

INSPECTION REPORT

THE REDWAY SCHOOL

Netherfield, Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique reference number: 110592

Headteacher: Mr Richard Fraser

Reporting inspector: Mrs Jacque Cook
2351

Dates of inspection: 10 – 14 June 2002

Inspection number: 254977

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Farmborough Netherfield Milton Keynes Buckinghamshire
Postcode:	MK6 4HG
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Michael Rowlands
Date of previous inspection:	January 1998

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2351	Jacque Cook	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>How high are standards?</p> <p>a) The school's results and achievements</p> <p>b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development</p> <p>How well are pupils and students taught?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
11041	Marvyn Moore	Lay inspector		<p>How well does the school care for its pupils or students?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with parents?</p>
20397	Rosa Blunt	Team inspector	<p>Information and communication technology</p> <p>Equal opportunities</p> <p>Post-16</p>	
31862	Julia Coop	Team inspector	<p>History</p> <p>Personal, social and health education</p> <p>Foundation Stage</p> <p>Special educational needs</p>	
16979	Charlie Henry	Team inspector	<p>Art and design</p> <p>Design and technology</p>	<p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
22823	Joy Hill	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p>	
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	<p>English</p> <p>Modern foreign languages</p> <p>Physical education</p> <p>English as an additional language</p>	<p>How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils or students?</p>
21822	Helen Maskew	Team inspector	<p>Mathematics</p> <p>Personal, social and health education</p>	

8056	Howard Probert	Team inspector	Science Music Religious education	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The Redway School is a mixed, community special school for 120 pupils with severe and profound and multiple learning difficulties. Currently, there are 101 pupils on roll. These include 12 children, six of whom attend part-time in the two Nursery classes, and 20 students aged over 16. There are more pupils in Years 3 to 6 than in other year groups. The term 'pupil' will be used throughout the report unless specifically referring to children or students. All but one pupil, who is being assessed, have Statements of Special Educational Needs. Attainment on entry is low and often very low. Thirty-one per cent of the pupils have profound and multiple learning difficulties. In addition, there are seven pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and a similar number of pupils who have very difficult behaviour. A few pupils also have visual or hearing impairments. Eleven pupils are from ethnic minorities and all are at the early stages of language acquisition. The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals is, at 31 per cent, lower than at the last inspection, reflecting the high level of employment in the Milton Keynes area. Most pupils are from Milton Keynes, although a few travel from neighbouring education authorities.

Currently, there are two special classes, forming the alternative environment department. One class is for pupils in Years 2 to 5 with autistic spectrum disorders and the other for a group of Year 5 pupils with very difficult behaviour.

There are continuing difficulties in recruiting teaching staff. At present, there is an unqualified teacher from overseas taking one class. The school has been subject to reorganisation proposals since 1997, which are shortly to be finalised.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school, which strives to provide all pupils with the highest quality of education. Teaching is very good overall, which leads to pupils having very positive attitudes to their work and making very good progress in their learning. There is a clear vision for the development of the school by the headteacher and senior management team. They provide very good leadership for a staff that works together exceptionally well. Value for money is very good.

What the school does well

- Ensures the pupils make very good progress overall in their work.
- Provides very high quality teaching and learning through the teamwork of staff and therapists, building on strong relationships made with pupils.
- Promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well, which leads to pupils developing very positive attitudes to their work, behaving very well and successfully developing their independence.
- Ensures that what is planned to be taught each year for children in the Nursery and Reception, pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the Post-16 groups is very relevant and as a result they do particularly well.
- Provides a very wide range of additional activities outside lessons.
- Makes very good use of the excellent accommodation.

What could be improved

- Pupils' progress in history and in modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in January 1998 the school has improved very well. All the key issues have been successfully achieved and, as a result, pupils' achievements, their attitudes and the quality of teaching, notably for Years 1 and 2, have improved very well. There have also been very good improvements in the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils, which has contributed to the very good improvement in their behaviour. The curriculum has been broadened effectively and monitoring of the work of the school has developed well. Assessment procedures are now good,

although in a few subjects procedures are very new. Senior staff now contribute successfully to the very good way staff work together, which, with the leadership of the headteacher, provides the school with a very good capacity to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 14	Key
speaking and listening	A	A	A	A	excellent A*
Reading	A	B	A	A	very good A
Writing	A	B	B	B	good B
Mathematics	A	B	A*	A	satisfactory C
personal, social and health education	A	A	A	A	unsatisfactory D
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	A	A	poor E

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

Overall, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress regardless of any special educational need or English is an additional language. How well they do reflects the quality of their teaching. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 consistently make the best progress, which is, at times, exceptional. Children in the Reception and Nursery classes, students in the Post-16 groups and pupils in Years 1 and 2 and 7 to 11 make very good progress overall, while pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in English, science, personal, social and health education and geography. Progress in mathematics is good overall, although pupils make very good progress initially in Years 1 and 2 and are now making excellent progress in Years 10 and 11 due to the very high quality of the teaching. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make very good progress in music and, as in Years 10 and 11, very good progress in physical education. Also, pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress in art and design, design and technology and in information and communication technology. In all other subjects, pupils make good progress, apart from history and modern foreign languages, where pupils do not do as well as they should. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress towards the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) awards and many students in the Post-16 group achieve modules from the National Skills Profile. The school is in the early stages of target setting for the pupils. It is too early to judge how well targets for July 2003 in English, mathematics and personal social and health education will be met.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very enthusiastic about coming to school, are keen to learn and do their best to please the staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. They are polite and well mannered and even young children learn to comply with requests.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils' relationships with staff and with their peers are excellent. Their personal development is very good. They persist in being as independent as possible and are sociable.

Attendance	Satisfactory.
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Pupils are very caring towards each other. They enjoy taking responsibility and are proud of what they achieve. Pupils with very difficult behaviour make very good progress. They learn self-control and to have regard for the needs of other pupils. Students in particular become more confident through their links with the community, in college and at work experience.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 14
Quality of teaching	Very good	Good	Very good	Very good

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

The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, often excellent for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and good for pupils in Years 3 to 6. Teaching and learning are very good in English, science, geography and personal, social and health education. Although good in mathematics overall, teaching and learning are excellent for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and very good in Years 1 and 2. Among the reasons for the high quality is the very careful planning of lessons. This ensures all pupils learn to the best of their ability and their special educational needs are met very well. This is helped by the very strong relationships that staff have with pupils. The teamwork of staff, their skills and thorough knowledge of what works best for the pupils they teach are very effective. As a result, pupils make particularly good improvements in their communication skills and put a great deal of effort into all their work. Literacy is taught very well and the teaching of numeracy is good. Where teaching is, occasionally, merely satisfactory, this is usually due to the inexperience of teachers.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is good overall and very good for children in the Nursery and Reception, giving them a very good start to their education. It is very relevant for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and for students in the Post-16 provision. History and modern foreign languages are not taught often enough.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The few pupils with English as an additional language have good provision. Staff take account of their needs when they are planning lessons and steps are taken to ensure there are no language difficulties with parents.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development is very good and moral development is excellent. At every opportunity staff reinforce an understanding of right and wrong and provide very good role models.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides high levels of care for the pupils. There are particularly good arrangements for developing and maintaining good behaviour.

The school works very well with parents and there is an effective parents' association. Communication with parents is very good, particularly the weekly newsletter and the home/school diaries. There is a very wide range of extra-curricular activities arranged for the pupils. The community is used well to widen pupils' experiences and links with local schools and colleges are very effective. Individual Education Plans provide very good means to track pupils' progress. There are good systems for assessing pupils' progress in English, mathematics, science, personal, social and health education,

information and communication technology and physical education. It is in the early stages of development in other subjects. Child protection training is not included in induction training for staff at present.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is led and managed very well by a strong team of headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior management team, who are clear about the educational direction the school should take. Delegation is effective and subject co-ordinators play an important role in ensuring pupils are making very good progress.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is supportive and very aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It fulfils its responsibilities well.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is good at evaluating its performance. Lessons are observed, planning is checked and pupils' progress towards targets on Individual Education Plans is monitored. Steps are taken to remedy any shortfalls.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well and very good use is made of additional facilities such as the local community and the expertise of therapists and other professionals who visit the school.

The shared philosophy of considering the whole child is seen in all the work of the school. The school improvement plan is good and all staff contribute. Targets have been set for individual pupils but this is in the early stages of development. The principles of best value are applied well. Despite difficulties with recruitment, the school has a very good number of staff with very high levels of expertise. The level of resourcing is very good. The accommodation is excellent.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • The teaching is good. • They feel well informed about their children's progress and are comfortable taking questions or complaints to staff. • Improvements in the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A number do not feel that there is the right amount of homework

The inspection team agree with all the positive points made by parents. They do not totally agree with the comments about homework because it is set regularly for many older pupils. Additional work is set, if staff are asked, for pupils to continue at home.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils make at least good progress and overall they make very good progress and achieve very well. This reflects the overall very high quality of teaching and learning and is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The progress and achievement of pupils in Years 3 to 6 are good, largely because teaching and learning are similarly good. All pupils make very good progress towards meeting targets on their Individual Education Plans. There is no measurable difference between the progress of girls and boys.
2. Young children do very well in the full and part-time Nursery provision and make very good progress in all six areas of learning. This is because all staff work very effectively as a team and have an excellent understanding of the needs of these very young children. An excellent range of activities is planned that meets their needs. As a result, these young children respond very well and feel increasingly confident. Children with additional special educational needs learn to tolerate shared experiences and are beginning to focus on objects because of very caring and sensitive encouragement from staff. This is a significant achievement. More able children improve their communication skills through the use of signs and simple words. They are able to express their needs, recognise cause and effects of their actions and are beginning to engage in purposeful play. Children gain knowledge and understanding of the world from their experiences in the white and dark rooms. They learn about and notice the difference between a variety of tastes and textures and begin to use simple tools. By the time they join Year 1, children have made a very good start to their education.
3. Many pupils in Years 10 and 11 are making very good progress towards the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) awards. This is the first year that they have studied for these courses and already there are four modules ready for assessment. The successes this year form the basis for the introduction of studying for this award, by pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties, in September. Similarly, the awards are planned to be continued into the Post-16 provision to broaden the range of accreditation, particularly for the less able students.
4. Students in the Post-16 classes are very well prepared for when they leave school. They achieve very well and make very good progress in a range of very appropriate courses. Many attend a local college, having selected the courses they wish to study, and receive college certificates. More able students make very good progress towards the Oxford, Cambridge and Royal Society of Arts (OCR), National Skills Profile (NSP). In previous years, students gained modules in at least one skill area and occasionally, the four skill areas of numeracy, communication, personal and information technology. Mostly they are at first grade but a few gain modules in numeracy skills at the second grade. There has been a period when students were not entered for awards; however, this year students are expected to gain modules in the four skill areas and practical work skills.
5. Pupils with English as an additional language are in the early stages of the acquisition of language, and are making progress in line with other pupils in the school. This is because teachers plan to meet individual needs and adapt their resources appropriately.
6. Pupils with additional special educational needs make the same progress as everyone else. The use of an intensive interaction approach (a method of working with children and adults to help them to learn and develop early communication skills) is very effective for pupils in Years 2 to 6 in the special classes. As a result, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders are increasingly learning to tolerate the presence of others and to join in group activities. Through the specific and intensive support, pupils with complex behaviour difficulties are also learning to conform to classroom and school rules and make very good progress in all aspects of their learning. Throughout the school, the learning of pupils with additional special educational needs is very effectively enhanced through a range of appropriate therapies and support from outside agencies such as the visual

and hearing support service. This provision and the planning that staff make to meet the needs of individual pupils ensure that they make very good progress.

