting them, they

do find it difficult to maintain good standards of behaviour through the whole of lessons. However, many pupils are managed very well and eventually participate and learn. Sometimes, disruptive behaviour takes up the time of the teacher and slows the pace of otherwise good or better lessons. This makes it difficult for pupils with moderate and complex learning difficulties to make best use of their listening and attending skills.

27. The use of resources for learning, including the deployment and briefing of support staff, is good. Book resources are generally used well to stimulate pupils' interest through listening to stories, in religious education for example. Pupils who have an understanding of print and pictures learn information well when books are used; especially big books that make it easier for teachers to involve all pupils. Support assistants play an important part in pupils' learning. They are almost always well briefed, manage behaviour well, and are fully aware of pupils' personal development targets. They are generally deployed well to assist pupils, and to use their own strengths, such as knowledge of play therapy and sport. Pupils who have individual support make good progress in attending in class lessons, in developing self-esteem, and in managing their emotions.

28. Homework is not given consistently or often enough, and many teachers have low expectations as to whether or not homework is given or completed. There is a new homework policy for teachers, parents and pupils to adhere to.

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

29. The curriculum is satisfactorily broad, balanced and relevant across all age groups, and meets statutory requirements. There have been good improvements in the breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum since the last inspection. The schemes of work for physical education are of high quality. Most specialist schemes of work are good, but do not always link well enough to learning undertaken in the primary department. Not enough time is spent on the teaching of science for the youngest pupils, an issue identified at the last inspection.

30. Although the provision for many pupils with additional needs is satisfactory, there are weaknesses in the provision for pupils with complex and emotional needs. In a few classes, some pupils with specialist needs do not make the progress they are capable of achieving because of the complexity of demands pupils place upon the teacher and support staff. The school has not yet fully defined the curriculum to be provided, or decided what teaching approaches will be used, or organised groupings to enable these pupils to be taught effectively and consistently. Long and medium-term planning, and way pupils are organised into different groups do not fully meet the additional complex needs of pupils, particularly, in the mixed disability classes in the primary department. The school has very recently set up a temporary separate class group, with a high staff ratio and a fully adapted, flexible curriculum approach that concentrates on pupils' priority needs. The LEA has provided an additional teacher at the school to allow this to happen. This is at present successfully meeting the needs of the oldest primary-age pupils who have severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. The inspection team do not have enough evidence to judge the effectiveness of

this new provision for those pupils who are at present excluded from school. Its permanence is very dependent on the LEA support. The team have been assured that support will remain, at least until staffing difficulties are resolved. The LEA, teachers and support agencies are at present assessing whether or not these pupils are appropriately placed. Annual reviews are being moved forward so that these issues can be addressed.

31. Revised class groupings in the secondary department have been more successful in providing a safe and secure environment for learning for pupils with more complex needs associated with communication and social difficulties. In this respect the school has addressed the challenging behaviour of these pupils identified as a weakness at the last inspection. On the whole these older pupils with complex needs have better role models and better support for their personal and social development needs. The school places strong emphasis upon meeting the requirements of pupils with a diversity of needs in each class.

32. The school provides a satisfactory range of externally accredited courses in the core subjects of English, science, and mathematics. In addition it provides opportunities to gain accreditation in the General Certificate of Secondary Education for a number of pupils in performing arts. There are also opportunities to gain accreditation in art and design and technology. The Youth Award Scheme is well established and there is a good, broad interpretation of this accredited provision. There are close links with the work experience scheme. It is a pupil-centred scheme with a series of challenges that help to support the pupils when they leave the school. The pupils work at different levels and there is a cross-referencing of key skills in ICT, communication, number and personal and social education. French in Years 10 and 11 and religious education project work are also linked and accredited to the Youth Award Scheme. Every pupil in the Youth Award Scheme is assessed in the school and all pupils entered for the award are successful.

33. The school's arrangements for careers and vocational education are very good. There is a well-organised and managed work experience programme for pupils aged between 14 and 16, with appropriate arrangements for the wide range of pupils' needs. Arrangements are made for one-week placements in Year 10 and five weeks in Year 11. There is careful monitoring of these placements and an evaluation report made for each visit, which is carefully supervised to ensure that the individual pupils' targets are not only linked to their individual education plan, but also that these targets are met. There are regular visits from a specialist careers officer who works closely with parents and pupils and provides individual interviews for Year 11 pupils to assist them with their career choices.

34. The wider community makes an important contribution to the education of the pupils. A range of events, visits and visitors is planned, particularly in the secondary department as part of the options programme held each Wednesday afternoon. For example, during the week of the inspection, a small group of pupils with complex needs were supported to use public transport; a craftsperson visited to instruct a group of pupils on how to make a mirror frame for a Christmas gift, and there was a field trip to Bolsover Castle to look at architecture. All of these made significant contributions to pupils' social and academic development. Pupils sell tickets in the community for the summer fayre; make theatre visits, and participate regularly in a range of activities and games. The school has representatives in national football and athletic teams for pupils with learning disabilities. They enter cross-country competitions and participated in the Millennium Youth Games.

35. The school makes constructive links with partner institutions and arranges integration for a small number of pupils. The head teachers of the mainstream schools speak with praise about the work of Woodland School staff and the support they provide for pupils placed in their schools. Link courses are arranged in agreement with New College, Nottingham. These extend pupils' opportunities to attend courses on science, information and communication technology and home maintenance. In addition, the school provides a good alternative curriculum that is open to all pupils, particularly those pupils having difficulties in class. Three staff members work effectively to arrange individual programmes, including the use of sport and leisure facilities. The school links with local colleges to arrange vocational courses, and creates opportunities to attend youth groups and careers courses. Pupils are also given chances to visit Nottingham Forest Football Club, go climbing and experience one to one support in non-directed play therapy.

36. The arrangements for raising the achievements of ethnic minority pupils are good. In addition to ensuring that these pupils have equal opportunities and access to the curriculum, targets are set to raise their attainment and there are high expectations in terms of their progress and achievement. The specialist teacher makes home visits and is able to sort out any practical issues that arise either at home or at school. However, the school has not fully addressed the needs of pupils of with differing disabilities.

37. The school, like other special schools, finds it difficult to provide a wide range of after school activities for pupils because of transport difficulties. However, the school does offer a weekly after school football club and a 10 week after school club in the summer term. Lunchtime activities include computer workshops and many sporting opportunities. The school provides a good range of holiday activities, including a highly commended Literacy Summer School. Holiday projects have focussed upon personal development needs and enable pupils to access the community facilities. There are strong links with the Castle Sports Association.

38. The school's provision for pupils' personal development is good and much better than at the time of the previous inspection. It is now a significant strength of the school. It is the school's declared intention to provide all pupils with the opportunity to access spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of learning. In practice, that intention is realised. Teachers work collectively to promote a well-written policy that is much more detailed than is usually found. The school makes its attitudes and values explicit.

39. Since the previous inspection the school has held an in-service training day to raise staff awareness of spiritual development in all curriculum areas. This was in direct response to the key issue of the previous report, which described spiritual development as unsatisfactory. The training has made a strong impact. Provision for spiritual development is now good. Religious education and physical education provide a very strong contribution to the spiritual dimension of pupils' development. Pupils have weekly targets, which allow them to reflect upon their progress, their strengths and the areas where they could improve. Positive reflection upon progress raises self-esteem. A theme for the week provides a good focus for spiritual development as it encourages pupils to reflect upon the ways and needs of others. In the inspection week, the theme was Hanukkah, the Jewish festival of light. In one assembly, pupils exchanged gifts by candlelight. The theme of giving is carried into class and tutor time, and pupils are encouraged to express their views. There are good examples of awe and wonder. For example, a pupil in a geography lesson heard a description and saw pictures of the fruit of the rainforests and said: 'This is *really* exciting'. There are also

excellent displays of aboriginal art, which cause pupils to reflect deeply upon a very different culture to the one that they know.

40. The provision for moral development is good. The school is unequivocal in what it expects of its pupils. Most are clear about what is right and what is wrong. If they are not, then teachers go out of their way to explain the difference. Sensible rules are displayed in classrooms and mentioned frequently as a pattern for behaviour. Behavioural targets are negotiated with the pupils, which gives them a much greater sense of ownership. Rewards are plentiful and help to keep pupils on the right track. There is an achievement assembly, which focuses upon all the things the pupils do well.

41. All members of staff provide very good role models for social development. Pupils are expected to show care and concern for their peers and in most cases this is seen to happen. Anti-social behaviour, such as bullying, is very promptly and firmly dealt with. The school provides a safe and secure environment in which pupils can develop and practise their social skills, but only under the watchful eye of their teachers. Older pupils are provided with opportunities to extend their social skills on residential trips. Pupils also show concern for the wider community in supporting good causes such as Children in Need and Red Nose Day.

42. The provision for cultural development is good and has been maintained at a high standard since the previous inspection. For example, the pupils continue to sponsor a student at a school in Mombassa and regularly exchange greetings. The religious education programme provides an insight into the customs and beliefs of other countries. Excellent art displays reflect work from around the world, including Australia and Africa. Pupils also continue to enjoy their own inheritance. Pupils have made a very good study of Anthony Gormley, sculptor of the Angel of the North. They visit local places of interest, including art galleries, museums and castles. The local Crafts Group visits the school and encourages pupils to revive former craft skills. A gospel choir visits and the local professional orchestra arranges a musical workshop.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. Overall the school cares satisfactorily for its pupils' welfare, health and safety, and provides a secure and safe environment. The school has sound arrangements for child protection and follows the policy laid down by the local Area Child Protection Committee. A child protection co-ordinator has been appointed and good links exist with external agencies involved in child protection issues. Sufficient attention is paid to ensuring the confidentiality of pupils' child protection files and the majority of members of staff have very recently received training in child protection issues. A rolling programme of training for child protection is planned.

44. The health and safety policy is good and regularly reviewed. No major hazards were noted during the inspection. Risk assessments have been completed for a range of school activities. Pupils get off and on buses parked on a busy road at the beginning and end of the school day and pupils are adequately supervised to ensure this happens safely. The school ensures that sufficient members of staff are trained in first aid procedures and the school nurse visits the school weekly. Pupils are screened each year and the doctor makes regular visits. A speech and language therapist makes weekly visits to the school and works with individual pupils. Accidents to pupils and staff are properly recorded. Fire equipment is in good condition and fire drills are held regularly.

45. Pupils are kept in a secure, locked environment during the day and this necessarily reduces opportunities to foster pupils' independence. Pupils have to be accompanied by a member of staff even to visit the toilets. Boys' cubicles have no locks and this affects adversely their privacy and dignity.

46. Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in recording and monitoring attendance. This is now good. Registers are completed accurately at the start of each session and absence is monitored carefully using a modern computerised system. The attendance policy is implemented effectively. The school has been well supported in its attempts to improve attendance by the Education Welfare Officer.