7. Pupils' gains in literacy skills are very good; they are making very good progress in improving their speaking and listening skills and in reading. Good progress is achieved in writing. Staff in all subjects are very good at taking time to develop communication skills and to improve the understanding of vocabulary. Pupils with additional needs develop their Makaton signing and the use of symbols. Regular reading sessions including stories using the senses, whole-class sessions with a big book and individual or small groups develop an enjoyment of books. Pupils make good progress in improving their writing skills. This is an improvement since the last inspection, which is the result of the support of information and communication technology (ICT) in literacy across the school.
8. In mathematics, pupils make good progress and achieve well between Years 3 and 9 and very good progress and achievement in Years 1 and 2. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make excellent progress in mathematics because they are taught very well indeed. Numeracy skills are improved well. Younger pupils increase their understanding of number value up to ten and their ability to make sets from similar objects. Older pupils continue to make progress in number skills and also show good knowledge of sophisticated shapes such as hexagons and spirals. They are beginning to have an understanding of time. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties explore shapes and discriminate between colours. They become increasingly able to link the cause of an action with its effect, for example, pressing a switch to operate a light or sound.
9. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well overall in science. They learn about different materials, exploring the physical properties through using the senses. Pupils discover the differences between liquids and solids and learn about the natural world through planting seeds and growing plants. Through their work, pupils begin to develop skills in investigating and making sense of the world around them.
10. In the subjects where pupils make very good progress, this is because the quality of teaching is very high. Pupils make very good progress in the important subject of personal, social and health education because, at every opportunity, staff help pupils to develop their independence as far as possible. Pupils also make very good progress in geography and in Years 7 to 11, they make very good progress and achieve very well in physical education. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress and achievement in art and design, design and technology and in information and communication technology. In other subjects and for other year groups, pupils make good progress. However, pupils do not make the progress they should in modern foreign languages (MFL) and history because they are not taught often enough to enable pupils to retain and build on their knowledge.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development have improved very well since the last inspection, partly due to the emphasis placed on personal, social and health education and on improving behaviour. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards school and their work. Parents commented that their children enjoy school and are disappointed if they are too unwell to attend. When pupils arrive in the morning they greet the staff who meet them with smiles and are clearly very pleased indeed to be there. Pupils try hard and are proud of the work they do. For example, a Year 5 pupil showed to each member of staff in the class the model car he had made from a box and wheels. Students in the Post-16 group recalled enthusiastically their work creating the multicultural garden from a piece of wasteland by Peartree Bridge, an area near the school. Pupils show interest in what they are asked to do and often show high levels of concentration and persist when an activity becomes difficult. Children in the part-time Nursery class attempt to purse their lips to blow bubbles and watch fascinated as the bubbles float in the air. A more able Year 8 pupil kept trying to click the cursor on the appropriate icon on the computer to enlarge a picture of a river that he wanted to print out. Eventually he succeeded and then moved on to select another picture. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and to what staff are saying. They are willing to attempt what they are asked to do and often join in with enthusiasm.

12. Pupils' behaviour is very good. They are polite and well mannered. In most classrooms, pupils sit around a table at snack time and eat sensibly and those who eat in the dining hall have appropriate table manners. They learn to sign or say 'please' and 'thank you'. More able pupils apologise when necessary; for example, a Year 4 pupil accidentally broke a polystyrene disc and she immediately signed 'sorry'. As they get older, pupils increasingly become aware that their actions may well have an effect on others. A student was heard to express concern for a pupil in a wheelchair, checking to see they were all right waiting for transport to arrive. Records show that pupils with behaviour difficulties make good progress in learning to conform. Incidents of aggression decrease and instructions from staff are followed with increasing frequency. This is particularly noticeable in the alternative environment department. There have been no exclusions from school.
13. Pupils' personal development is very good and the relationships they form with staff and with each other are excellent. As far as possible they are independent. For example, in physical education, many pupils learn to undress and dress themselves with a minimum of assistance and those who are not able to do so help staff as far as they can by relaxing and using the movement they have to assist. Students fill little cakes with icing mixture without staff supervision. All pupils make choices effectively. Children choose whether to play with certain toys and indicate clearly if they wish to have the computer switched on to look at their pictures. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties select, for example, whether they want to explore the tube that sounds like rain or the sea on the shore. Students decide about what they want to do at lunchtime. Pupils learn to wait for their turn and to share. They take turns at selecting a 'special' item from a box and looking at a 'special' book in a religious education lesson.
14. Increasingly, as pupils get older and when they are students, they collaborate with each other and co-operate very well. They make joint decisions, for example, on what they would like for a youth club and how they should plan their environmental project. Their self-assurance grows; initially, being confident in different places in the school and in the community when they go to shop at the local super market to, ultimately, managing very well on work experience at, for example, a busy hospital.
15. Attendance is satisfactory at 90 per cent. There is very little unauthorised absence and most of the authorised absence is due to illness. Punctuality is good.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

16. The quality of teaching and learning is very high and, for almost all pupils, the teaching and learning is not less than good. This is a considerable improvement from the last inspection and reflects the monitoring and support provided by members of the senior management team. Teaching and learning for pupils in Years 10 and 11 are always very good and often excellent. Lesson planning and methods chosen to teach individual pupils in these year groups are frequently excellent. However, for pupils between Years 3 and 6, the teaching and learning are predominately good overall but there is a small, but significant, number of lessons where teaching and learning are merely satisfactory. This occurs in classes where teachers lack experience and expertise.
17. There are three major factors that contribute to the overall very high quality of teaching and learning. Firstly, teachers know their pupils very well indeed and are clear how best each one learns. They are very aware of pupils' special educational needs, levels of working, the targets that have been set for them and their individual idiosyncrasies. Secondly, drawing on this information, they plan lessons very thoroughly, often in great detail, ensuring that all pupils have opportunities to learn in the way that suits them best. Thirdly, strong and trusting relationships are clearly established between all staff and the pupils they teach. As a result pupils are prepared to try new activities. For example, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties allow their feet to be wrapped and moved around in a plastic sheet containing water, to feel the effects on their skin. Their faces are carefully observed by staff to note and respond to what the

pupils like and dislike. Staff are very alert to ensuring all pupils in a group are included in activities at an appropriate level. Very good use is made of staffing to ensure those that need extra support have one-to-one sessions or work in small groups as well as working with the whole class.

18. Pupils learn very well because the staff who work with them are consistent in the way they do things. The teamwork in each classroom is very good. Most of the support staff are experienced and many have gained appropriate qualifications, increasing their expertise. As a result, it is often difficult to determine when entering a classroom which member of staff is the teacher, particularly when pupils are working individually or in small groups. This clearly demonstrates common ways of working, which establish routines. Pupils become more confident because they know what will happen next and this helps to develop their independence. For example, on the poolside at the beginning of a swimming session, pupils sit on chairs and help to put on their buoyancy aids. This consistency is particularly important for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. They learn, for example, that when pupils are working one-to-one with the teacher in a work bay that they should stay in the play area. The good use of Treatment and Education of Autistic and Communication Related Handicapped Children (TEACCH) based procedures ensures, for example, that pupils quickly learn to follow the routine of working on their tasks systematically, taking tasks from the left and putting them on the right when they are completed. They learn effectively because they have a clear structure, which helps them feel secure and is reinforced by all staff who work with them. Similarly, behaviour plans are carefully followed for pupils with behaviour difficulties so that pupils are clear about what is acceptable. In many instances, staff distract or deflect pupils from unacceptable behaviour: for example, giving a pupil a long foam tube to float with in another part of the warm water pool when they were beginning to irritate another member of the class by being too close.
19. The management of the behaviour of children in the Nursery and Reception and pupils in Years 10 and 11 is excellent. Staff know exactly how to get the children and pupils to do what they would like them to do. Often, choices are offered so pupils make a selection rather than being told what to do. For example, a child was offered a toy or the computer; however, staff are firm and at the end of the session the child was told 'finished' and the computer was switched off. Staff get the best out of the pupils by using praise and encouragement. Even on the rare occasion when a pupil is told 'no', for example when a piece of construction equipment was thrown, it is quickly followed up with a positive comment when the pupil puts the item down. Phrases such as 'good looking', 'well signed', 'you can do it', are constantly used and challenges set to help pupils improve further. For example, a pupil was asked if she could float for 40 seconds as she floated for 30 last week and another was asked if he could stretch his fingers further to grasp play dough. Staff have high but realistic expectations of what pupils will achieve in their work and in the way they behave. In the Post-16 classes particularly, expectations are very high and students rise to the challenge. For example, they repeat scenes over and over again until they are perfect when they are film-making.
20. On the whole, teachers have good levels of subject expertise, which, combined with their knowledge of meeting special educational needs, leads to pupils making very good progress in their work. Staff teaching children of Nursery and Reception age have excellent knowledge and understanding of how very young children learn. This helps them to plan for children to learn through play very well. Teachers use elements from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies effectively and teach these areas very well. The skills of subject co-ordinators are passed to other staff, for example in the use of the warm water pool in physical education. There are a few instances where a lack of subject knowledge slows pupils' learning, notably in Years 3 to 6, for example in using appropriate subject specific language to illustrate a study of packaging in a design and technology lesson.
21. Staff use signs and symbols well and communication aids effectively, including objects of reference (items that are consistently used to cue pupils in, for example, to activities or places) such as a fibre optic torch to signify the dark room, to help pupils make meaningful responses where language is not developed. In an art lesson, pupils signed the colours as they were

referred to and in an interactive play session, primary aged pupils used a simple communicator to choose play dough.

22. Resources are well chosen and used to great effect to capture and keep the interest of pupils, for example, exciting pop-up books, amazing umbrellas and several wildly different pairs of shoes. Pupils respond well to humour and in all classrooms there is a great deal of fun and laughter. At times pupils join in, teasing staff. One pupil deliberately gave the wrong answer with a broad grin on his face. Staff work very closely with therapists and the sharing of expertise is very beneficial, notably in the teaching of communication skills and the work of the speech and language therapists. Partnerships that are formed reinforce learning and give the pupils the security of agreed ways of working.
23. Most lessons are suitably fast moving. This is particularly noticeable in the Nursery and Reception and the Year 10 and 11 classes. Time is seldom wasted, for example, waiting for pupils to return from the cloakroom or having to collect together the equipment needed for a lesson. Instead, if a lesson has already started, a pupil is swiftly given support to know what is happening and resources are well prepared and ready for each session. During lessons, staff often record how well pupils are doing and they talk about significant progress made by pupils. This information is used to plan subsequent sessions to ensure pupils build on their learning.
24. Homework is regularly set for many older pupils. For example, a holiday task was to do research for their project to make something for their bedroom and parents were asked to help. Six of the eight pupils completed this work and all kept their diaries over the half-term. Many younger pupils take books home to read with their parents.

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

25. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in developing a relevant curriculum with the right amount of time for each subject, which includes the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. At the Foundation Stage, for children of Nursery and Reception age, the curriculum is very good. It is effectively planned in line with the Early Learning Goals, which provides a rich learning experience for the children and a firm basis for the next stage of their education. The curriculum for students aged over 16 is also very good. It is very well planned and age appropriate, emphasising life skills and fostering independence. The work related curriculum that has been introduced in Years 10 and 11 is rightly praised by parents and is making an excellent link with the Post-16 provision. Students gain accreditation through the OCR NSP. Over the last year, pupils in Years 10 and 11 have begun studying for the ALL award and students in the Post-16 groups are due to start in September. This is a very positive move providing a series of courses, which meets the needs of pupils and students. However, further vocational accreditation is being sought for the more able students which will recognise higher ability levels.
26. There has been an improvement since the last inspection in what is to be taught in music, which is now good, and in teaching ICT in all subjects. The provision for mathematics is good and has been enhanced with the inclusion of elements from the National Numeracy Strategy. The curriculum for English was criticised at the last inspection for being too narrow. This has been corrected and is now very good and links in well with the National Literacy Strategy. Provision for history and modern foreign languages (MFL) is unsatisfactory: although both subjects are taught, they are not taught often enough or regularly. History is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 during one focused week of well-planned activities each year. This does not provide an adequate basis for pupils to retain their learning. Provision for MFL is good when it is taught for a six-week block each year; however, pupils do not retain what they have learnt, or build on it, because there is too large a gap between lessons. The school recognises the problem and is now looking to improve provision in both history and MFL. The Foundation Curriculum, designed for children of Nursery and Reception age, has been extended to include pupils in Years 1 and 2. This is unsatisfactory because these pupils do not work from appropriate areas of the National Curriculum.

27. The curriculum for personal, social and health education is a strength of the school and is taught through discrete lessons as well as throughout the school day. The school nurses and other professionals make a positive contribution to health, education in drug misuse and sex education, which are taught effectively. Plans to introduce the new citizenship curriculum for pupils in September are being completed and the subject is already taught to students.
28. Provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is very good overall and has improved considerably since the last inspection. Support from outside agencies is invaluable and all children are fully included in a range of stimulating experiences. Pupils in Years 2 to 6 with autistic spectrum disorders and more complex behaviour difficulties are supported very effectively through a recently introduced intensive interaction way of teaching. Modified TEACCH methods are effective. Staff respond to pupils' 'moods', and have developed a successful and flexible approach to engaging pupils' attention. Regular advice and support from specialist visiting staff is taken into account when planning the best methods for teaching pupils with visual and hearing impairments. An excellent initiative in partnership with the health authority and social services has been very successful in making provision for very difficult and erratic behaviour.
29. The provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. Although there is no specific additional support for these pupils, teachers incorporate in their lessons many opportunities for them to develop their speaking and listening skills in English and they provide very good models of spoken and signed language and make all pupils feel welcomed and valued.
30. There are excellent opportunities to extend pupils' experiences outside school. Each week pupils go horse riding to nearby specialist centres. All pupils have opportunities to participate in residential experiences each year. This summer there is a two-day trampoline course planned. A weekly sports club and a youth club take place after school. Older pupils and students also have opportunities to meet together at lunchtimes, for example, to listen to music. School concerts are organised and a European week is held each year when pupils and students have a Spanish, German, French or Italian experience. Visiting artists and travelling theatres are regularly in school. In addition the curriculum is enriched through links with the community. Facilities are used well to widen the range of experiences for pupils. For example, the use of the local bowling alley effectively develops good social skills and the weekly physical education session at a local prison provides high quality instruction. Local parks and shops are visited on a regular basis. The great variety of activities available enhances the curriculum and makes it more relevant to pupils' individual needs.
31. The school has very good links with local schools as well as colleges. Pupils integrate for lessons in a local nursery and several schools. For example, at the local nursery school, children and pupils play with and alongside other children and look forward to visiting the school each week. A local secondary school joined in with pupils and students for German week last year; it is planned to be repeated for this year's Spanish week. Recently the school took part in an outdoor pursuit challenge with another local secondary school. There are strong partnerships with outside agencies including the very good support from the speech therapists, physiotherapists and occupational therapists. Their work within the curriculum is very effective indeed. Innovative work by the recently appointed Children and Young People Rights Officer for the authority is very effective in helping students determine and realise their wants and needs. This has led to the establishment of the youth club in the centre of Milton Keynes.
32. A well-planned careers programme is taught to Year 10 and 11 pupils and Post-16 students. The local careers officer meets regularly with students and this is now being extended to Year 10 and 11 pupils to help them formulate career ideas. Post-16 students attend the local college for basic skills courses in computing, cookery, communication and shopping skills. They receive internal certification in their chosen subjects. Students experience a wide variety of work placements working in the local hospital, Woburn Safari Park, local shops and a hairdressers'. One student, as a result of his placement in the local hospital mailroom, has been offered a permanent job when he leaves school this year.

33. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good and a strength of the school. There has been a significant improvement since the last inspection. This development is encouraged by the examples set by staff and the caring atmosphere of the school. There is a clear policy of including all pupils, an absence of oppressive behaviour and a very good spiritual atmosphere created throughout the whole school. 'Circle time' (when pupils sit in a circle and take turns to contribute to discussions) has been introduced, which gives an opportunity for pupils to develop their social, moral and personal skills.
34. Spiritual development is very good. The day starts with a welcoming activity during which pupils can share experiences of the previous evening through their home/school diaries. This makes each pupil feel valued. Pupils are given opportunities to sit quietly and reflect at the end of each day. Many classes light candles and play calming music. Music makes a significant contribution to the calm atmosphere around the school and a wide selection of different styles is played around the corridors. Each assembly has an element of awe, wonder and mystery within it. Use of aromatherapy and the dark and white rooms (special rooms where pupils can use their senses to explore light and sound) all provide pupils with opportunities for individual experiences of calm and reflection.
35. Moral development is excellent and has significantly improved since the last inspection. All staff set very good examples. Pupils have many opportunities for decision making in class. They are consulted on their needs, and individual likes and dislikes are known and considered. The school rules emphasise fairness and celebrate each pupil as an individual. Pupils are encouraged to treat each other with respect. Staff take every opportunity to explain the difference between right and wrong and ensure that pupils understand the importance of treating each other fairly; for example, stressing the need to share, wait for your turn and be aware of other people's needs and feelings.
36. Social development is very good. The policy of inclusion means that pupils study all subjects and have good opportunities to socialise with other pupils. These include playtimes, lunchtime clubs and after school activities. Friendships often extend beyond the school day. Assemblies are well used to celebrate individual success, birthdays and good news generally. Social development is also encouraged through links with mainstream schools and the local and wider community in Milton Keynes. Activities such as work experience, attending college and developing the cultural garden ensure that students increase the number of people they meet and help them manage a wider range of social situations. The very wide range of extra-curricular activities available to all pupils enables them to enjoy a wide variety of social experiences, including visits to local shops, restaurants, and places of interest. There are many opportunities for pupils to meet with local people.
37. Cultural development is very good. The school provides a full range of cultural experiences, which is available to all pupils. Opportunities to study the faiths and beliefs of a variety of ethnic groups are very good. Pupils visit churches, mosques, synagogues and temples and are introduced to aspects of Buddhism. Music from other countries is played and Indian and Caribbean food is prepared in food technology lessons. Paintings, pottery and sculpture from a variety of styles are studied and displayed around the school. Visiting musicians, artists and drama groups enhance the curriculum and introduce the pupils to a wide variety of cultural experiences. This reinforces the school's commitment to inclusion.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS AND STUDENTS?

38. The school procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are good. The school has clear and concise policies for child protection, which are adapted from the procedures of the local area child protection committee. Staff are trained in child protection procedures, although, at present, it is not included in the induction procedures for new staff.
39. There are effective procedures for the safe feeding and moving of pupils, which are well understood and applied by staff. All pupils are given a very high level of support and staff display a deep concern for the welfare of their charges. As a result, pupils' trust and confidence is increased and

they are able to rise to challenges and make very good progress in their learning. Good health and safety procedures ensure pupils' welfare. The school's medical arrangements for pupils are very good indeed. There are two nurses and the school doctor visits regularly providing advice and support for staff, pupils and parents.

40. Supervision of pupils at lunchtime and breaktime is of a high standard. This allows pupils to continue to develop their skills during these times. The lunchtime crèche for pre-school children of supervisors mentioned in the previous report helps ensure that staffing levels are maintained. Transport is well organised and the child care assistants who accompany pupils to and from school know about their needs.
41. There are very good procedures for promoting good behaviour and for eliminating unacceptable behaviour. Since the previous inspection, where this aspect was criticised, the behaviour policy has been completely re-written after consultation with pupils, parents, staff, the governing body and other professionals. As a result, all staff are now fully aware of the agreed approach and follow it consistently. Visiting educational psychologists and behaviour specialists work at the school to support staff who work with children displaying difficult or challenging behaviour. Behaviour plans for pupils with difficult behaviour are well thought through, followed effectively and checked regularly. As a result behaviour has improved dramatically.
42. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance at the school are good. Staff have a good working relationship with the education welfare officer, who visits the school regularly and discusses with school staff any matters of concern about attendance. This ensures that potential difficulties are quickly dealt with.
43. Educational and personal support and guidance for pupils are very good. Annual reviews of statements are efficient and involve parents and specialist staff. The targets set are clear and information on progress and the views of parents, staff and external professionals are all taken into account and mentioned in the review document. The provision as outlined in pupils' statements is very well met. Staff work very effectively with a range of outside agencies and visiting therapists, thus ensuring that all pupils benefit from the available expertise. Programmes of physiotherapy, for example, are used well, often as part of physical education, to help pupils manipulate their limbs and bodies.
44. The procedures for assessing pupils' progress and monitoring how well they are doing have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall with some very good practice in the early years department. Very careful assessments on entry to the Nursery are used to plan detailed individual programmes and class activities. Very regular monitoring of children's achievements and progress are used effectively to adapt and extend what they are being taught. Individual learning targets are continually revised as children develop and achieve their targets. In addition to annual reviews of children's statements, informal half yearly reviews with parents and staff provide an invaluable means to track and monitor progress. Individual educational and personal development targets continue to be set in the main school and the monitoring of these is now more frequent than at the last inspection. These targets are, on the whole, precise and easily understood. They enable staff to effectively track the progress made by individual pupils. These are incorporated well into daily lesson plans. As found at the last inspection, the school's own communication assessment schedule is very detailed and used successfully throughout the school to assist in planning lessons and to track progress. This is an effective and successful approach, often used as a basis for grouping pupils in classes. However, the school recognises that the system does not explicitly recognise the few pupils working above the highest banding in certain areas.
45. In English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, physical education and personal, social and health education, procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good. A range of detailed assessments and observations are used to analyse pupils' achievements, to plan work and to monitor progress in the development of skills. In addition, what pupils have learnt in lessons is checked against what they were expected to learn. Staff know pupils very well and these measures ensure that overall very good progress is made. In other subjects, assessment

procedures, whilst satisfactory, are not as well developed. In general, teachers assess pupils using tick lists that are linked to learning outcomes of topics covered. These assessments recognise the skills achieved, related to the specific topic, but are at an early stage and are not used sufficiently to plan future work.