47. Following the last inspection, the school reviewed its behaviour policy. The revised policy is comprehensive and provides adequate guidance to teachers and support staff. It sets out arrangements for rewards and sanctions that relate to the majority of pupils in the school. However, it should now be reviewed again, reorganised, and reduced in length so that there is a more concise statement of the school's policy that can be understood quickly and implemented effectively to meet the needs of all pupils in the school. Arrangements for rewards and sanctions are set out in the school's policy, but these provisions are not always observed, or suitable for pupils with autism, and, as a result, inconsistencies in practice exist. Most teachers do give very good opportunities for pupils to discuss their targets for behaviour at the beginning and end of lessons, and this is enabling pupils to take responsibility for their attitudes and behaviour in class. Pupils are expected to make up for lost time in lessons and are enabled to use their points rewards to exchange for goods. This works very well for many pupils. Some of the younger pupils worked hard to earn enough points to buy their parents Christmas gifts, for example. Classroom rules are prominently displayed and pupils are made well aware of them. The school's policies for eliminating oppressive behaviour and bullying are good. Members of staff are alert to situations where bullying can arise and take prompt and effective action to stop it if it occurs. Supervision of pupils at break times and lunchtimes is good.

48. All members of staff know and understand the needs of the majority of pupils well and respond sensitively to them. The personal and social education programme for all pupils and the alternative curriculum for Year 11 pupils contribute to developing pupils' awareness of the outside world and encouraging good relationships between pupils and between pupils and staff. Health education is delivered effectively and a recent feature has included holding a Health Week in conjunction with external organisations. This made an important contribution to pupils' understanding of a healthy lifestyle.

49. The school's pastoral system is effective in ensuring pupils' well being in school. Teachers take responsibility for individuals within their base group, but all teachers at each key stage take responsibility for reviewing the behaviour of individual pupils in the school. Individual pupils giving cause for concern are discussed at weekly departmental meetings and behaviour targets revised if necessary. At the start of the academic year the school invested in a commercial computerised package, which has the capacity to analyse and evaluate incidents that occur at the school. This has already yielded some benefits to the school, but remains only partly effective because of the backlog of incident forms built up during the term. The information on these forms still has to be entered on the computer.

50. There is now a whole school approach to individual education plans (IEPs). They have improved and have now a consistent format across the school. However, they are still of variable quality in Literacy and numeracy. Not all teachers use the assessment on P Levels to set long term targets, and few are broken down into small manageable steps. Targets for assessing pupil's personal development are on the whole good. The best targets are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timed (SMART); however, it is difficult to measure or know when most are achieved. It is therefore difficult to monitor and evaluate progress over time. IEP targets are linked satisfactorily to pupils' statements. However, not all statements have an up to date picture of pupils' individual priority needs. Targets often appropriately focus on English, mathematics and personal, social and health development. More detailed academic targets are linked to subject development plans. However, not all planning shows achievable targets for the lowest attaining pupils. The quality of annual review reports is good on the whole. They provide considerable detail, acting as a summative record of progress over a year. If targets were improved, and teachers only reviewed the priority targets at the formal review, a clearer picture of pupils' overall progress could be gained.

51. The monitoring of the of individual pupils' academic performance and personal development is satisfactory overall. Baseline assessment is carried out on entry and further assessments are carried out after six months and one year to assess pupils' progress. School reports are detailed and show that day-to-day assessment is often good, but it is variable in quality and reliability. Each pupil has an individual National Curriculum record for English, mathematics, personal and social education and information communication technology (ICT) that records individual pupil's progress in these areas over time. Reports, which are often used as the main recording document for other subjects are detailed and provide good information on the whole. However, some subject reports are sometimes less informative than they should be and tell only of what pupils have covered, rather than what they have learnt. Assessment procedures are best for pupils aged between 14 and 16 where pupils are working towards external awards. They have good opportunities to gain awards, such as, the NEAB Certificate of Achievement in English, mathematics, science and art, which are structured in small steps. All pupils are working towards the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Bronze/Silver Award.

52. The assessment and monitoring of progress in physical education is of very high quality throughout the school. This is because one teacher takes overall responsibility for teaching and monitoring this subject. The co-ordinator has developed very good systems for assessing pupils' progress and has used this assessment to modify the curriculum provided so that it meets all pupils' needs. However, very few specialist teachers have any input into lessons in the primary department or have a clear idea of standards achieved by different groups of pupils across the school. Subject specialists use previous information from reports to set work to meet differing needs on the whole and assess most pupils' progress well enough at the end of units of work. Most pupils are learning the right things in lessons. However, not all plans for assessment give opportunities for the lowest attaining communicators to show what they know, understand, and can do.

53. Whole-school targets are set in mathematics, English and personal and social development (PSD). The school carried out a pilot scheme in 1998 to analyse the value of using the *P-scales Project*, (data for pupils working significantly below age related expectations). Because of the success of this pilot scheme, in that all pupils tested could

succeed in showing what they know, understand and can do, the school has now adopted these scales for all pupils. The LEA has begun to work with the school to analyse the results of these tests, but the school has not yet developed an understanding of how these results can be used to effect changes to the whole school curriculum.

54. Records of pupils' achievements are developed from an early age as pupils move through the school. Pupils add *Certificates of Achievement* gained in all subjects and their personal development. However, they do not have enough annotation, or use photographs, text and symbols to make them useful documents that exemplify progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

55. Information gathered through the parent questionnaire and the meeting for parents showed that parents are happy with the school's provision. Parents are most pleased about the way members of staff relate to the pupils, and the standard of teaching. They feel their children like to come to school. The inspection team agrees that these are positive features of the school. However, parents are concerned about homework policy and practice, and about the behaviour of some pupils. The inspection team share these concerns. The recently introduced homework policy has been well received by pupils and their parents. Homework diaries, recently issued to pupils, provide a new means of communication between home and school. The new policy and practice should be successful if all teachers adhere to it. The school is working hard with the LEA to review the placement and provision for those pupils who find it difficult to behave appropriately in school.

56. The school works satisfactorily in partnership with parents. Parents visit the school and the acting head teacher and other members of staff make parents feel welcome. The acting head teacher makes herself available to discuss issues with parents, often at short notice. There are effective procedures for informal contact between the school and parents using telephone contact and occasional home visits. A classroom assistant has recently organised informal weekly coffee mornings which have been supported by a small group of parents. A room at the school has been allocated for parents' use and redecorated by volunteers. A few parents help in school, driving the mini bus for example. Parent governors actively support the school.

57. Information for parents and their involvement in their children's learning is satisfactory overall. Parents are invited to attend annual reviews and are consulted about individual education plans. They are also invited to an annual open day when they can meet their child's teacher. The school provides transport for parents to enable them to attend meetings at school. It also offers interpretation of review reports to parents who have English as an additional language so they are kept as well informed as others.

58. Both the prospectus and the governors' annual report to parents meet statutory requirements and both documents present a well-rounded profile of the school's activities. The school provides very detailed information for parents at the annual review. The school also produces a short written report at the end of the academic year, but this provides neither sufficient detail about what pupils have studied in the course of the year nor a clear indication of progress made. The school has plans to improve the information given to parents and improving links with parents is one of the priorities in the school development plan.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The leadership of the acting head teacher, governors and key staff is good. They all have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and work well together. They have ensured that the school has made good improvements since the time of the last inspection, and all have a common vision for the future of the school. This includes the redefinition of the school's aims in the light of the changing clientele. The school continues to discuss the admissions policy at the school and the definition of pupils' needs. The school has identified the need to develop a more secure middle management system.

60. In the recent past, the school has suffered from a high level of staff absence due, in the main, to long-term sickness. This has been managed satisfactorily overall, but the solutions have affected teaching and learning, especially for younger pupils and particularly those with additional needs, who have found changes in teachers unsettling. However, some members of staff that have been on sick leave are likely to return to work for the start of next term. This will ease staffing problems; reduce the use of supply teachers, and enable members of staff with management responsibilities to be more effective. The substantive head teacher, who is seconded to the authority to provide support to other schools that have behavioural problems, has now resigned from the post of head teacher, and the school has now advertised for a new head teacher.

61. Management is sound. The acting head teacher is in the process of establishing a new management structure, but is constrained by the temporary nature of her role and by staffing problems. The strong administrative team in the office is very good, and greatly aids the day-to-day running of the school. Communication systems are formal and well established. Meetings are held regularly with the staff, and the governors, to evaluate how the school is progressing and to decide further priorities for action. The school has set targets for itself based on pupils' success in accredited courses and against 'P' Levels, and has begun to evaluate how well it is doing against these targets. All members of staff contribute to the formal action plan and have clear roles and responsibilities within it. Priorities in the school development plan broadly reflect the findings of the inspection. The school development plan is realistic; it has been evaluated and amended several times due to changes in priorities caused by building works and staffing problems. It has good links with staff development priorities and finance.

62. The acting head teacher and senior management team have monitored and evaluated the school's work satisfactorily overall. The acting head teacher and key members of staff support teaching very well. However, the acting head teacher is now teaching up to 50 per cent of her time because of staffing problems. Other key members of staff are covering lessons or taking on new class groups to ensure that standards of behaviour and achievement are maintained during this difficult time. Much of the acting deputy and acting head teacher's spare time has been taken up with the major building improvements at the school, and the disruption this has caused. These factors have made it hard for them to complete their programme for monitoring and evaluating teaching. Not all members of key staff have completed their training in this area, and those that have completed it have very little time available for them to monitor planning and delivery of lessons. However, it is clear that previous focused monitoring and evaluation, done in partnership with the LEA, has ensured satisfactory improvements in teaching and learning.

63. The school has a good equality policy in line with the local authority guidelines. There has been significant in-service training and much discussion to establish good practice in this area, particularly looking at stereotyping and prejudice. This has resulted in the examination of resources, groupings and curriculum in order to establish a corporate understanding of equality issues. Work is also undertaken with individual pupils and their families to address racial and homophobic harassment where this occurs. The school works successfully, through personal networks and the development of volunteers, to recruit members of staff who can provide good role models for boys and girls and who are able to give appropriate personal support to all pupils. However, the school has not fully addressed the needs of pupils with differing disabilities.

64. The aims of the school are clearly stated. The school has worked very hard to ensure the vast majority of pupils with emotional and behavioral difficulties make the progress they should. It is still working hard to ensure these pupils' priority needs are established, and that all pupils are appropriately placed. However, the acting head teacher, governors and senior management team recognize that these aims do not clearly reflect the changing clientele being admitted to the school. All members of staff are committed to the aims, which include a commitment to equality of opportunity. The school is aware of the competing and conflicting demands of pupils in several classes, where the needs of pupils with complex needs are not being consistently addressed. This is being dealt with, to some extent, by new groupings. Ongoing discussion with the local authority on placement policy is aimed at securing appropriate provision for all pupils.