46. The criteria from the externally accredited courses, ALL and the NSP, are used well to assess and check on the progress of older pupils and students. Close links with the college of further education ensure that students continue to do well when they attend for their courses. Ongoing assessment and self-assessment procedures are good. Students negotiate targets and evaluate their achievements in lessons daily. This is a successful and positive strategy that encourages independence and self-awareness.
47. Pupils' all round progress is additionally shown in their individual record of experience and achievement. Work, photographs, assessments and certificates are entered, with some pupils contributing to the construction of these records with the help and support of staff. These provide a clear and detailed personal record of achievement and progress, which is regularly updated. They are very useful and relevant documents, which record in detail pupils' progress throughout the school.
48. The school has recently introduced a more detailed whole-school system of record keeping and assessment, in order to compare its performance with similar schools. In its early stages of development, this is a positive step, and is aimed to assist in monitoring progress throughout the curriculum. It is based on Performance (P) levels (performance levels produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority for assessing the achievements of pupils who are below the lowest level of attainment of the National Curriculum). The school recognises that this requires further development in order to assist in the monitoring process.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

49. The school has extended its partnership and links with parents since the previous report and information provided for them is now very good. The close relationship between school and parents, and the support given to parents by the staff, has a very positive effect on pupils' progress.
50. Parents have very positive views of the school. The inspection findings confirmed the views of parents that behaviour at the school is good, they are well informed of their children's progress and the school works closely with them. The positive relationships with parents at the time of the previous report have been well maintained and further developed. There is now a website for parents, which is interactive with the school's own website and gives parents much appreciated information about ancillary facilities available to them. A room has also been provided where parents can meet in comfort.
51. The school brochure is of high quality and contains information that parents need to know regarding facilities and what is taught in the school. The governors produce an annual report, which also contains the required information. In addition, there is a weekly newsletter, which gives parents up-to-date information on events and details of staff appointments and pupils' achievements.
52. Effective links are forged early with parents of nursery-aged children. A well-designed leaflet has been introduced since the last inspection, providing useful advice and guidance. Home/school diaries provide an invaluable daily link with parents at this stage. Home visits and planning meetings held after a short settling in period help reassure parents. Informal half-termly reviews held with professionals enable parents to fully participate in their children's education. These links help in making the transition from home to school smooth. The home/school diary is well used in other parts of the school also and provides a constant means of communication between parents and school. Many parents use the diary to tell staff what the children have done after school or

at the weekend. This enables staff to talk with children and gives very good opportunities to improve communication skills. Staff transfer information on pupils' progress provided by parents to their own records. The use of the diary and breadth of information has considerably increased and improved since the last inspection. Parents are able to contact the school at any time to discuss their children's progress or if they have any concerns.

53. There are two parents' evenings a year, one at the beginning of the academic year and one at the end, and parents are given ample opportunities to meet all staff and discuss their children's progress. Annual reports on pupils' progress provided by the school are detailed, give effective information on achievements on a subject-by-subject basis, and contain targets. Reports link in to targets recorded in pupils' Individual Education Plans and parents are fully involved in pupils' annual reviews and target setting. Parents interviewed during the inspection week stated that they felt that the information provided by the school was of a good quality and the help and support given to them was of a high standard; and was much appreciated.
54. There is a very active Parent and Teacher Association, which, although relatively small in numbers (15 parents for the core committee), works extremely hard to provide considerable funds for school use. During the previous year through hard work and obtaining sponsorship, they raised funds for the school's garden project. In addition the association arranges social functions such as barbecues, discos, and bonfire nights, which brings parents together successfully. A small number of parents help in school by assisting in the warm water pool, accompanying teachers and helpers on school outings and acting as escorts on residential visits. This allows pupils to have more one-to-one support.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The headteacher, senior management team and governing body have a very clear view of the direction of the school. They have worked successfully to emphasise the school's partnership with parents and its role within the community. Together with all staff, they continually promote a high level of regard and thoughtfulness for all aspects of pupils' development. Although there is uncertainty due to the review of special educational provision within Milton Keynes, this has not distracted the school from successfully achieving its overall aim of meeting the needs of the 'whole' child. There is a clear drive to ensure the needs of all pupils are met well. In one instance, special classes have been established for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and for pupils with very difficult behaviour. Where overall provision did not fully meet needs, a very successful partnership has been established between the health authority, social services and the school to provide 24-hour care. The feeling within the school that all are working together to create a greater sense of community meets very well an area for development identified within the previous inspection. It is reflected in all areas of the work of all staff. Its success is seen in the very good attitudes pupils have towards their work and the excellent relationships they develop.
56. Responsibilities are well delegated to staff. The headteacher is very well supported by an enthusiastic senior management team, including the deputy headteacher and the phase team leaders. He has successfully encouraged and developed the management skills of this relatively new team. These key staff have clear responsibilities, which they fulfil very well. For example, through co-ordinating the planning of all subjects within their team meetings and reviewing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) they have a very good overview of what pupils are doing and how well they are learning. Overall, the role of subject co-ordinators has developed well since the last inspection and has developed further in a few subjects than in others. All subject co-ordinators are involved in supporting the planning of their subject throughout the school; they review teachers' plans and offer advice and support. Co-ordinators have carried out useful reviews of teaching and learning in English, mathematics and behaviour management. A plan has been drawn up to review all other subjects over a four year period, with the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and personal, social and health education to be reviewed more frequently. Reviews undertaken so far have included the observation of lessons and this is planned to extend to the other subjects. Each subject has a plan for further development, although these are not yet sufficiently related to the whole-school improvement plan. A further example of very effective delegation is shown in the broad role of the lunchtime and play scheme co-ordinator. This valuable member of staff fulfils a very broad range of important roles, including co-ordination of lunchtime responsibilities for teachers, classroom support assistants and mid-day assistants and organising and running the very successful summer play scheme. She also supervises the crèche for the young children of the mid-day staff.
57. The entire staff show a very high level of commitment to improve the school even further. All staff and the governing body contribute to the school's improvement plan. The plan is detailed, covers important areas of the school's work and includes costs that are linked to its budget. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. A new improvement plan is now being finalised and shows continued development in important areas from the last one. This extended three-year plan supports well longer-term developments, such as the ongoing review of the curriculum. There is a broad and effective range of procedures in place for monitoring the work of the school. All teachers are observed teaching at least once a year, as well as during part of any subject reviews that take place. Pupils' Individual Education Plans and reports are also monitored. There is a comprehensive range of meetings for information to be effectively given to staff and for discussion of school planning and developments. This cycle of meetings includes monthly meetings of classroom support staff and half-termly meetings with the visiting specialist therapists.
58. The governing body are well informed and fulfil their responsibilities well. They are strong supporters of the school and provide effective monitoring of the schools' work. They have recently undertaken a training session to further contribute to this aspect of their role. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas where they feel more could be done to raise the quality of pupils' education even higher. Regular full governing body and committee

meetings include presentations by members of staff about developments and the outcomes of subject reviews. The headteacher provides detailed reports, including updates on the implementation of the school improvement plan and the action plan from the previous inspection. Policies are regularly reviewed and agreed. Governors occasionally visit the school to spend time in classes, although this is not routinely done. The chair of the governing body visits the school every week to meet with the headteacher. In this way, governors gain good first hand knowledge of school life.

59. Financial management is very good. The bursar carefully monitors what is spent and ensures this is in line with plans. Regular and up-to-date information is provided to the headteacher and governing body, together with explanations of any variations from expected expenditure. An overspend from the previous year's budget was caused because the school was not being fully funded for pupils with very difficult behaviour. This has been resolved in the current budget allocation. Resources required for subject development plans are bid for by co-ordinators and allocated by the headteacher and senior management team. This expenditure is not yet closely linked to whole-school priorities but works well. Other designated funds, in particular the Standards Fund, are firmly linked to required uses. There is a similar high level of care given to the school fund, including regular, external auditing. Financial resources are used wisely and good regard is given to the principles of best value, for example when awarding contracts for telephone maintenance and staff payroll. The administrative staff are efficient and contribute well to the smooth running of the school. New technology is used very well, including for preparation of teaching and learning materials, for financial management and planning and for communication between staff. This aspect of the school's work is very well supported by the ICT technician.
60. Overall, teachers are well qualified, experienced and sufficient in numbers to meet the requirements of the curriculum and the needs of pupils. There has been difficulty in recruiting teachers and currently there is an unqualified teacher from overseas taking one class. This problem is being tackled wisely by encouraging and supporting support staff to undertake further study and training to become teachers. The first of these staff is due to complete training next year. There is also an adequate number of support staff, many of whom are trained nursery nurses. On a very few occasions there is insufficient flexibility in deploying support staff to meet pupils needs, for example when a pupil is absent and support would be more effectively used in another class. Staff are very well supported when they start at the school. For example, teachers new to working with pupils who have special educational needs learn alongside an experienced member of staff; they have regular meetings with their phase leader and further advice is readily available. They value this support highly. However, this induction to the school does not always include the very important area of child protection awareness and relies on information on procedures outlined in the staff handbook. Arrangements for performance management of teachers are effective and all teachers have targets. There is a strong emphasis on professional development for all staff, linked to school priorities. For example, the programme of training to improve the management of pupils' behaviour has been very successful. Midday supervisors have received training on feeding and basic signing. The school receives valuable support from a range of specialist staff from the local authority and health authority, including speech and language therapy, occupational and physiotherapy and school nurses.
61. The site supervisor and cleaning staff keep the outstanding accommodation in excellent condition. The building is light, airy and graffiti free. Facilities to support learning include fully equipped food technology rooms, a science room, art room, warm water pool and a full range of rooms well designed for medical use. The range of resources for learning throughout the school is very good. The library is well stocked and has a suitable range of books together with reference materials. The needs of all the pupils at the school are met by the provision of well-maintained and up-to-date specialist equipment and as a result of the very good facilities provided their learning and progress are enhanced.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

62. The governors, headteacher, senior management team and staff should:

- increase the time and regularity of the teaching of history and modern foreign languages in order to improve the achievement and progress that pupils make in these subjects.

(Paragraphs: 10, 26, 111-113, 121-122)

Governors may also wish to consider the following less important issues when constructing their action plan:

- The inclusion of training in child protection awareness for all new staff; (Paragraphs 38, 60)
- Ensuring the curriculum for pupils in Years 1 and 2 is linked to the National Curriculum rather than the Foundation Curriculum; (Paragraph 26)
- Continuing to develop the assessment procedures for the subjects where they are underdeveloped; (Paragraphs 46, 101, 107, 110, 126, 139)
- Enabling more co-ordinators to monitor and moderate pupils' work; (Paragraphs 56, 110, 126, 134, 139)
- Ensuring plans to provide further accreditation for the more able students in the Post-16 groups are implemented. (Paragraphs 25, 142)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	112
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	71

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	12	44	49	4	0	0	0
Percentage	11	40	45	4	0	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Three small group sessions taken by therapists are not included.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	101
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	31

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	11

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.5

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	.05

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

Swimming Awards 2001 - 2002

LEA Water Confidence Level 1

5 pupils gained awards

LEA Water Confidence Level 2

7 pupils gained awards

Amateur Swimming Association Watermanship Level 1

3 pupils gained awards

Distance Awards gained without buoyancy aids

5 metres – 2 pupils gained awards

10 metres – 3 pupils gained awards

15 metres – 1 pupil gained an award

25 metres – 1 pupil gained an award

Riding for the Disabled Awards

Grade 1 Riding and Stable Management

4 pupils gained awards

Grade 2 Riding

5 pupils gained awards

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	1
White	90
Any other minority ethnic group	3

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: N – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.8
Average class size	7.2

Education support staff: N – Y14

Total number of education support staff	37
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1233

Financial information

Financial year	2001/2
	£
Total income	1458292
Total expenditure	1438256
Expenditure per pupil	14101
Balance brought forward from previous year	-15673

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance carried forward to next year	4363
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	2
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2.6
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	101
Number of questionnaires returned	37

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	95	5	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	78	22	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	76	74	0	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	40	16	0	12
The teaching is good.	83	14	3	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	78	14	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	14	0	3	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	21	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	76	24	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	73	16	3	0	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	22	0	0	8
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	40	3	0	6

Other issues raised by parents

No other issues were raised by parents. They did comment very positively on the improvement in the curriculum for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children is very good.

Strengths

- Very good progress made in all areas of learning.
- Very high quality of teaching.
- Rich and interesting curriculum.
- Exemplary behaviour and very positive attitudes.
- All children are included in activities.
- A very good start to their education.

63. Since the last inspection, the good provision for children of Nursery and Reception age (Foundation Stage) has been improved to very good. Children start in the part-time Nursery class from the age of two. They transfer to the full time Nursery in the September following their fourth birthday. In special circumstances, full-time provision is available at an earlier age. Children start school with a wide range of medical and complex learning difficulties. The extremely varied range of learning experiences together with highly effective teaching provides a very supportive and interesting learning environment where young children increasingly feel safe and gain confidence. Staff work very well together to ensure that the very good start made in the part-time Nursery class is consolidated and built upon in the full-time Nursery and Reception class. The curriculum for all children in the Foundation Stage is very good. It provides a very positive individualised learning experience for these young children based upon the Early Learning Goals. As a result, children have a very good start to their school career, make very good progress and achieve very well in relation to their complex needs. The provision for children is a strength of the school.
64. All members of staff work very hard and are highly focused on meeting the needs of all the children whatever their difficulties, including those with additional special educational needs and those from homes where English is not the first language. As a result, they also make very good progress. All pupils are involved in activities. The quality of teaching and learning is very good and on occasions excellent, in all areas of learning, and this leads to very good progress. Teachers have an excellent understanding of the needs of these young children and the organisation of the classroom and children's behaviour are exemplary, as is the support from support staff. Lessons are extremely well planned to provide highly interesting activities that use a varied and stimulating range of resources to which children increasingly respond. Staff have formed very caring relationships with children and are very good role models. This ensures that children 'blossom' and become happy and relaxed, and are thus able to benefit fully from activities.
65. The provision is very well managed by a hardworking and very efficient co-ordinator, who has clear vision for the future development of the outdoor areas. She is very ably supported by all staff working within the Foundation Stage and they form a highly effective team. Staff have worked hard to ensure that the accommodation is bright, welcoming and stimulating. Resources, in particular, both teacher made and bought, are of a high quality and support learning very well.

Personal, social and emotional development

66. Children start in the part-time Nursery class with a wide variation of personal and social skills, but because of the positive way that staff work, all children make very good progress. Teaching is consistently very good and all members of staff promote children's personal and social development very well throughout their time in the Nursery classes. They provide very good role models as they treat the children warmly and with sensitivity, which ensures that children of all

abilities begin to respond to staff. Children develop their concentration spans and learn to listen to instructions and comply with requests. Early morning routines are clearly planned. Music plays and staff spend time greeting children, touching and using close eye contact with them to ensure that they are aware of their presence. More able children are encouraged to be independent and hang up their coats, take the register to the office and to choose an activity they can do on their own. Less able children increasingly respond to this support and smile at staff. As a result of this high level of support and care, children with additional special educational needs also begin to co-operate with their personal care routines.

67. Every opportunity is taken to develop children's personal and social skills, from encouraging more able children to make their own snacks, to constantly striving to find ways that less able children can indicate 'more' for example. Children spend half a day a week in a local mainstream school nursery. They happily enter the school and integrate very well with their mainstream friends and staff. Throughout their time they are encouraged to choose activities and to share with other children. Later, in their own class, two children were observed patiently taking it in turns on the computer, with warm encouragement and praise from the teacher. This activity lasted a few minutes and was a considerable achievement.

Communication, language and literacy

68. When children start in the part-time Nursery class, the skills of most children in communication, language and literacy are undeveloped. Staff in the Nursery classes focus on this aspect of learning very effectively. All teaching methods are designed to encourage children to express their needs and to develop a constant communication system through gestures, signing or speech. As a result, all children make very good progress. Staff continually talk to children and commentate on the experiences or activities. They are constantly alert to children's responses and act quickly to interpret, develop and encourage purposeful gestures or sounds. They use signing, photographs, personalised books and objects of reference to stimulate children's awareness and responses. More able and average-attaining children in the Nursery are able to communicate, using simple words, phrases and signs and are increasingly able to express their needs and also delight in making marks on paper. One child currently engrossed in books is beginning to recognise the link between pictures and words. Fascinated with this new experience constantly asks to 'go library'. Less able children and those with additional needs because of the consistent and varied experiences are beginning to indicate preferences, such as turning towards lights and suspended toys or at other times indicating 'no' by pushing away objects. Staff are very patient and always allow children time to respond, continually praising and encouraging responses.

Mathematical development

69. This area is also very effectively supported, by very good teaching, in both classes and children make very good progress. Throughout all activities staff encourage children to respond to experiences. Through handling and touching objects and playing games children are encouraged to gain awareness. Staff, for example, use cold and warm packs gently encouraging less able children to explore them so as to develop an awareness of opposites. In singing games and play, more able and average-attaining children are encouraged to recognise different coloured objects and count cups, for example, at snack time. Staff use every opportunity when interacting with children to support this aspect of learning. When playing with the water, more able children are encouraged to fill the big containers and to recognise full and empty while less able children are gently supported to explore objects at different heights and of different textures. As a result many children are increasingly aware of cause and effect and notice consequences, for example, when pushing toys.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

70. Consistently very good teaching based on very effective planning of a wide range of activities encourages children to use all their senses. This effectively introduces the children to a world of

exciting experiences and they learn very well. Visits and very stimulating resources make a significant contribution to learning.

71. In the white and dark rooms children of all abilities enjoy a range of experiences. Less able children and those with additional needs within these environments have spontaneous reflex responses to the lights and are beginning, because of patient support, to make purposeful movements to operate the switches and 'set off' vibrating toys in the classrooms. More able and average attaining children can operate a range of switches and can manipulate a large computer switch to change the photographs on the screen. More able children are able to move the mouse, in order to interact with the screen, moving icons in a simple matching game. Children join in birthday celebrations, taste different foods and visit a range of different environments. They enjoy exploring a range of textures and throughout these activities, because staff are continually monitoring and responding to the children's responses, they make very good progress. In one very effective lesson, for example, very young children experienced touching and handling a range of brushes. Staff continually talked about the experiences and responded to children's vocalisations and reflex responses. In this way one child took the toothbrush in his own hands and began to explore the brush unaided.
72. Older children have planted seeds and enjoyed making cakes. They are encouraged to use simple tools to stick materials onto paper and in this way not only become increasingly independent but also develop their hand control. Continuous monitoring by staff very effectively develops learning.

Physical development

73. A range of activities and therapies very effectively support this aspect of development and make a significant contribution to children's physical progress. Aromatherapy sessions, for example, in a relaxing environment, stimulate the physical senses of less able, non-mobile children. They often gurgle in delight and attempt to move when massaged gently. Physiotherapy and hydrotherapy sessions run by specialist staff also very effectively help develop body awareness and control. Large hammocks and swinging games help children to become aware of motion in a very effective activity. More able and mobile children also benefit from activities in the secure and safe soft playrooms, where they can explore moving around and gain confidence and skill without hurting themselves, while other less able children delight in rolling to explore coloured and shiny paper and toys without fear. Staff join in very effectively with children in these activities, encouraging them through voice, touch and gestures. This results in children growing in confidence. Children delight in these experiences and the outdoor play area is also used very effectively to encourage moving in large spaces. One young child, because of the high quality support from staff, discovered the ramp and kept trying to negotiate this obstacle, despite numerous falls. In addition, more able and mobile children have regular access to the hall where they explore large balls and gradually gain control over their bodies and large toys. Although children's attention is sometimes fleeting, the staff intervene at these times continually encouraging, modelling and guiding children, which results in very good progress over time.

Creative development

74. Children's creative development in the Nursery is promoted very well through art, music and a variety of activities using the senses. Skilled encouragement by teachers increases children's confidence to explore a wide variety of creative mediums. Children who initially were reluctant to explore painting become increasingly interested and once started are reluctant to stop. They show sheer pleasure in feeling and exploring the different textures. Music also effectively stimulates children's responses and is used very well throughout the whole day. At home times, goodbye songs signal the end to the day, while the song bag with a range of objects representing the nursery rhymes encourages more able children to express a preference for the songs they want to hear. Increasingly, more able children begin to shake simple instruments to the music. Less able children begin to investigate noisy activities and these are used very effectively by staff to gain a response from these children. For example, a child with more complex needs at the beginning of the inspection week had begun to purposefully move an arm. Staff, instantly alert to

this, developed this response and, through the use of an ocean drum placed under the hand, this child began to recognise that a downward movement resulted in a loud sound. By the end of the week this movement was persistent, deliberate and quite well developed to the delight of all who observed.