65. The delegation of responsibilities is better than it was at the last inspection and is now satisfactory overall. Teachers on the whole are now teaching and managing subjects that reflect their strengths. The three curriculum coordinators have ensured good development of subject policies and schemes of work. The coordinator for integration has developed good systems and ensured that integration practice runs smoothly and very successfully. However, the acting head teacher and key members of staff recognise that there are weaknesses in the delegation of roles and responsibilities. The acting head teacher and acting deputy have formal job descriptions with clear roles and outline responsibilities, but other key members of staff do not. Not all subjects have a permanent coordinator. The senior management team is overburdened with responsibilities. The school has encountered particular difficulty in recruiting a suitable applicant to teach and manage mathematics. An offer has recently been made and it is expected that the new teacher will take up the post shortly after the beginning of next term. This will release the acting head teacher from this responsibility, which she manages well at present. The school development plan acts as a good tool for rigorously monitoring and evaluating the performance of all members of staff on priority issues. There is a need for further training and further delegation down the school management structure once the staffing is stabilized.

66. The school's governing body makes a good contribution to the work of the school. Members carry out their statutory responsibilities well. All governors have identified responsibilities for monitoring and evaluating developments outlined in the school's action plan. Most add to the information they have by regular visits to the school, by regularly attending meetings, or by telephone calls to managers responsible for development work identified. The governing body has a good range of expertise, for example in finance and education, which is used well by the school. Those governors interviewed showed a good knowledge of the school's main strengths and weaknesses.

67. There is a sufficient number of teaching staff to provide a balanced curriculum. The members of staff are capable of meeting the majority of pupils' needs. However, too few have sufficient experience of managing pupils with complex needs associated with autism or language impairment. There are plans to address this issue. The governors have introduced performance management on a twelve-month cycle and the first cycle will be completed by February 2001. The acting head teacher's performance will be assessed in early 2001. Training has been organised for teachers and this is tied to the development needs of the school. Supply teachers who teach regularly at the school are briefed effectively, but others who work only intermittently do not receive the same degree of attention.

68. The teachers are very well supported by the team of keen and enthusiastic learning support and care assistants. The assistants give good support to pupils' personal and social development by being approachable and available for pupils. Training is provided for care assistants who wish to become learning support assistants and the arrangements for this are good. Overall the learning support and care assistants provide a high standard of care and guidance to pupils.

69. The school is situated in a residential area on a well-defined and secure site. Major repairs to the roof and gutters have recently improved the external appearance and condition of the building significantly. The internal environment of the school is in good order and enhanced in the primary department by large, well-designed murals. The accommodation provides very good specialist rooms for physical education, and good facilities for science, ICT and design and food technology. Facilities for music are very limited. The school offers adequate access and facilities for disabled pupils. The building is well cleaned and managed by the site manager and cleaning staff. Despite the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils, no incidents of vandalism were noted during the inspection. The two small 'calm-down' rooms for pupils are unfurnished, lack natural light and do not have appropriate seating. The library is in need of reorganisation after the disruption caused by the building works.

70. Resources across the school are satisfactory overall and linked to priorities in the school development plan. Artefacts for the teaching of religious education and software for information communication technology are improved, but still limited. Resources for learning are good in physical education, science, art, and design and technology and English. They are satisfactory overall in all other subjects.

71. The school, under the direction of the acting head teacher, has established effective and efficient working practices to plan, manage and monitor the school's finances. Financial management is secure and forward looking. Budget setting, a key issue for improvement at the previous inspection, is now firmly linked to development planning and reflects well the educational needs of the pupils. Long term planning is of good quality. There is, for example, a three-year outline plan, which sets out the educational priorities for future development. Financial planning is also flexible and responds well to needs as they arise. There is some uncertainty about present and future funding, as this depends critically upon the school roll. The acting head teacher and the governing body have looked most carefully at all the options and are well placed to make sound decisions.

72. Financial records are detailed, accessible and accurate. The acting head teacher and office manager monitor spending regularly. In-year adjustments are made to secure prudent use of school funds. Sensibly, cover for staff absent through sickness is provided by a well-chosen insurance scheme. The Governors' finance committee meets regularly to review expenditure and to plan for the future on the basis of regular and well-ordered financial reports.

73. Day to day financial control is sound and efficient. The office manager is meticulous in maintaining records of expenditure by computer. The most recent audit found that, overall, the finances are properly managed. The school is responding promptly to the recommendations made. The school fund account is audited separately. In the school office, good use is made of the new technology, but it is less well used to support learning in other subjects and for providing alternative means of communication.

74. Accommodation is used effectively. Classrooms are imaginatively furnished and provide a stimulating work environment. The management of learning resources is sound and they are used well. However, not all computers are in full use and the speech therapist's skills in developing alternative methods of communication for pupils with complex needs could be better used by the school. Co-ordinators use their delegated budgets effectively to support learning. Members of teaching staff are well deployed across the curriculum.

75. Good use is made of the various additional grants that the school receives. Funding available for pupils with special educational needs is used efficiently. There are appropriate action plans in place that identify priorities and indicate how funds will be allocated and how success will be evaluated. The standards fund is used well to support developments in the school. In all aspects of expenditure, a careful check is made to ensure that the school is receiving best value for money, although this technique is not yet as sophisticated as it might be.

76. Taking into account its overall effectiveness, its context and its expenditure per pupil, the school provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. The school should now:

- Improve the achievements of pupils in reading and writing, particularly in the secondary part of the school, by:
(*Paragraphs: 3, 4, 11, 20, 50, 78, 82, 84, 85, 86, 102, 136, 158.*)
 - * Developing a whole school policy and guidelines for the teaching of basic skills.
 - * Sharing good practice developed in the literacy summer school;
 - * Improving the quality of targets for literacy in individual educational plans, so that they are based on good assessment, achievable and known to pupils;
 - * Monitoring teaching to ensure all lessons have a specific literacy skill focus related to targets within individual educational plans;
 - * Tracking the progress of different groups of pupils in reading and in independent writing as they move through the school by systematic scrutiny of pupils work or test results to establish any specific difficulties that pupils' are experiencing.

- Improve the achievements of pupils with additional complex or specific needs in communication and social interaction (all aspects of English) by:
(*Paragraphs: 2, 3, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 20, 21, 23, 24, 26, 30, 31, 50, 60, 63, 64, 66, 69, 73, 79, 80, 81, 82, 84, 86, 87, 88, 94, 97, 98, 101,102, 109, 121, 125, 127, 133, 134, 136, 151, 155, 156, 158, 159, 160, 162.*)
 - * Reorganising class groups so that pupils with complex communication needs have better role models and opportunities for staged integration according to their individual needs;
 - * Providing professional training for all staff in the teaching and management of pupils with autism;
 - * Using profiles obtained through the school's good assessment procedures to identify pupils with specific and complex needs;
 - * Improve the quality and range of software for ICT so that it matches the differing needs of pupils;
 - * Collaborate with the speech therapist and support agencies more effectively to improve teacher knowledge and to promote alternative methods of communication, including specific input into pupils' I.E.P.;
 - * Monitoring and evaluating the statements of special educational need more effectively through the annual review process to ensure that all these pupils' priority needs are relevant, and to improve the quality of their individual educational plans so that they relate to these priority needs.

- Improve the personal and social development of pupils with severe emotional and behavioural difficulties by:
(Paragraphs: 2, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12, 26, 30, 41, 45, 47, 49, 60, 63, 68, 80, 84, 86, 87, 89, 91, 93, 99, 109, 125, 155, 161.)
 - * Monitoring and evaluating the success of the groupings made, and the support given to pupils in the Green class;
 - * Reviewing, reorganising and reducing the length of the behaviour policy to achieve a more concise statement that can be understood quickly and implemented effectively by all new staff;
 - * Providing a carousel of training so that all staff skills in the management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are continually updated;
 - * Providing additional support to the office staff until the backlog of incident reports is entered monitored and evaluated effectively;
 - * Using profiles obtained through the school's good assessment procedures to identify pupils with specific literacy needs and ensuring these needs are fully met;
 - * Improve the accommodation used for the counselling of pupils and consider how the locked environment can be improved in order to foster pupils' independence and dignity.

- Improve the overall achievements and progress of the small group of pupils aged six and seven, particularly in information technology, science, art and religious education, by:
(Paragraphs: 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 18, 19, 21, 22, 29, 52, 60, 64, 69, 88, 96, 97, 98, 104, 108, 110, 127, 131, 134, 155, 156.)
 - * Stabilising the staffing in the Red Class so that pupils do not have so many changes of staff and routines;
 - * Developing a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum structure that meets the needs of the lowest attaining pupils and is focussed on early learning goals;
 - * Developing the roles of the science, information and communication technology, art and religious education co-ordinators to include oversight of standards of teaching and learning in their subjects throughout the school;*
 - * Developing a portfolio of pupils' work that has photographic or annotated evidence to show the youngest pupils' achievements in these subjects or areas of learning.

- In addition to the key areas above, the following less important areas of development should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:
 - * Restructure, define and formalise job descriptions and distribute the roles and responsibilities of all managers more evenly, taking account of individual strengths; *
(Paragraphs: 52, 64, 102, 108, 134, 146, 154.)
 - * Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the new homework policy; *
(Paragraphs: 28, 55.)
 - * Extend accreditation where possible to meet the differing needs of pupils; *
 - * Consult more widely with parents and improve the quality of information, support and advice given to them; *
(Paragraphs: 58, 98.)
 - * Improve the accommodation for music, and reorganise the library; *
(Paragraphs 68, 86, 146.)
 - * Consider the use of a bound incident book until other methods of collecting and storing information are secure;
 - * Improve the quality of reports in science so that they clearly state what individual pupils know understand and can do.

* The school has already identified these issues as priorities in the school development plan.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	96
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	13	64	93	7	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	97
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	58

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	5

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	11.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.8

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	3
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	88
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	3	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	24	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 – Y13**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.2
Average class size	

**Education support staff:
YR – Y13**

Total number of education support staff	27
Total aggregate hours worked per week	833

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	------------------

	£
Total income	1,267,359.00
Total expenditure	1,214,895.00
Expenditure per pupil	12,029.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	499.00
Balance carried forward to next year	52,963.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	98
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	27	0	8	0
My child is making good progress in school.	54	31	11	4	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	39	27	23	11	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	27	19	23	15	16
The teaching is good.	58	31	8	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	11	11	0	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	81	11	0	0	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	62	23	4	0	11
The school works closely with parents.	77	15	4	0	4
The school is well led and managed.	69	23	0	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	61	23	4	4	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	61	19	8	4	8

Other issues raised by parents

- Parents at the meeting were concerned that their children were not allowed books to take home to practise their reading.
- They would like the records of their phone calls to be made and the person who answers the phone, when they are asking for information or expressing concern, to give the name of a person responsible as their first point of contact.
- Some parents felt that exclusion should be used more readily as some pupils' behaviour affected other children's learning.