ENGLISH

Overall the provision for English is very good.

Strengths

- Very good progress in improving communication skills.
- Very good teaching and learning for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and Years 7 to 11.
- Good use of library provision.
- Good adaptation of the National Literacy Strategy.

Areas for improvement

- The good assessment scheme needs to be extended to allow increased flexibility for the more able pupils.
- Writing is not as well developed as reading and speaking and listening.

75. Achievement and progress in English is very good for pupils in Years 1 to 2 and Years 7 to 11, and good for pupils in Years 4 to 6, reflecting the quality of teaching and learning for these year groups. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and the very improved teaching of communication skills have had a very positive impact on standards. Another factor in the improvement in the standards of communication has been the joint partnership of very good speech and language therapy provision with the English co-ordinator. This partnership has supported all the staff through training in communication, have consulted with advisers in mainstream and other special schools and have used the information gained effectively to improve the standards throughout the school. Progress in reading is good owing to a good use and concentration of reading skills in library sessions. An increased use of information and communication technology (ICT) provision has improved writing throughout the school; however, the school recognises the need for a more concentrated effort by staff to improve further the basic writing skills of the more able pupils. More able Year 11 pupils are working towards the ALL in English and, at Post-16, students study for the OCR NSP awards in Communication.
76. Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in improving their speaking and listening and communication skills. By the end of Year 2, pupils, including those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, pay attention and respond to others. They learn to communicate using appropriate means, for example, eye pointing, signing and using symbols, occasionally the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS). They recognise and respond well to objects of reference such as plastic balls to represent the ball pool and a strip of towelling to represent swimming. All teachers consistently use pictures, photographs and symbols effectively to gain successfully the attention of less able pupils. Communication boards, communication machines and visual timetables provide a successful structure for the school day and enable pupils to understand what is happening next. Pupils express their feelings through signing, vocalisation and body movements. One Year 2 more able pupil working with a support assistant counted beakers and clearly said 'Teddy wants more water and I want a drink too'. During a literacy session based on the poem 'I like spaghetti' a Year 3 pupil used her communication machine to say 'I like spaghetti and tomato sauce too'. By the time they are in Year 6, many pupils have built up a good repertoire of signs; for example, a pupil with a hearing impairment, signs to signify that hearing levels are alright. Pupils have increased understanding of language and respond to requests. More able pupils develop their language skills further and increase their vocabulary. When the teacher using different kinds of equipment to represent sounds asks the group 'Who wants a go?' they respond in sentences such as 'I do, please'.
77. Signing becomes more fluent as pupils move into the secondary part of the school. For example, by the time they are in Year 9, pupils are signing their preference to having a TV dinner on their laps or at the table. Through skilled questioning by staff, pupils are able to explain what they did on holiday. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties clearly show their likes and dislikes, for example, by pushing away the tray of grass, sand and gravel they did not wish to put their feet in. Pupils by the end of Year 11 continue to make very good progress in speaking and listening; during a literacy session with mainly Year 10 pupils with profound and multiple learning

difficulties, staff and pupils tap rhythms, clicking fingers and using chiming bells and wind chimes to convey meaning to a story about a ball. A more able Year 11 pupil could answer the question 'The day before Wednesday is Tuesday and that was yesterday and tomorrow is Thursday!' Communication is linked very well with music. For example, pupils responded well using various musical instruments to beat out the rhythm of the stories on 'The Ball'. In another session on communication and body awareness, staff used a chamois leather cloth on the limbs of pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties while a car song was being played. This was greeted with great shouts of laughter and enjoyment from a number of pupils within the group

78. Pupils' achievement and progress in reading is very good throughout the school. The National Literacy Strategy has been adapted well to meet the needs of all the pupils and staff have been fully trained. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils can read simple 'I can read' books and a few recognise certain words, for example, 'in', 'the', 'classroom', and pupils' names. Pupils can match simple words on the computer, identify key words and recognise their own names. All classes use the library regularly, they handle and look at books and by the end of Year 6 the more able know the conventions of reading, for example, following text from left to right, top to bottom and page following page. One Year 6 pupil recognised letters of the alphabet by shape, knowing his name began with the letter S. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties clearly enjoy stories told with the help of props that use the senses. They react with smiles and giggles to the 'rain', a spray in the 'pond' represented by a large blue sheet, and feel the hay on their bodies as they imitate following the route of a story called *Rosie's Walk*. The use of puppets captures and holds their interest and helps their understanding.
79. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils discuss characters such as the talking hens and chickens in a video extract. They clearly state what they think will happen next. They choose reading or picture books from the library. Many pupils identify words with the help of symbols and read symbol books. By the end of Year 11, more able pupils' reading skills improve much further: one Year 11 pupil could read any library book chosen for her fluently and with accuracy. Pupils could recall what had happened in the previous week's video clip based on *Mathilda*, by Roald Dahl. Most pupils know that words and pictures carry meaning. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties continue to enjoy stories and rhymes. They anticipate what will happen next in a well-known story and many study and interact with pictures and photographs.
80. Writing skills develop well throughout the school. By the end of Year 2, more able pupils use the computer to operate a tracker ball and click when on the correct page. They colour in pictures with support. Pupils touch and trace flour and sand through their fingers. More able pupils begin to understand that marks and symbols convey meaning: for example, they scribble alongside a picture. Pupils begin to develop a correct grip for holding a pencil and most are making intentional marks on paper. By the end of Year 6, more able pupils can produce a drawing to accompany writing and they can track, overwrite and copy under or over a model making horizontal, vertical and circular lines; with support they make and complete patterns. By the end of Year 9, more able pupils overwrite, writing their own names and one or two other simple words correctly from memory. A Year 9 pupil used words to make up a story about a painting *By the River* by Serrat. Using the computer, she wrote 'A boy standing by the river, lying in the sun.' Pupils begin to group letters and leave spaces between them as they write separate words. By the end of Year 11, less able pupils draw lines across and down, draw an object dot to dot, and can colour simple shapes staying within the lines. More able pupils can, as part of their handwriting practice, write out their own cheques and address envelopes. They continue to over or underwrite and can write simple words independently. There are pupils who are ready to move forward further and the co-ordinator has recognised that independent writing needs to be developed.
81. The provision for and achievement of pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and difficult behaviour are very good. They have high levels of staff support to help them use computers, often using switches. Pupils are fully included in the literacy programmes. All staff ensure that all pupils achieve their potential and that they make progress in communicating with others. During a Year 9 literacy session, pupils with autistic spectrum disorders could sing the appropriate words 'skinny, fat and running feet' in response to a poem about shoes.

82. Literacy skills are taught very well through all subjects. This has been achieved by the very hard work and co-operative manner of working between the teachers in the school and the two speech and language therapists, who give very effective support to developing communication. Vocabulary is taught well and pupils are helped to recognise letters and sounds. For example, in a geography lesson, pupils looked at pictures of a river flowing down hill and appropriate words were used such as 'flow', 'cloud', 'mountains and hills'. Pupils are encouraged to write and during an art lesson a more able Year 5 pupil attempted to write names on paintings. Speaking and listening skills are emphasised. Pupils are asked to listen, reinforced by the sign and encouraged to respond to carefully considered questions such as, in a mathematics lesson, 'What's next?' 'What shall we sing?' 'How many?'
83. In all lessons teachers plan well and clearly identify what they expect pupils to learn. They select work to suit individual needs and use the very good resources in an imaginative way. This helps to interest pupils and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment. Effective strategies are underpinned by good assessment of pupils' progress, which ensures that activities are well matched to pupils' ability. The school's communication system has four bands and was devised by the co-ordinator and the speech and language therapist. This provides a very good basis for staff to work from and is instrumental in the very effective teaching throughout the school. It does, however, have an apparent ceiling at band four and a small, but significant, number of pupils achieve higher levels. Teachers and support assistants manage pupils well using a great deal of praise and encouragement. Their knowledge of the pupils and strong relationships they have with them ensure that they get the best from them. The library is used very well to foster a love of books and stories. Many classroom displays celebrate pupils' work, which encourages them to feel proud of what they have achieved; for example, in Years 10 and 11, photographs of sensory work on *Macbeth* and a display showing the family connections of the Montagues and Capulets in *Romeo and Juliet*. The subject contributes very well to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development through the contents of its lessons. A few teachers have received training in using PECs for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders and this is being developed, although at present it is not used consistently in all classes.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the provision for mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Progress of pupils in Years 1 and 2 and 10 and 11.
- Quality of teaching for pupils in Years 1 and 2 and 10 and 11.
- Subject is managed very well.
- Relationships are excellent.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning in Years 3 to 9.

84. Pupils' achievements and progress in mathematics are good and they make good progress because the majority of pupils, those in Years 3 to 9, are taught well. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 make very good progress, and pupils in Years 10 and 11 now make excellent progress as a result of the very high quality of teaching in these year groups. There has been a good improvement since the last inspection.
85. The National Numeracy Strategy has had a very positive effect on the teaching and learning of mathematics. The training and professional development of teaching and support staff, along with considerably improved resources, have had a significant effect on outcomes. The teaching of the basic skills of number, shape, measurement and data handling has improved, with a consequent good effect on learning throughout the school. More able pupils count up to 15 and 20, recognise a variety of shapes and patterns, describe the value of coins and combine them, have an

understanding of basic concepts of time, and set out simple block graphs. Less able pupils make good progress with basic number work, matching, sorting and recognising simple shapes.