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

ENGLISH

78. Standards of achievement in English throughout the school are similar to those found in other schools for pupils with moderate learning difficulties. Pupils, including those with English as an additional language, are making better overall progress than at the last inspection, particularly those aged between seven and 11, and between 14 and 16. Pupils make appropriate progress in speaking and listening throughout the school and have good opportunities to listen, speak and discuss with other children and adults in lessons. The majority of pupils in aged six and seven, including those with English as an additional language and at an early stage of language acquisition, make steady and satisfactory progress in reading and writing. This progress is good for the majority of pupils aged between seven and 11, where activities best reflect the pace and content of the National Literacy Strategy. Overall, progress is satisfactory in English for pupils aged between 11 and 14, and good for pupils aged between 14 and 16. This includes some good and very good progress in English literature, due to charismatic teaching of a good quality literature curriculum, but only satisfactory progress in reading and unsatisfactory progress in writing.

79. Progress for pupils with complex needs is unsatisfactory for those aged between six and 11. The best practice in the primary department is good, with pupils making appropriate progress through the use of symbol reading schemes and communication aided by signing. Provision varies, however, and in many lessons, activities are not sufficiently matched to the needs of these pupils. Teachers are not using methods and settings that are known to support the learning of pupils with autism.

80. By age seven, higher attaining pupils are making good progress towards their individual targets in the subject. They develop their ability to listen to instructions and to respond appropriately, for example. They show clear gains in the early reading skills, such as recognising the characters linked with each letter of the alphabet. The control and accuracy of their over-writing improve steadily, although few are able to write well-formed letters. Pupils with complex needs participate in activities, but require a good deal of help to remain on task and often need significant hand-over-hand prompting to produce any marks on paper. Where classes are grouped by emotional and learning needs, behaviour is generally settled and pupils get satisfaction from completing work. Where classes have pupils with competing demands, there are many disruptions. In one lesson all the higher attaining pupils removed themselves at some point during the group session, leaving the teacher without additional support to help the more dependent pupils with their learning.

81. By age 11, the development of pupils' confidence in speaking with a growing vocabulary is particularly noticeable. The highest attaining pupils make very good verbal contributions to lessons, when they can control their behaviour within the group. For example, one pupil defined 'tradition' and explained carefully how he had made the decision that a Victorian doll was from a rich family. Pupils make appropriate progress in reading, and several pupils in Year 6 are confident with words that they meet frequently. Almost all pupils join in with the alphabet song and some put items into alphabetical order. They also recognise words from their current favourite topics, such as the Egyptians, scanning the text for names such as Tutenkamun and Cleopatra. The highest attaining pupil spells simple words and the way that he spells unknown words shows that he knows and uses some

phonetic spelling rules. One or two pupils with autism recognise the symbols for different activities during the day and are beginning to read with symbol support. However, a significant minority of pupils who require augmentative systems for communication are not currently getting this support. This leads to frustration and poor progress.

82. By age 14, pupils are keen to talk about the stories that they study. For example, a chapter from 'The Iron Man' sparked off a long imaginative description of what would happen if one ate barbed wire, full of detail and gory adjectives. Most pupils remember details of the story from week to week, and say what they think will happen next. A few pupils are confident to read aloud and the highest attaining pupil reads fluently and with expression, different accents and a great awareness of the audience. Most pupils rely on adults to take down their text for them and then they copy this into their books. This aids fluency and the development of ideas, but does not always help pupils to build confidence or writing skills. Behaviour varies greatly and often depends on factors outside the class. Overall it is satisfactory, but there are often disturbances that disrupt learning for other pupils.

83. By the time they leave school, pupils make good progress in lessons, working well towards the objectives of the lesson and their own targets. Higher attaining pupils gain accreditation in English. However, there is not yet a corresponding award for others. They complete modules towards an appropriate accredited scheme and learn about a good range of types and styles of text. They confidently compare styles that they see in different tabloid newspapers when reading about Prince William in Patagonia. They understand the use of writing frames and generate these as a group activity. Much of the work that they complete is done as a group and then written with support, to dictation or by writing from an adult copy. This motivates them and keeps the group well on task, but it fails to develop their basic skills. Their knowledge and understanding of aspects of poetry are impressive. They have a good technical vocabulary, using terms such as 'quatrain' and accurately identifying the rhyme scheme. Year 10 pupils were studying 'The Voice' by Thomas Hardy. They illustrated onomatopoeia confidently by giving examples from the poem, and described the way in which alliteration is used to represent the wind. They respond very well to the adult ethos generated by discussions and ideas in the poems. Some pupils attend a neighbouring school for GCSE performing arts. They contribute to stage design and lighting as well as participating in high profile and very polished performances.

84. Judgements about teaching are based on lessons seen and scrutiny of work and records. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. They are good for pupils aged between seven and 11, and between 14 and 16, and satisfactory for the majority of pupils aged six and seven, and between the ages of 11 and 14. Of the 13 lessons seen, 92 per cent were satisfactory or better, 69 per cent were good or better, and 8 per cent were very good. All the best teaching was seen in lessons for pupils aged between 14 and 16. Good or better lessons have increased by over a third since the last inspection. However, in otherwise satisfactory lessons learning was unsatisfactory for a few pupils with complex needs. In the best lessons pupils are captivated by the dramatic renditions of stories and poems, from such diverse sources as 'Dracula' and Shakespeare's sonnets. In some primary lessons there is a very good focus on teaching basic skills. The whole class team pays detailed attention to the development of punctuation and alphabetical order. Pupils hear the concepts reiterated and reinforced by different people in different contexts and so make good progress. Much of the teachers' planning for the younger pupils reflects the detail and timings of the National Literacy Strategy and provides an effective context to help all staff to work together, providing well paced and motivating lessons. Time is used well in most lessons, except where there is

disruption from difficult pupils. However, many teachers, including temporary staff, remain steadfast to the topic of the lesson and continue to provide appropriate teaching for the rest of the class, whatever is occurring elsewhere in the room. Pupils are generally managed well and are often helped to manage their own behaviour by continual refocusing and engagement in motivating learning activities. Behaviour and attitudes to work are satisfactory or better in all lessons of English; in half of lessons they are good or better. This is an improvement since the last inspection when attitudes and behaviour were satisfactory in only two thirds of lessons. In some lessons, independent reading and writing do not have sufficient priority, and there is too little work towards specific aims for groups or individuals. Learning objectives and resources are not always matched to the learning needs of individuals. For example, pupils are given worksheets that they cannot read, or not provided with activities in a less distracting environment. This sometimes prevents pupils making the progress of which they are capable. Although teachers know pupils well, they do not always use this information to plan lessons.

85. The English curriculum is good overall for the majority of pupils aged between seven and 11. Provision is well grounded in the National Literacy Strategy and pupils experience a good range of different stories and poems, and write for a variety of purposes. Most classes use computers appropriately and have made big books for their class libraries. Teachers use opportunities throughout the day to develop reading and writing skills, working towards individual targets in many different lessons. The literature curriculum is very broad for older pupils and interesting. There are too few opportunities, however, to develop independent literacy skills in a systematic and planned way. The literacy demands that teachers make in the other subjects vary. In science, pupils are keen to record work themselves, but in most other lessons, pupils depend on adults. Currently, there is no appropriate whole-school practice for developing reading, writing and spelling. The literacy summer school is having a very positive impact on pupils' confidence and attitudes, but it is not yet seen to have an impact on standards of reading and writing. Too little use is made of computers and the supportive features of software such as speech or symbols. Activities, such as visits to the theatre and visiting companies, are greatly enjoyed and make a very valuable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development, as well as to their English skills.

86. Assessment is developing well and helps the school to track the progress of groups and individuals, but it is not yet used sufficiently in the planning of many lessons. There has been no systematic scrutiny of pupils' work or test results to establish any specific difficulties that pupils are experiencing. Help with these problems could lessen the frustration that some pupils experience in lessons. Leadership and management of English are good. The appointment of a co-ordinator for the subject has now ensured a clear and shared commitment to raising standards. The summer Literacy School is a great strength, and teachers are developing good resources across the school. There are impressive aspects of provision, particularly the literature work for the oldest pupils. The National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact on standards in the primary department, but there is still work to do to ensure that all pupils continue to make progress in reading and writing as they get older. The current decision to keep secondary pupils in their own classes for English, in order to settle behaviour after the major building works and problems with temporary staffing, means that books and displays are not available to motivate pupils and support learning. Several pupils commented that they miss the English room, and teachers find it difficult to marshal the appropriate range of resources for each lesson. The library is currently in a state of upheaval following building work. This again is temporarily depriving pupils of a valuable learning resource.

MATHEMATICS

87. Standards of achievement for pupils' aged between six and 11 in mathematics are satisfactory in relation to pupils' ages and abilities. Older pupils' achievement is good. Ninety three per cent of pupils entered for the Certificate of Achievement gained a pass in the subject. At all stages, pupils are given the opportunity to apply what they know to everyday problems in number. This enhances the quality of learning and, by the age of 16, enables pupils to see the usefulness of what they have learned. In turn, this improves motivation and self esteem. Pupils with complex needs in the primary department achieve less well than their peers because they are rarely able to learn in an environment that is free of all distractions. Younger pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties often find it difficult to concentrate and apply themselves to work, which sets a lower limit on their achievement than their ability indicates. Most pupils progress at a steady rate in all aspects of mathematics.

88. By age seven, higher attaining pupils count confidently to five. They recognise and say the numbers and match numbers and objects. They write numbers by tracing a pattern of dots, and practise what they know by singing *Ten Green Bottles*. Pupils recognise the sequence of taking away a bottle in each verse, which they confirm by counting on their fingers. They also draw lines and simple shapes. Pupils with autism show good attention to number songs at the beginning of lessons, but find it difficult to participate when working in a group. Support is well deployed, but practical resources are not used well enough to support their learning.

89. By age 11, higher attaining pupils count up to 100 and all pupils extend their knowledge of shapes and time in relation to their prior abilities. Lower attaining pupils with autism place numbers correctly on a clock face and higher attaining pupils tell the time. The majority of pupils talk about what they do at various times of the day. Most pupils learn their telephone number and practise writing it using ICT. They are quick to spot when a teacher has entered a 'rogue' number. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs in mixed disability groups make less progress than others, as their attention is not fully maintained throughout lessons. This occasionally affects the progress of others. Pupils with emotional and behavioural needs in the Green class plan to survey the school's 'favourite pets'. They record the information on a tally chart and illustrate it on a bar graph. Their behaviour is well managed.

90. By age 14, pupils are ready to put their number work to practical use. Autistic pupils make good progress when activities are related to learning skills that prepare them for daily living. For example, they prepare well for a visit to the local fast food restaurant where they practise number skills in reading menus and counting change. Pupils play a card game in which they spot similarities and differences. Higher attaining pupils begin to understand the importance of place value and know the difference between 34 and 43. They use the knowledge to place shapes on a grid according to the given co-ordinates. Pupils rotate shapes to see if they still 'look the same' and use words like reflection and symmetry correctly. One or two pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties find it difficult to maintain attention throughout the whole of lessons, but make satisfactory progress overall.