86. By the end of Year 2, pupils make very good progress because of the very good quality of teaching and use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Very good planning for a variety of abilities enables all pupils to succeed at tasks well suited to their needs. A more able pupil can identify and match pictures of animals into the same sets, counting to five and recognising the numbers. The teacher's use of very good teaching aids enables her to show how three comes after two in a line of toy pigs. Less able pupils of the same age begin to recognise numbers up to three. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties explore the shape and properties of objects, particularly toys that are often pushed and pulled and turned. They begin to make good connections between cause and effect, for example, will activate a musical switch. Pupils at the end of Year 6 make good progress and this reflects the good teaching. Elements of the National Numeracy Strategy continue to be used effectively. More able pupils understand the order of numbers up to 15 and can make a number line using the computer independently. Pupils with more profound difficulties use a till in the classroom toyshop and begin to sort coins by their size. The teacher uses good questioning skills such as 'How many?' and 'What do we do next?', which ensures pupils concentrate and try to think out the correct answer. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders make very good progress when matching shapes and completing simple, often inset, jigsaw puzzles. They sort by colour and more able pupils sort by more than one attribute, for example, the colour and type of model vehicle. They are able to concentrate and complete the task with the patient support of the teacher. Pupils with very difficult behaviour learn to count to five during intensive play sessions. The effective use of a counting song encourages pupils to join in.
87. Good teaching and use of relevant and effective resources ensure that, by the end of Year 9, most pupils have made good progress. More able pupils build on their number skills and are beginning to understand concepts of time and make progress in learning about money. They understand simple vocabulary of length, describing lines that are 'longer' and 'shorter'. Pupils sort and match familiar objects and understand 'full' and 'half-full' when measuring capacity. Less able pupils begin to recognise a variety of different patterns and shapes. They identify a circle and square and understand basic concepts of time through the days of the week and months of the year. They continue to improve their number skills. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties participate in weighing and sorting. They pour sand from side to side on a balance to make it move, help locate pairs of socks, and match toiletries. By the end of Year 11, pupils are making excellent progress. Teachers' very high quality of planning, extremely well chosen resources and effective management of pupils have a significant effect on learning. Activities are well suited to pupils' individual needs. More able pupils identify sophisticated shapes such as a hexagon and spiral. They give examples of spirals in everyday objects including pasta, shells and springs that they have brought in from home as part of their homework. All pupils make examples of spirals from a variety of materials. They cut shapes from paper, roll out play dough in two colours to make a Swiss roll and cut through it to show a spiral. One pupil clearly describes different patterns of stripes, spots and checks. All pupils are making excellent progress in number work. Pupils with profound and multiple difficulties put objects together and are building on their knowledge of basic number skills. Many learn to beat in time and to anticipate events, getting a lot of enjoyment from staff saying 'one-two-three' and then making something happen. There is a clear understanding of 'more', particularly for an activity they enjoy.
88. Numeracy is taught well throughout many other subjects. In a swimming session, for example, pupils measure the depth of the water. In the after-school Sports Club they count up to 10 while learning to throw beanbags. The mini-enterprise run by older pupils requires them to add and subtract money as they sell fruit and vegetables to members of staff. Pupils are helped to explore patterns. In geography they look at the shape of riverbeds and in art make repeating patterns when printing. Staff use 'one, two, three' as a lead in to activities so pupils learn to anticipate that actions will take place after 'three', such as being lifted from the ball pool or feeling 'rain' from a spray.

89. Overall teaching and learning are good. Although teaching and learning are very good in Years 1 and 2, this is not sustained and the quality drops to good for Years 3 to 9. In Years 10 and 11, the teaching and learning are greatly improved, to excellent. Planning of lessons and knowledge and understanding of the needs of all the pupils have a significant effect on progress in mathematics. Additionally, in Years 10 and 11, teachers maintain an excellent pace so pupils' interest is maintained and methods chosen are carefully selected to ensure all pupils make exceptional progress. All staff have now been trained in the National Numeracy Strategy. There is excellent use of imaginative resources, many designed and made by teachers and teaching assistants themselves. Teachers ensure that classrooms are very attractive environments for pupils to work in and wall displays reinforce all the elements of the National Numeracy Strategy. The celebration of pupils' success contributes to the very good working atmosphere in classrooms. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent. Pupils are very willing to assist the teacher put out equipment and clear up at the end of the lesson. Older pupils and more able younger pupils are encouraged to work independently. Speaking and listening skills are encouraged through very good questioning of pupils by teachers and teaching assistants. Good use is also made of ICT and many operate computer programs unaided and unsupervised.
90. Assessment, both for individual pupils and for mathematics in the school as a whole, is good. Most pupils have a target for numeracy written into their Individual Education Plans. Teachers record pupils' progress both formally every half term, and more informally at the end of each lesson in discussions which draw out what pupils have learned. Written work is commented on and there are often clear indications on how much the pupil completed themselves and what the input of the teacher was.
91. The management of the subject is very good. The subject co-ordinator has consulted with teachers to produce thorough long, medium and short-term plans. These are used consistently across all age-ranges. Monitoring of teaching and learning now takes place. He has ensured that all staff are trained in the National Numeracy Strategy. This has a very good practical effect in classes when support staff can now be included in the support of individual pupils in mathematics.

SCIENCE

Overall, the provision for science is very good.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good overall.
- Monitoring of planning and teaching.
- Focused work for the different groups in the school.
- Very good subject co-ordination.

Areas for Improvement

- Development of science in the local environment.

92. Since the last inspection the teaching and learning of science has improved and is now very good. Science is taught to pupils in Years 1 to 9. These observations and the scrutiny of pupils' work indicate that, overall, the subject provides for the needs of pupils very well and their achievement and progress are very good. Pupils' progress and achievement are very good in Years 1 and 2 and 7 to 9 and good in Years 3 to 6. The increased resources, development of schemes of work and the introduction of new levels of assessment have made further improvements. These factors have contributed to higher standards. Discussion forms an important part of all lessons and in this way pupils improve their speaking and listening skills.
93. By the end of Year 2, pupils are beginning to learn about a range of materials through investigations and practical activities. During the inspection one class was investigating, using their senses, various dairy products including milk, yoghurt and cheeses and expressing their various likes and dislikes. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties become aware of their immediate environment through touch, smell and sound. By the end of Year 6 pupils are continuing to develop their experience and understanding of science. For example, they improve

their skills in observing by exploring water and its properties in liquid and solid stages. They look at water in different settings - pictures of a lake in winter and rain water - and then feel water from a spray. Pupils look at feel and react to water. They pour it and notice the difference between hot and cold water and water in ice-cube form. Pupils learn to handle an ice-cube and respond to the question 'Is it hot or cold?' Before observing the crushing of an ice-cube, pupils learned that ice-cubes would not pass through a hole in the sieve but water does. A few pupils made ice-lollies in the primary food technology room. All these activities not only enhance their knowledge of science but also provide opportunities to develop their communication skills.

94. By the end of Year 9, pupils make very good progress. They make studies of food and taste apples, potatoes, sweets, cheese and onion crisps and grapefruit. They develop their knowledge and understanding of healthy living and the importance of exercise, cleanliness, good food, fruit and sleep. Those with profound and multiple learning difficulties develop good eye contact and react to the sensory experiences of handling materials and plants. All the pupils responded positively to the multi-sensory experiences provided. In another lesson pupils were establishing features of the natural world and in particular plants. They listened to the story of *The Tiny Seed* before investigating their plants, grass and herbs. They learned the importance of sun, rain and soil to growth in plants and one group crushed their herbs in order to make a bread mixture. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' personal development because they begin to appreciate differences and how to make choices. This is particularly evident in their studies of food and taste.
95. The quality of planning and the focus upon meeting the needs of the different groups of pupils in the school is very good. Teachers use a range of activities to consolidate learning and to develop basic skills for all pupils. The preparation of appropriate resources to match the subject ensures pupils have practical activities related to the topic. In the very good lessons there is a sense of fun: for example, making a game of tasting and smelling and recording likes and dislikes with smiley faces. Teachers have also developed good question and answer techniques and augmentative communication strategies to ensure that all pupils join in and understand what has to be learned. Teachers and support staff co-operate closely and ensure that pupils learn effectively. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and work planned to help them to achieve their targets. Teachers have good expectations of the pupils and stress the need for attention and safety. The most effective teaching methods use as many of the senses as possible. For example, in one lesson on the properties of plants they experienced a range of textures, scents, sights and sensations. Pupils' work is assessed and matched to the curriculum through the use of 'P' levels that are broken down further. These assessments of academic targets help staff to ensure pupils make good progress overall.
96. The improvement in science teaching is because there is very good subject co-ordination and management. The co-ordinator has monitored very effectively the planning and the teaching as well as providing advice on the planning of lessons. She has a good overview of the subject and a working knowledge of how teachers implement the subject policy. Assessment of pupils' work is carried out very well from a list of assessment statements and progress is judged against these levels. Now that the science programme is clearly planned throughout the school, the next stage of using the wider environment to help pupils learn is being planned to include opportunities to explore different habitats such as a pond, meadow and growing areas.

ART AND DESIGN

Provision for art and design is good.

Strengths

- Pupils' progress and achievement, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is good overall and often very good.
- Exciting topics and materials.

Areas for Improvement

- Development of assessment to monitor achievements and for setting targets for progress.

97. Overall, pupils' progress and achievement are good. They are very good for pupils in Years 10 and 11. This is a good improvement since the last inspection when progress was satisfactory overall. This improvement is the result of an increase in the quality of teaching, especially in planning to meet the range of needs of pupils in each class.
98. By the end of Year 2, most pupils choose colours that they like for their work. More able pupils make circular marks on their paper when they draw with crayons and use paint and paintbrushes independently, for example, as they paint a facemask. They learn to make rubbings using wax crayons on textured surfaces. Less able pupils help to choose materials, such as leaves, to add to collages. They explore rough and smooth surfaces and shiny materials and print using sponges and potatoes. Pupils explore the effect that a comb can make on wet paint and help to stick materials on an outline of a face. They use toy car wheels to make interesting prints and investigate the different patterns they can make in clay. Pupils in Year 6 make prints of butterflies by folding over a painted wing to create the same pattern on the other wing. More able pupils draw recognisable drawings of people, producing stick figures. Pupils study individual colours. When looking at green, they explore the shades of colour, for example in grass, a toy frog and a bottle. They use their knowledge of colour to look carefully at pictures by Monet.
99. By the end of Year 9, pupils further develop exciting techniques and produce very interesting work. They make vivid prints using marbling inks on water. Many learn to weave, starting with coloured paper strips and the more able use coloured wools and small pieces of plastic netting to create colourful patterns. Less able pupils choose the colours and patterns for their work, using orange for their picture of a volcano. They make marks on paper and are helped to use scissors to cut pieces for collage work. Most pupils help to make cards to celebrate Divali, making Mendhi patterns with glitter. More able pupils make evocative pictures of Munch's *The Scream*. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 study the work of famous painters, for example Van Gogh. They paint a bright picture of sunflowers in the style of this artist. More able pupils use a range of techniques on the same piece of work to make wonderful effects, for example, using montage, mono printing and collage to depict different feelings, including 'sad', 'angry', 'happy' and 'calm'. They further develop their use of simple computer software to make patterns. Less able pupils enjoy the reflection made from shiny materials. They track light shining through coloured tissue paper and explore a wider range of textures, such as wood and wool. Pupils express their preferences, for example, choosing black on white rather than white on black. They point to yellow as a happy colour.
100. Teaching is good overall and very good for the oldest pupils. In the best lessons teachers make the work really exciting, with a range of resources to develop pupils' imaginations and interests. Planning is detailed and activities move smoothly from one to the next so that no time is lost. Teachers and support assistants work really well as a team so that each pupil is fully part of the lesson. This results in pupils attending and concentrating very well and wanting to do their best. Staff encourage pupils to take part by using signing effectively and giving time for pupils to respond.
101. Art and design are well led and managed. The long-term plans of what is to be taught show that pupils study and experience a broad range of art and design work. The co-ordinator has started to develop these plans further to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are covered in sufficient detail for pupils to build on skills, knowledge and understanding as they move up through the school. She has started to use information from 'P' levels to detail the key aspects of learning to be covered within a topic and within each lesson. This development is alongside improvement in the assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do. Pupils'

achievements are recorded at the end of each topic; however, this does not yet build up into a picture that can be used to plan for future work and set targets for individual pupils' progress.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision for design and technology is good.