91. By age 16, most pupils are sufficiently competent in mathematics to gain formal accreditation in number, shape and data handling. Pupils' work is often linked to the practical use of mathematics and where this is the case the majority of pupils make good progress. For example, pupils study a holiday brochure and decide upon the optimum time to take a 2-week holiday in the sun, according to the advertised price structure. Pupils analyse a train timetable and work out journey times, noting the days and times that a train does not stop at a particular train station. Pupils study the holiday television schedule and work out the best way to programme the video. Pupils name and construct different types of angle. They name 3D shapes correctly. Lower attaining pupils become more confident in their use of mathematical language, which helps their understanding and helps them to answer more difficult questions. A few pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make satisfactory progress overall, but less progress than their peers even though their behaviour is managed well.

92. Pupils know how to use number in other areas of the curriculum. This is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection when the use of mathematics across the curriculum was described as limited. For example, in food technology pupils measure out the correct ingredients to make a cake. In art, they use their knowledge about shapes to draw regular patterns suitable for home decoration. In music, pupils use their knowledge of number to sing action songs, and in information technology, they use programs for addition and subtraction and matching numbers to objects. In geography, pupils use co-ordinates to draw and read maps, and in physical education, they know how to keep the score.

93. The overall quality of teaching is sound and it has many good features. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Of all lessons observed, one-third was good or very good; the remainder was sound. Teachers are presented with a formidable task. Pupils are drawn from a wide age range and have many different learning needs, particularly in the primary phase. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils' work and behaviour. They work extraordinarily hard to meet the needs of all their pupils, but not all teachers have the expertise necessary to manage pupils with autism or complex needs. Teachers and learning support assistants work closely together and this has a positive impact upon learning. Teachers also provide a secure environment for learning where most pupils are at ease and begin to develop confidence in their own abilities. Teachers are remarkably patient and they constantly praise the pupils' efforts to learn and progress. They are firm but sympathetic to individual needs. They are always looking for new and different ways of helping pupils to know and understand. The majority of pupils respond well to this approach. There is a significant minority of pupils, mainly in the secondary school, who take advantage of this approach and show very little respect for their teachers or inclination to learn. These pupils distract the teacher and spoil the learning opportunities of other pupils.

94. Teachers assess the work of the pupils more consistently than at the time of the last inspection. Teachers are well aware of what pupils know, understand and can do and use this to plan individual work programmes. All pupils have personal targets, which are referred to in each lesson. The progress of all pupils is carefully recorded. Teachers are secure in their knowledge of mathematics, but are not equally effective in meeting the needs of autistic pupils who require specialised teaching in a calm environment if they are to progress.

95. The subject is well managed on a temporary basis by the acting head teacher. Schemes of work are clear and are firmly based on the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has not been able to recruit a specialist teacher of mathematics since the previous inspection,

although an appointment is expected in the near future. There is no designated mathematics room in the senior school. This presents difficulties in the use of resources and makes the work of visiting, temporary teachers less effective. There is too little computer work planned on a regular basis for all classes. Bright and stimulating displays encourage number development. Resources for mathematics are satisfactory and are often used well used to stimulate and retain the pupils' interest. Overall, mathematics is taught in a positive environment that encourages pupils to learn about mathematics and its application to everyday life.

SCIENCE

96. Judgements about progress, teaching and learning are based on scrutiny of work and records, and observations of 14 lessons. Pupils make good progress in science between the ages of seven and 16. By the age of 16, all pupils entered are gaining accreditation in the Midland Examination Group Certificate of Achievement. Pupils between the ages of seven and 11 achieve well, and make good progress in lessons. Progress is unsatisfactory for the youngest pupils as not enough time is devoted to the subject. This was noted at the time of the last inspection and has not been satisfactorily addressed.

97. Teaching and learning in science are good overall. Teaching is good or better in three quarters of lessons and very good in about a third. This is an improvement since the last inspection. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. However, the teaching and learning for the youngest pupils are still unsatisfactory over time. They do not have good enough opportunities to build systematically on what they know. The best feature of teaching and learning seen in the one satisfactory lesson observed for pupils of this age group was the emphasis given to learning key vocabulary and engaging in sensory experiences. There is evidence in records and observations of other lessons that high attaining pupils aged six and seven identify parts that move on objects and people, and the way they move. They understand language, such as *kick*, *throw* and *push* and *pull*. Most pupils explore using their senses, although pupils with severe autism find this difficult to do independently. There has been limited fine assessment of their abilities in this area. The highest attaining pupils are beginning to use language such as *rough*, *smooth*, *hard* and *soft*. However, few have opportunities to record their work and very limited samples of work were available for scrutiny in the form of annotated photographs, for example. The scheme of work does not support the learning of the lower attaining pupils of this age. This makes it difficult for supply teachers to plan work to meet the needs of these pupils. There are weaknesses in classroom management of pupils with severe autism at this age.

98. The teaching and learning for the older pupils of primary age are good overall. Teachers place a good emphasis on pupils exploring and investigating. Consequently pupils learn which changes occur when different solids are mixed with water, and what happens to water when it freezes. Teachers gave them good opportunities to make predictions and to check these with their findings. Good opportunities are given to discuss their work with the teacher before they are enabled to record their observations. For example, pupils learn to observe changes in weight, as well as in colour and properties, when powdered plaster is mixed with water. Other evidence suggests teaching and learning are good in the knowledge and understanding of life and living processes. However, there is insufficient evidence of coverage of physical processes to make a judgement on this area of learning. Pupils are given good opportunities to extend their scientific vocabulary. Higher attaining pupils learn

to name more body and plant parts and to describe how plants and people grow healthily. However, lower attaining pupils with more complex language needs do not learn at the same pace as others because their needs are not always met. Reports do not give enough information about what individual pupils learn over time.

99. Teaching and learning for pupils aged between 11 and 16 are good overall. A specialist teacher with very good subject knowledge and high expectations teaches pupils of this age. Good opportunities are given for investigative work and there is good emphasis on improving pupils' scientific vocabulary. Work in the best lessons is set to meet the needs of the higher and lower attaining pupils. Pupils with challenging behaviour in relation to emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed well in these lessons and behave safely in the science laboratory. Higher attaining pupils are interested in animal life, and this interest is heightened when pupils are shown live specimens, woodlice, for example. Pupils learn new vocabulary, such as *herbivore* and *carnivore*. Good questioning and guidance enable pupils to suggest ideas about how they could find out where animals like to live. Pupils also learn how to test their ideas, explain the results and draw conclusions. They know how some organisms are adapted to survive daily changes in their environment, in cold, dark and wet conditions, for example. Satisfactory opportunities are given to pupils with more complex needs to investigate animals in their own habitats using the locality, but learning slows when the management of pupils with more challenging behaviour is less secure in this situation. However, pupils are enabled to explore animals that live under things, to discuss animals they see, and learn new words such as *hibernation*. Clear explanations, good revision of key vocabulary, good pace to lessons and work which is set to meet a wide range of needs ensures that pupils at the age of 14 learn that metals are good conductors of electricity, for example. Pupils are very enthusiastic about practical work of this type and behaviour is good in these lessons. They show a good understanding of series circuits in diagrammatic form and follow them well in practical sessions. Work is recorded well in tabular form.

100. The oldest pupils' learning is also good. Teaching and learning are based around relevant contexts that are interesting to pupils and well planned. There are good opportunities for discussion before investigating and testing ideas. For example, pupils were given very good opportunities to investigate the relative absorbencies of different nappies and to learn about the birth of a baby. Very good relationships were shown in the way pupils behave very sensibly during discussions and the open way they were conducted by the staff and pupils. Learning was built on in the lessons and interest sustained throughout. The teacher plans questions that meet all pupils' needs and stage of learning. Consequently pupils by the end of the lesson knew about the different stages of birth, and the use of drugs to relieve pain. They were able to use terms such as *placenta* and *vagina*, and showed a very good understanding of how to carry out a fair test. Pupils work together in mixed ability pairs and this works well. They learn to help each other and to collaborate effectively. Another group investigated how some liquids can act as solvents and to recognise that different solids need different solvents. Good attention is paid to safety in these lessons.

101. In occasional lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, not enough attention is paid to the specific individual needs of pupils. Consequently, not all are able to take a full part in lessons. This leads to lack of attention and some disruption in the learning of other pupils.

102. There is now a clear policy statement for science and procedures are in place for the assessment of attainment and tracking of pupils' progress. The system of curriculum managers is effective when regular meetings involving primary and secondary representatives

occur, but staff changes have inhibited the regularity of these meetings so that the monitoring of science across the school is not thorough. Teachers do not have enough knowledge of the needs of autistic pupils in science groups. The accommodation and resources for science in the secondary phase are good.

ART

103. The achievement and progress pupils make in art is good for pupils aged between 11 and 14. Achievement and progress are satisfactory overall in the primary department.

104. Teaching and learning are based on scrutiny of available work, and observations of seven lessons. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about learning over time for the youngest pupils as work is sent home after completion. The teaching and learning of the youngest pupils, taught by a supply teacher, was unsatisfactory during the time of the inspection. Too little emphasis was placed on the learning of new art skills and pupils with more complex needs were not organised and managed satisfactorily.

105. Only one lesson was seen for older primary aged pupils, as art was timetabled later in the week for most pupils of this age. This one lesson was good. In the primary department, art is not taught as a separate subject, but is used to enrich the work in topics and other subjects. The majority of pupils steadily increase their fine motor and creative skills. For example, pupils learn to construct a three-dimensional model of a sailing boat as part of a Victorian study, and make 3 Dimensional sewn cloth models of animals in another topic. Pupils learn to imprint in clay, and to make simple finger pots. They are given a satisfactory range of materials and, in one lesson made an impressive model of an imaginary animal. A good emphasis placed on learning vocabulary so pupils can describe their work. Consequently pupils learn the meanings of words such as *smooth*, *rough*, *light*, *heavy* and *metallic*, and the youngest pupils learn their colours. Teachers manage pupils well considering the wide range of difficulties in the classes. On the whole, pupils have good attitudes towards their work, are supportive of each other and celebrate each other's success. There are limited facilities within the primary department for the storage and display of models made.

106. When pupils join the secondary department, they are taught by a specialist teacher and use the good accommodation of the art room. This has a positive effect upon the quality of learning and progress. Teaching and learning are good overall. Teaching is good or very good in three out of four lessons, and satisfactory in the other. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject; lessons are well prepared and skills are taught well. Pupils with more complex needs respond to the well-established routines of the art room and are well supported by their pastoral teacher. They study a good range of interesting topics, such as those on buildings and self-image, and develop images and good quality work in crayon, paint and pencil drawings. Pupils have good opportunities for learning about design. In one lesson, pupils were working on a Christmas craft unit and designing patterns with a good range of materials, and developing their own ideas to create two-dimensional surfaces using variations in tone and colour. They manipulated pencils, paintbrushes and other tools well. Pupils with a wide range of complex needs all worked enthusiastically to complete their designs. Although all pupils were given the same task, each pupil completed it to the best of their ability because good advice, support and encouragement were provided.

107. The oldest pupils work towards obtaining the Welsh Joint Education Certificate of Achievement Accredited Art Course. Evidence in the art room suggests that the pupils achieve a wide range of high quality work. The work of other artists is used well to stimulate ideas. These include 3D studies arising out of the study of the work of Anthony Gormley and his sculpture of The Angel of the North. Teachers also provide good opportunities to study the work of artists from other cultures and times, and this contributes very well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Collages of aboriginal art, seascapes and landscape paintings of Africa and Christmas cards using medieval designs are all of high quality. Work is sympathetically mounted and this raises pupils' self-esteem. Pupils say they are proud of their artwork. Pupils build on their previous learning about modelling with clay and extend their learning through modelling with papier-mâché. They use paint well to create imaginative finishes. Teachers also use the skills of visiting craft specialists well. During the inspection, the oldest pupils learnt how to design and make a mirror frame as a Christmas gift. They learnt how to use decorative techniques well, tearing and cutting paper, painting highlights and applying decorations like beads, sequins and found objects. Good opportunities were given for choice from a wide range of materials, so that the end piece was appropriate to the receiver of the gift. All pupils were keen to complete their mirror frames and made good progress with both their art and their craft skills. Teachers do not give pupils consistent opportunities to use sketchbooks. This limits their ability to collect information and to develop ideas about art over time. Information communication technology is used satisfactorily to support learning in the subject and to consolidate information communication technology skills.

108. The secondary co-ordinator has worked hard to ensure all pupils of secondary age, including those with a range of special and complex needs, maintain the good progress seen at the last inspection. Pupils are now working towards accreditation in art. Achievement and progress are satisfactory overall in the primary department. There are no regular arrangements to monitor the progress of pupils across the primary phase of the school or to prepare them for work in the secondary department. The scheme of work has not yet been adapted to meet the more complex needs of pupils now entering the school, and does not fully support supply teachers in their planning of lessons. Assessment procedures have improved since the last inspection. However, information gained by these assessments is not always used to inform planning for the youngest pupils.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

109. The school has made good improvement in design and technology since the last inspection. Teaching and learning, and pupils' attitudes towards the subject have all improved. This has had a positive effect on the progress pupils make. Pupils with additional complex needs associated with autism in the primary department, and those with severe emotional and behavioural needs in the primary and secondary department, make satisfactory progress. These pupils find it more difficult to concentrate for the whole of lessons, although their behaviour is managed well considering the wide range of difficulties within class groups.

110. Pupils from the ages of seven to 16 make good progress. However, it was not possible to see design and technology taught to pupils under the age of seven during the week of the inspection. As there was insufficient recorded work from this age group, it is not possible to make a secure judgement on the progress this group of pupils are making.

111. By the age of 11, pupils design, and build a *Hippocrump*. All pupils, regardless of their learning difficulty, fully participate in the activities. Pupils work well together. They chose from a wide range of materials of different textures. They cut and stuck materials to represent the *Hippocrump*'s features, such as eyes, nose, legs, feet, humps and 100 teeth. Pupils had very good recall of the story of the *Hippocrump* upon which the model is based. The whole class collaborated to design and develop a large book, showing the full story of the life of the *Hippocrump*.

112. In food technology, pupils read a recipe, with support, select utensils and ingredients. They measure and weigh, mix and blend, occasionally tasting as they work. They place the mixture into a tin, place in the oven, work out the temperature required and the time the cake will be ready. While the cake is cooking, pupils wash up and tidy their work place, with little prompting or support. They show great pleasure and pride when the cake is cooked and brought out of the oven to be shown to the rest of the class. At this point all pupils are quick to celebrate each other's success.

113. By 14, pupils design and make Christmas packaging. They first draw and design in draft form, discuss, amend and alter until they are satisfied with their product. They know where basic materials and tools are kept, select what they need, and use them safely and effectively. They cut, fold, stick and paint to create a gift bag and tag.

114. In food technology, pupils create a Christmas log as part of their topic. They use their literacy skills well to read and understand the recipe. They use their numeracy skills to weigh and measure, using digital scales to measure accurately. They mix and blend, creaming the chocolate. They spread onto their log, adding extra artistic touches to their logs by adding a candle, holly, a robin and a reindeer. They show great pride in their finished product. Pupils show independence and social skills by washing up and putting away all the utensils they use, leaving the food technology room tidy and ready for the next class.

115. By 16, pupils design and make Christmas cards, wrapping paper and gift tags. They discuss and plan their work with staff and with their other. They draft out their work, and persevere to complete their work. They use a wide range of materials to make their work interesting. They colour, draw, paint, cut and stick. They understand the concept of *collage* and use this to enhance their projects. They are prepared to amend their work as they go, asking for help in an appropriate manner.

116. In food technology, pupils prepare short-crust pastry. With little support they follow the recipe, fetching the correct ingredients and utensils, as they need them. They measure accurately, using digital scales, mix and blend. They set the oven at the required temperature and time the cooking accurately. During all their work, they follow simple hygiene rules when dealing with food. At the end of the session they wash up and clear away with little prompting or supervision.

117. Teaching and learning in design and technology, including food technology are good. Demonstrations are used well to enhance all pupils' skills. There is good attention to emphasising specific design and technology vocabulary. This helps pupils of differing abilities to gain confidence in making choices and talking about their work. Questioning is used skilfully to assess gains in knowledge and understanding. Pupils' enjoyment is evident as they learn new experiences, such as mixing dried fruit and cherries, exploring the tastes,

smells and textures. Tasks are presented in such a way that they are appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils. Pupils are encouraged to discuss ideas, which enhances their speaking and listening skills. They also have good opportunities to practise their numeracy skills by weighing and measuring ingredients during food studies. Teachers manage behaviour well. Pupils are aware of behaviour that is acceptable in the technology rooms and follow simple rules and routines.

118. Good attention is paid to the management and needs of pupils with more complex learning needs, such as autism and challenging behaviour. Pupils respond well to the approaches and resources used and their behaviour is good. Teachers are skilful at bringing pupils with challenging behaviour back on task, and they make good use of individual education plans and behaviour strategies. Pupils try hard and maintain a good work rate even when they find tasks difficult. Between the ages of seven and 16, they work well in small groups, value each other's work and show respect for staff and each other. Praise and encouragement are used effectively to give pupils confidence, as a result pupils are willing to do things for themselves and support each other. Members of support staff are deployed well to promote pupils' learning. They establish a calm working environment in which skills can be practised and good work celebrated. In one Year 7/8-food studies lesson, when pupils were mainly on the autistic spectrum and when the autistic pupils' teacher provided the support, behaviour and results were even better. The teacher's specialist knowledge and management of the pupils was such that they were fully involved in the lesson and made good progress.

119. Pupils' attitudes in design and technology and food technology are consistently good. This is a subject pupils like; they work hard and take pride in their work. There are good relationships in class. Pupils respond well and are keen to learn and well behaved. They come to lessons with good attitudes, prepared to work hard and do their best. They show perseverance, good concentration for longer periods of time, and complete their tasks well. Pupils take great pride in their work and are keen to show visitors their work and explain how this was achieved.

120. Assessment for design and technology is good. Pupils are assessed each term at the end of each unit of work. Pupils are given good opportunities to gain Certificates of Achievement, which they add to their Record of Achievement folder. The accommodation and resources are good and are well used by staff. Design technology and food technology make a positive contribution to the personal development of all pupils, by building pupils' confidence and self-esteem, and by creating opportunities to share and support each other in all lessons.

HUMANITIES (History and geography)

121. Humanities are taught to pupils aged six to 11. They are not offered as a subject from the ages of 14 to 16. In humanities, pupils aged between seven and 14 make good progress in knowledge and understanding of humanities in lessons. However, progress in the communication element is affected by the limited opportunities for pupils of differing abilities to record their work effectively to show what they know and understand. This weakness was noted at the last inspection and has not been satisfactorily addressed. The standards of achievement seen at the last inspection have been maintained for the youngest pupils even though there has been a changing character to the intake of the pupils. Standards

have improved for those aged between 11 and 14. No lessons were seen for the youngest pupils aged six and seven. However, it is possible to say from analysis of pupils' work, individual education plans, annual review reports, displays and discussions with staff, that they are making satisfactory progress. Pupils by the age of seven develop appropriate language associated with the both subjects and begin to sequence events in their daily life.

122. By 11, pupils discuss the jobs their parents do. They look carefully at posters showing a range of jobs done by men and women; discuss the jobs available in Nottingham, and say which jobs they would like to do when they grow up. They use flash cards to match labels to jobs, reading aloud as they match them. In role-play, all pupils identify jobs such as the *fire fighter, police officer, nurse, doctor, postman* and others they have come into contact with. Pupils have been on field trips into Nottingham to look at people in action. High attaining pupils show a good knowledge of the life of children in Victorian times and compare Victorian toys with more modern ones well. Lower attaining pupils show a good response to the Victorian toys used in lessons and record their understanding by drawing a toy that would have been given at Victorian Christmas. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties use their speaking and listening skills well in lessons, telling other to 'Look at the resemblance', and defining such terms as *tradition*. However, pupils with autism find group discussions and recording of their work difficult even though they show initial interest in the toys presented.

123. By 14, pupils have a good understanding of the *rain forest* in relation to their prior abilities. The majority of pupils know the animals that live in the *rain forest*, such as birds, monkeys, sloth, snakes, lizards and fish. Pupils know the common fruits that grow in the *rain forest*, such as bananas, pineapples and oranges. Higher attaining pupils know the less common fruits, such as mango, paw paw, and alternative names such as papaya, cassava, manioc, and sweet potato. Pupils use globes and atlases to find Brazil, and locate the *rain forest* with differing degrees of support. Higher attaining pupils use a CD ROM programme, to locate the Amazon basin and find the equator.

124. All pupils make gains in learning about the *French Revolution*. Lower attaining pupils name Louis XVI and ranks of nobility. All join in discussions at their own level about the problem of the peasants paying taxes but not the King and the nobility, and the fairness of the voting system that was weighted in favour of the nobility. All take part in role-play when they act out the roles of the King, the church and the peasants and hold a mock election to show the unfairness of the whole system, for example.

125. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory for primary aged pupils and good for pupils aged between 11 and 14. Four out of the five lessons seen were good. However, in one lesson seen, the organisation of the class was such that insufficient progress was made, and the quality of teaching was not satisfactory. The composition of the class, made up of a high proportion of pupils with autistic tendencies, communication disorder and emotional problems with challenging behaviour, made it very difficult to manage the class so as to ensure all pupils could make progress. In all other lessons work is carefully planned to meet individual needs in oral communication, and to be accessible to all pupils. In the best lessons information communication technology, atlases, maps and globes are used well for research

purposes. There is good use of praise and encouragement. Humour is used well to motivate pupils and, occasionally, to defuse incidents that could develop into potentially difficult situations. Teachers and support staff work very well together. Support staff are targeted at pupils with most need, and use their experience and expertise effectively to support pupils' learning as well as to pre-empt problematic situations arising.

126. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. A wealth of photographic evidence shows them enthusiastically participating in a range of lessons and enjoying activities out of school. Relationships between staff and pupils are good. The needs of pupils with more complex needs are satisfactorily met through the support given. The majority of pupils arrive for lessons keen and ready to work. In one lesson where the children were studying the *rain forest* and were about to taste some of the unusual fruit the teacher had brought in, one girl admitted *This is so exiting I can hardly wait!* This indicated the enthusiasm good teaching created.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

127. Standards of achievement in information and communications technology (ICT) are similar to those found in other schools for pupils aged between seven and 14 with moderate learning difficulties. However, pupils do not achieve as well as they should by the age of seven. The majority of pupils aged between seven and 14 make good progress overall. Lower attaining pupils make satisfactory progress, but could make better progress if teachers were more knowledgeable about the use of ICT for this group of pupils. Major contributors to this good progress for pupils aged between seven and 16 are good access to computers and a sound programme of work. However, the programme of work for the younger pupils with more complex needs does not support teachers in their planning.

128. By the time that they are seven, the highest attaining pupils are interested in computers and explore by moving the mouse and clicking on parts of the screen. They are familiar with some programmable equipment. For example, they learn how to switch on a tape recorder. By the time that they are 11, pupils are familiar with a range of software. They are learning to move the cursor with the mouse and are developing the concepts of 'drag' and 'drop'. Some load their own favourite programs that they use to help develop literacy and numeracy skills. They develop appropriate keyboard skills and format text for big class books that they have made, changing the size and colour. They begin to look for information on the Internet with some support, showing awareness of the sort of information one might find, such as, Pokemon pictures and football fan clubs.

129. By the age of 14, all pupils are independent in their basic use of word processing software. Most pupils have appropriate keyboard skills for their age and ability. They copy type their own dictated work with reasonable accuracy, although they rely on adult support for motivation and accuracy checks. Some pupils are aware of the spell-check facility and know when a word is misspelt, but need support to choose the appropriate correction. Almost all pupils behave well in lessons, motivated by the use of good technology. They use a basic art package to create pictures using a range of facilities such as shapes, lines and flood-fill. Most pupils would rather erase their work and start again than edit and improve their work. They use spreadsheets, entering data into tables. They also use databases with support and are beginning to look for information on the Internet. The highest attaining pupils work quickly and accurately to copy data and text, understanding the purpose of tasks

and the advantages of using a computer. Lower attaining pupils work steadily and carefully. All pupils have an idea of the sort of information that can be obtained from different electronic sources, learning to use office and communication equipment, such as phones and faxes. Most still need some help to look for information successfully on the Internet.

130. By the time that they leave school, Year 11 pupils have undertaken a college course. This improves their skills such as the speed of typing and the accuracy of data entry. They also begin to use other graphics packages and learn to draw simple diagrams. They are very motivated by the college provision and work hard, independently organising their own activities. They behave very well.

131. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Four out of seven lessons seen in the school base were good; two others were satisfactory and only one, for the youngest pupils, learning was unsatisfactory. Two lessons seen at the local college gave very good opportunities for the oldest pupils. Lessons are well planned so that all staff and pupils know what is expected and work very well together. Good questioning helps pupils develop independence by modelling the sort of questions that they should ask themselves when they get stuck. Members of the support staff help lower attaining pupils make progress in lessons by encouraging and refocusing them. Where there are unsatisfactory features of lessons, it is often because of a lack of knowledge, for example about the best way to carry out a task or what parts of a system are called. There are times when the resources let people down, such as new computers that are not fully functional.

132. The curriculum for all pupils has improved, and is effectively enhanced by lunchtime computer clubs. It is broad and balanced for secondary pupils, but the oldest pupils do not yet follow an accredited course. The practice of having all school-based secondary classes undertake the same project for the term leads to rather dull provision. The programme for primary pupils is appropriately planned, but is rather narrow. Pupils have some good quality experiences and appropriate access to new technology, but provision varies from class to class. The school has the national schemes. These would help teachers to develop broader and more interesting activities, but people responsible for teaching ICT have not been made aware of them. The use of ICT in other subjects varies for both primary and secondary pupils. It is used well in a number of lessons, for example when pupils research topics on the Internet, use CD ROMs, conduct a survey or format their poetry for display. However, in some areas this sort of activity is too infrequent.

133. There is very little use of ICT to support individual pupils in accessing the curriculum and recording their work, or in developing symbol-based communication for pupils with autism or language difficulties. There is a need to use a wider variety of resources, such as whole-word word processors, symbols and predictive software. There is not yet a recognition that developing individual access strategies, with the supportive features of technology, is as important for the oldest and highest attaining pupils as for those with complex needs. Assessment is appropriate, with the recent introduction of a whole-school system as well as regular recording of skills in the primary department and module checklists for senior pupils. However, this information is not always used sufficiently in matching work to the needs of individuals in lessons.

134. Overall, improvements in ICT since the last inspection have been satisfactory, but this represents a balance of some good developments and areas that still require attention. Appropriate equipment has been purchased and a good ICT suite is well used by all the

pupils. The software installed on the computers, however, does not sufficiently reflect the learning needs of the range of pupils and curriculum areas. More is needed to develop work in, for example music and art, as well as supportive software for literacy, numeracy and communication. Staff skills are improving and ICT is used well to create attractive learning resources and displays. The provision of a specialist ICT support person has been a very positive move. The co-ordination of ICT is currently unsatisfactory as there is no clear leadership or monitoring of practice through the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

135. French is well established since the last report and progress is now good by the age of 14 and satisfactory by the age of 16. This is satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

136. Pupils start to learn French at the age of 11. At this stage many have limited language skills. By the age of 14, pupils learn to greet each other and visitors, which they do enthusiastically. They consolidate their range of vocabulary carefully and respond accurately to simple instructions and commands. They participate in simple role-play games, playing shopkeeper and customer. In this role-play, they greet each other, order food and drink, express their likes and dislikes. They repeat words and phrases, which improves their accent as well as building up their vocabulary. They enhance their number skills by counting in French and consolidate their literacy skills by recording their work. However, there is an overuse of work sheets, which are not individual enough for the lower attaining pupils. Pupils are well supported to complete them, but this does not provide a true record of what they know understand and can do.

137. By 16, pupils use French in their work during their Youth Award Scheme Euro Challenge programme (YAS). During this work, pupils use their skills to book a holiday at Euro Disney near Paris. They use numbers and months of the year well, and they record the date on their work accurately.

138. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. Planning is detailed, ensuring all pupils participate fully. Management of pupils, and timing of changes of activities are very good. This ensures pupils are motivated, concentrate well and persevere to complete their work, even when they find some aspects difficult. Teachers use praise, encouragement and humour well, which is appreciated by pupils and builds on the good relationships staff have with pupils. This works particularly well when, occasionally, pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties exhibit extremely challenging behaviour. For example, when, in one Year 10 Youth Award Scheme lesson, a particular pupil came into the lesson with a very negative attitude, staff implemented his individual behaviour strategies. This was very effective and the pupil soon met his targets, co-operated fully, and remained on task for the rest of the lesson.

139. Pupils' attitudes to learning in French and their behaviour in lessons are now good overall. They are prepared to attempt new words and phrases, to build upon existing knowledge, extend their vocabulary, and practise and improve their accents, and raise self-esteem and confidence. In all lessons, the learning support assistants' contribution was

invaluable. They were effectively planned into lessons. Their teamwork with teachers was very good, and they used their experience and detailed knowledge of the pupils to avert situations arising, thus preventing small incidents becoming major ones. This was very important when supply teachers, who did not have such good knowledge of individual pupils, taught lessons.

140. French makes a positive contribution to pupils' personal development. Good staff role models add to their moral development. Pupils take turns in role-play, support and encourage each other, and are quick to celebrate each other's successes, which enhance their social development. They discuss and compare French and English customs and traditions.

MUSIC

141. Achievement in music for pupils aged between six and 14 is satisfactory in relation to pupils' differing ages and abilities. Music is not offered to pupils over the age of 14. Most pupils make satisfactory progress through the music curriculum and enjoy a reasonable range of musical experiences. Pupils listen to music of all kinds in assembly and are given the opportunity to comment on what they hear. Each year the school holds a musical pageant to which many pupils contribute. Recently a group of young recorder players entertained senior citizens.

142. By age seven, pupils are experiencing the rhythm, tempo and mood of music, through song. Pupils enthusiastically don masks before singing about *Robin Hood* and his merry men. They follow this with a carol. Most pupils know the words, but if they do not, they listen intently as others sing. They understand the difference between loud and soft and use this to add emphasis. Most pupils pitch the notes well and maintain the tune.

143. By age 11, pupils have made sufficient progress to be able to make their own instruments out of classroom materials. Before this, pupils look at pictures of people playing instruments. They name the instruments and label them correctly. Then, guided by their teachers, they make percussion instruments that they use as an accompaniment to their singing of *Jingle Bells* and *Rudolph*. The pupils enjoy making music and meet the lesson objective of shaking, hitting and rattling to 'make a noise'. In the process, pupils learn how to handle instruments and how to keep a steady beat.

144. By age 14, pupils have good access to a range of musical experiences. They learn about orchestral music, folk music and jazz. Pupils see and touch instruments such as the trumpet, zither and flute. They learn how the different sounds are produced and have the opportunity to make them. They are helped to simulate the sounds on an electronic keyboard. Pupils listen to orchestral works to hear the instruments in context and begin to understand how the various sections of the orchestra contribute to the finished piece. Pupils sing folksongs from around the world and learn how they express the culture of the country. They sing enthusiastically and keep good time with the music.

145. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory. It is better than at the time of the previous inspection, when some teaching was described as poor. Pupils are managed well and a good balance is maintained between creativity and control, although some lesson plans indicate a greater degree of caution than is necessary. Pupils are encouraged to make music

and this increases their involvement and their awareness of the musical elements. Teachers work closely with learning support assistants and this enables pupils to get the help and encouragement they need to progress. Relationships are good. Teachers and pupils enjoy making music together.

146. The curriculum is satisfactory and the work schemes are well planned. Assessment is good and good records of pupils' progress are kept. Resources are satisfactorily used, although the current lack of a specialist room in the secondary school causes some inefficient use of the teacher's time and detracts from the pupils' learning. The subject co-ordinator is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, but has responsibility for the secondary school only. This leads to some fragmentation in learning.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

147. Physical education is a strength of the school. A specialist teacher very ably leads the department. There have been good improvements in teaching and learning since the last inspection. Achievements in physical education are good overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress overall by the age of seven in the development of their physical skills. Pupils make very good progress in games and good progress in other areas, including swimming, from the age of seven to 16. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement about progress in dance.

148. Pupils between the ages of seven and 11 are making better progress than at the last inspection. This is mainly due to the specialist teaching now offered to older classes in the primary department. Pupils who are aged between 14 and 16 are also making better progress. This is a consequence of very good support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties in the form of an alternative programme, which includes fitness training as part of their educational development. Well-trained members of the support team provide very good personal support for these pupils and this enables them to take a full part in the physical education programme. Training in the management of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties has also improved the overall management of pupils in lessons.

149. Teaching and learning are very good overall. Teaching is very good or better in all games lessons, good in the one gymnastics lesson seen, and satisfactory in a soft play session seen for the youngest pupils. The youngest pupils learn to climb stairs, to run and jump in order to catch a moving swing, and to share equipment very well in lessons. Most pupils kick a ball intentionally and the highest attaining pupils kick or roll a ball from one person to another.

150. The most significant strength of the teaching of physical education for pupils aged seven to 16 is the very good behaviour management of pupils. The enthusiastic, specialist teacher has very good knowledge and uses the good resources well. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is never less than very good, and in a third of lessons, pupils' attitudes to work and behaviour are excellent. Even when classes are organised into groups with a wide range of disability needs, the teacher manages them very well and sets challenges to stretch all pupils. Pupils enjoy the lessons; are very involved in their own learning, and try very hard to

succeed. This is because there are well-established routines, good reward systems and role models, and clear personal objectives that pupils know and understand. Planning for all lessons given by the specialist is excellent. The teacher uses his weekly assessments very well to plan later lessons that focus on the individual needs of pupils.

151. Warm up sessions are well known to pupils. The younger pupils learn to follow simple signs so their attention is gained throughout the warm up sessions, and they learn to control their movements so they start and stop on command very quickly. However, those with complex communication needs sometimes need additional physical support for this. The use of signal flags, or symbols would help their attention even more. Older pupils complete their warm ups almost independently, and pupils take increasing responsibility for this part of the lesson. They are aided in this by the interactive displays of warm up routines in the high quality school gymnasium. The oldest pupils take the warm up sessions and train their peers. The teacher then uses these opportunities very well to give additional timely coaching with the very good support of the additional staff.

152. The teacher uses demonstration and opportunities for imitation very well. This enables all pupils to know what is expected of them and helps them to improve their basic skills. In this way, higher attaining primary aged pupils learn to run fluidly and bounce a basketball skilfully to and around a cone. Lower attaining pupils run independently and begin to dribble a football in the same way. This method is also used very well to enable older pupils with complex needs to remember extended gymnastic routines. They use the floor and the box well to remember, practise and perform extended routines incorporating a range of gymnastic shapes, balances and rolls, showing good control of their movements.

153. An emphasis on reflection at the end of lessons enhances pupils' learning and provides additional interest. Excellent questioning encourages all pupils to describe their physical and creative efforts. The younger pupils talk about what they have done, such as *dribbling* and *bouncing*, and the older pupils give a resume of how they have improved in their fitness, or in their knowledge of basic skills, or tactics of a game such as uni-hoc. The oldest higher attaining pupils coach their teammates well using the same strategies as the teacher, and all create games that improve their friends' skills. Older pupils regularly use the very good fitness suite in order to get fitter for the games they play. They are well aware of their increased fitness and stamina and compare their personal performances each week. Pupils want to learn and to get fit. The subject provides an excellent contribution to pupils' personal development and raises all pupils' self esteem. The youngest pupils learn to share equipment well; later they work in pairs or small-sided teams. When they are older, they play in conventional teams in the community with a sense of fairness and respect for others' achievements. Pupils are proud of their achievements in physical education and show great respect for the teacher and his support staff.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

154. Achievement and progress in religious education are good overall. However, a significant minority of lower attaining pupils aged six to 11 do not make enough progress in religious education. The progress of all other pupils is good overall. This is an improvement since the last inspection when achievements were found to be satisfactory across the school.

155. The quality of teaching and learning has improved for the majority of pupils. Half the lessons observed were good or better. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen for the youngest pupils. Here the teaching and learning of a small but significant minority of pupils is unsatisfactory. This is because methods used to teach the subject and to manage their behaviour are inappropriate for pupils with complex needs associated with autism and language difficulties. This weakness in teaching was also observed in one other lesson in the primary department, where pupils are organised into very wide ranging disability groups.

156. The strength of the teaching of religious education is the emphasis on the development of knowledge of characters and events in biblical stories. Enthusiastic story-telling and good questioning by teachers ensured higher attaining pupils aged six and seven listened well to the story and learned that three kings came to visit Jesus when he was born in a stable. Older pupils of primary age were given good opportunities to dress up and enact the story of Jesus' visitors at the stable. Higher attaining pupils and those with moderate learning difficulties showed a growing understanding of the Christmas story in this way, and enjoyed the lesson. However, pupils with more complex needs do not listen or learn because they do not understand the story being told or enacted. Objects, such as those in a nativity scene, are not used to gain their attention and to enhance the learning of the youngest pupils. Older pupils of primary age with autism are not given the opportunities to learn new information in a distraction free, ordered environment. Consequently, take little part in the lessons.

157. In the secondary department, where pupils with complex needs are organised into separate groupings, learning is very good. Pupils with complex needs are very well managed in religious education lessons. The teacher knows these pupils well and prepares lessons that have an emphasis on learning key reading vocabulary. Work is well linked to targets within individual educational plans for literacy and is presented in a practical game context that is fun. Thus, pupils learn to read words associated with the story, such as *angel*, *king*, and *Mary*. Most have learnt very well the main characters of the story in this way and some eagerly talk of the events of Christmas. Pupils then take part in making a King's crown, which incorporates the key vocabulary to help them to remember it and records their learning very well.

158. Higher attaining pupils aged between 11 and 14 make good gains in other classes for religious education. Those with emotional and behavioural difficulties are managed very well. They are reminded of their personal targets at the beginning of lessons and pupils try hard to achieve them throughout the lessons. Each child receives an award for achieving them. This works very well. Behaviour and attitudes in the lesson seen were very good. The teacher checks what pupils know well at the beginning of lessons and gives good opportunities for pupils to predict what might have happened next in the story. The teacher gives good opportunities for pupils to empathise with the characters in the story through skilful questioning. *How would you feel if an angel visited you?* Teachers provide adapted texts so that most pupils have good opportunities to use their reading skills. However, the use of symbols would make it easier for lower attaining readers to access the story for themselves. Good attention is also paid to the sequencing of events in the stories, and pupils learn to sequence the Christmas story in order. Pupils of this age know Christmas is a religious celebration, and that it has some secular features such as Santa Claus and a

Christmas tree. They know most religions have a ritual of giving gifts during celebrations. The highest attaining pupil knows that Joseph is believed by Christians not to be the real father of Jesus, and that they believe the real Father was God. Pupils are given opportunities to write, but most pupils are reluctant to write independently and prefer to copy write, or just to colour in pictures. Teachers are less confident in teaching the basic skills of reading and writing at this age.

159. The oldest pupils are successfully completing the Youth Award Scheme in religious education. All pupils also learn about other religious celebrations through the theme of the week. The oldest pupils show a good knowledge of Christianity and a satisfactory knowledge of other religions, such as Judaism, Hinduism and Sikhism. This learning would be enhanced further if the collection of religious artefacts were further improved. Not all pupils of this age are sympathetic to leaning about religion, and the behaviour of some interrupts the learning of others. However, they are managed well by teachers who follow behaviour management programmes to the letter.

160. Good leadership has ensured improved standards of achievement for the majority of pupils since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has already recognised the need to improve the scheme of work and assessment procedures so that they better support staff in planning for pupils with more complex needs. There is a need to monitor teaching to ensure full equality of access to the curriculum for those with more complex needs.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PHSE)

161. Personal, social and health education (PHSE) has a firm place in the school's taught curriculum and it is an essential part of everyday interaction between pupils and staff. Pupils aged between seven and 11 achieve satisfactorily and make sound progress. The great majority of pupils aged between 11 and 16 show greater maturity and this enables them to have good achievement and progress. All pupils have clear targets for personal development and their progress towards them is carefully monitored, assessed and recorded. The analysis of personal development provided by the local authority shows a steady upward trend in the key features of working with others and in gaining the skills for independent living. This was self-evident during the inspection week, except for a small minority of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties who find it hard to acquire acceptable personal and social skills.

162. By the age of seven, most pupils have made satisfactory progress in establishing simple routines at the beginning of the day, although full independence has not yet been acquired, for example, in toileting arrangements for pupils with the most complex needs. Pupils are learning how to listen and some respond well with appropriate language, eye contact and gesture when the register is called. They learn to wait their turn, for example, for learning equipment, and behave sociably towards each other. The personal management of those with the most complex needs is not secure and some find it difficult to cope with transition from one activity to another, and to participate fully in lessons.

163. By the age of 11, pupils understand the importance of sharing and respecting each other's achievements. Pupils spontaneously applaud good work. One pupil, who sometimes spoils his work and that of others, spends time repairing the damage he has done. Another

talks about family relationships, and explores her likes and dislikes in a supportive and friendly environment. Pupils understand the significance of exchanging presents and accompany their gifts with a paper heart to indicate the deeper nature of giving.

164. By the age of 14, pupils know what is expected of them in a family group, and their behaviour in class and their relationships with others are used to model this. Pupils know how to support each other. They know how to work together. They understand about bullying and what to do if it should happen to them. Some pupils are very protective of each other. In one class, one pupil consoled another in his distress. Pupils prepared a 'healthy snack' together. They collaborated well and pooled their knowledge. They begin to develop the life skills of independent living at the same time as learning about the benefits of teamwork.

165. By the age of 16, pupils are ready to take their place in the local college for vocational courses to prepare them for the world of work. Through the Youth Award Scheme, pupils gain further experience of teamwork and sharing ideas. The scheme also helps them to enhance their basic skills and to take part in informative health and sex education programmes. Most pupils show a developing sense of responsibility and an awareness of others. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties are slower to recognise the effect of their behaviour upon others, but skilful handling of crises by the teachers as they arise makes a strong impact upon their personal development. A visiting speaker talks to the pupils about the dangers of the misuse of drugs and pupils ask intelligent and often perceptive questions. In their final year at the school, pupils look to the brighter side of life and discuss the options of taking a holiday abroad. They study travel brochures, which effectively brings together their skills of literacy, numeracy and personal development. A trip to Disneyland, Paris, is envisaged. Pupils determine the cheapest time to travel, where to stay and learn a few simple French phrases.

166. Personal, social and health education is, on balance, taught well, particularly in the senior school where the Youth Award Scheme provides a useful guide for planning. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic to share their knowledge. Visiting speakers supplement their work. Teachers are understanding and patient. This encourages pupils to contribute and to ask questions. Teachers listen to the pupils and make use of what they say. Teachers keep a good sense of perspective and endeavour to provide a safe and secure environment where the development of life skills can flourish.

167. Since the previous inspection, the programme of PSHE has been firmly placed on the curriculum map. The scheme of work is good. The teaching is well organised, although there is a need to make stronger links between the senior and junior schools. Residential provision for Year 11 is a key feature of the programme, where pupils learn independence and interdependence. The programme also includes units on citizenship, delivered through 'theme' weeks, together with health education and links with the community.