Strengths

- Pupils' progress and achievement, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- Teaching is good overall and often very good.
- Accreditation awards for the older pupils.
- Excellent specialist rooms.

Areas for Improvement

- Assessment of what pupils learn and monitoring of how well they are making progress.

102. Pupils make good progress and achieve well throughout the school. They do very well in Years 10 and 11. This is the result of the quality of teaching and the use of the Accreditation for Life and Living (ALL) award scheme. This work is based on very good assessment, where the results are used to plan further work and ensure pupils' progress is very good. The level of pupils' progress in design and technology across the school is a good improvement since the last inspection.
103. By the end of Year 2, pupils, with skilled support from staff, have begun to learn to use different tools and implements, for example when mixing and cutting. They have tasted different fruits, such as pineapple, mango and melon, expressing which ones they like and which they do not. Less able pupils have explored different textures of materials that they might use in cooking, such as flour, dough and custard. More able pupils learn to open different types of containers, including a screw top and they decorate paper carrier bags. In Year 6 pupils taste an increasing range of flavours in their food technology lessons and choose which they like best. Less able pupils use their sense of smell as they explore materials, for example with pot-pourri. More able pupils build towers from plastic building bricks, showing increasing steadiness and control so that the constructions get taller before falling over.
104. By the end of Year 9, most pupils have learned to use tools more effectively and with greater care, for example, using glue spreaders and brushes with increasing accuracy when making papier-mâché pigs. They make a moneybox from a cardboard tube and decorate it attractively. Pupils help to prepare a wider range of foods, including pizza and fairy cakes, and begin to weigh and measure. More able pupils make a simple breakfast and learn how to boil and poach an egg. All pupils increase their ability to express choices about things they like and do not like, for example as they compare sweet and sour foods. They understand more about which foods are healthy ones, and know that fruit and vegetables are particularly good for them.
105. In Year 11, as part of the home management unit in their ALL award scheme, pupils work hard and with enjoyment as they prepare a meal. They make out a menu and help to find the ingredients when they go shopping. In sending an invitation to someone in school to come to the meal, pupils use their literacy skills well. They prepare egg sandwiches, spreading the bread with margarine and then with the eggs they have boiled, shelled and mashed. Throughout, they think carefully about the need for hygiene. Less able pupils are very clear in their responses to a wider range of tastes and smells. They explore the contents of containers, while the more able pupils use a wider range of fastenings on these containers, such as press-studs, buttons and zips. A particularly exciting piece of work was making a model car from cardboard boxes and other materials. In this project, more able pupils used tools with increasing accuracy and confidence. They chose the most appropriate materials and then cut, arranged and stuck the components together. Another exciting lesson for less able pupils involved making interesting drinks called 'Calypso Cocktail' and 'Caribbean Smoothie'. In this lesson pupils helped to cut up fruit and add other ingredients including orange juice, honey and milk.

106. Teaching and learning are good overall and very good for older pupils in Years 10 and 11. In the best lessons, teachers have taken great care to plan lessons really well to involve pupils to the full, based on their detailed knowledge of each pupil. Resources are prepared in advance and the activities are interesting and help pupils of all ages and abilities to want to learn. Teachers and support assistants work well together as a team, using signing and electronic communicators effectively so that pupils can contribute as much as possible. Teachers monitor how well pupils are learning by careful questioning and set tasks that challenge. Pupils respond well to these approaches, try hard and concentrate well.
107. Plans show an appropriate emphasis on food technology within the broad range of topics covered in design and technology. These plans are being developed to show in more detail the specific aspects of what a pupil is intended to learn in each topic. This planning is to form the basis of more detailed assessment of pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding from which progress can be tracked and individual targets set. At the present there is a detailed assessment of learning at the end of each topic but this does not build up a picture of progress over a longer period of time that can be used for planning work and checking how well pupils are doing in all aspects of the subject. The co-ordinator monitors what pupils are to learn and provides effective leadership for the subject throughout the school. Excellent specialist rooms suitable for pupils of all ages and very good resources help pupils to do well.

GEOGRAPHY

Provision for geography is good.

Strengths

- Standards in teaching and learning are very good.
- Quality of the curriculum is good.
- Shared commitment to improvement.
- Accommodation and learning resources.

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring, assessment and tracking of standards.

108. Pupils make very good progress in geography, which is good improvement since the previous inspection. By Year 2, pupils look for *Bertie Bear* in different places around the school such as in assembly, in outside play areas and in the classroom. They understand familiar places and people and what they are there for. By Year 6, pupils explore the wider environment outside school and understand that buildings are used for different purposes, for example that shops sell things and hospitals are used to care for the sick. Pupils follow a route to places, using different modes of transport to arrive at their destination. They understand that different types of clothing need to be worn depending on the weather conditions. The inner courtyards and gardens provide them with knowledge of living things. This develops an understanding that plants grow, and that fish need food to survive.
109. Pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 use digital photography to record area visits and the physical features found locally. They plan and record journeys and use maps and plans successfully to understand physical facts, such as fields or woodland. The topic on rainforests allowed pupils to understand that creatures need different conditions to live successfully. Pupils successfully undertake trips to buy seeds and compost. They understand that seeds need water, warmth and light to grow. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 develop an awareness of the local environment. They undertake numerous visits, for example, to the local library where they take an active part in group interviews. They understand the importance of public buildings and their purposes. Pupils have recorded their likes and dislikes of each visited area; their records show how and when visits were made. They plot routes on maps of Bletchley and pick out and name the surrounding areas of Netherfield and Willen. Their topics on transport and water show how pupils understand transport past and present and have a good understanding of the uses of water in canals, rivers and lakes.

110. Teaching and learning are at least good and are often very good. Teachers have high expectations of what their pupils can do and are very aware of safety issues. Pupils are grouped well and staff are deployed excellently to allow all pupils support when they need it, yet extend their learning and to succeed in a very positive manner. The planning of lessons is, on the whole, good and teachers use questions and answers to very good effect to judge how much their pupils know. However, the co-ordinator has identified the need to extend monitoring and assessment so that pupils' abilities may be tracked and recorded more usefully. The curriculum is broad and very relevant and gains pupils' interest very well. Resources and accommodation are good and are used effectively to improve standards.

HISTORY

Provision for history is unsatisfactory because it is not taught regularly.

Strengths

- Exciting theme weeks.

Areas for Improvement

- Insufficient teaching.
- Unsatisfactory progress.

111. There has been unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection, when history was reported to be satisfactory across all the school. Since the beginning of the current school year planning for history has changed. For pupils in Years 1 to 6, during a five-year curriculum cycle, history is planned to be taught for three terms only. As a result, no history has been taught this year. The topics planned are relevant, but this is not satisfactory, as pupils' skills are not continuously or progressively developed. For pupils in Years 7 to 9, current planning leads to history only being taught for one week during a school year. Although this week includes a wide and varied range of learning experiences, this does not ensure that pupils' skills and understanding are developed. As a result, the planning of what is to be taught is unsatisfactory.
112. No evidence of current work for pupils in Years 1 to 6 was available. No teaching was observed, and therefore, because history has not been taught this year, no judgements can be made about teaching and learning for these pupils. Older pupils have undertaken one week of work when they studied the Victorians. Photographs and teachers' planning indicate that there were exciting experiences. These included: a visit to a Victorian house, where some pupils were able to wear authentic costumes, dancing in Victorian style, making and tasting Victorian style foods and spending a day experiencing life as a Victorian school child. This work was interesting and well planned indicating that the quality of learning is good. However, overall, the lack of regular teaching leads to unsatisfactory progress.
113. In the past, history has been a strong focus of the curriculum and evidence suggests that it provided a source of interesting experiences for pupils. The co-ordinator is very aware of the current shortcomings in curriculum planning. She is very keen to re-establish regular teaching and to develop the skills of staff awareness, in order to ensure that history becomes a source for enriching pupils' experiences and a means of encouraging communication and other key skills.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for information and communication technology is good.

Strengths

- Teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11.
- Provision and use of resources.
- Use of information and communication technology in all subjects.

Areas for improvement

- Completion of review of assessment systems.

114. Pupils' progress and achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) is good for pupils from Year 1 to Year 9. It is very good for pupils in Years 10 and 11 because the quality of teaching and learning is very good for these pupils.
115. Year 1 and 2 pupils use a variety of simple switches and communication aids, particularly to make choices. They use the equipment in the dark room and by operating a switch turn displays of lights and bubbles on and off. They react very positively to the changes that they can make, watching carefully, making happy sounds and grinning. Other pupils in Year 1 can use switch-operated toys, turning them on and off. By Year 2, most pupils can use switches well and many use a variety of other equipment linked to computers such as a large simple mouse device called a tracker ball. With help, the more able use art programs to make their own pictures. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties begin to learn about cause and effect and improve their communication skills using speech output devices. During Years 3 to 5, pupils continue to use switches. In English lessons, they turn on talking books and with help can select programs from the computer screen. By Year 6, pupils use programs such as 'Clicker' to make a number line and complete sequences to ten including correcting mistakes on the screen.
116. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 have increased the range of equipment they can control such as the television and microwave as well as switches and computers. They can use the Internet to find pictures and more able pupils use a mouse independently. Pupils use ICT in many of their lessons using programs about different subjects with little help, for example, in mathematics working on selecting shapes. They use word processors, and begin to save their work and print it. By Year 9, pupils use ICT effectively in many situations, for example, using 'First Artist' to make a picture. They use the mouse well, moving the pointer onto icons and using the mouse buttons to choose colours and paint effects. Year 10 and 11 pupils continue to use switches and computers in their lessons and to record their work. They become more independent loading programs without help and saving and printing their work. By the end of Year 11, pupils use specialist equipment such as digital cameras and videos effectively to record their experiences.
117. In all subjects, ICT is taught well. It is used in mathematics to reinforce counting and in geography to record events during a visit. Opportunities are taken to ensure pupils make choices using ICT, particularly for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties when using the white and dark rooms. Many of the school staff, including support assistants, have very good ICT skills including a detailed knowledge of the equipment available in the school. They use this knowledge well to assist pupils in lessons. ICT contributes well to pupils' personal development giving them the chance to communicate and record their work in new and exiting ways.
118. Teaching and learning of ICT are good for pupils from Year 1 to Year 9 and very good for Years 10 and 11. Where teaching and learning are of very high quality, very clear objectives are set for lessons and plans show where ICT will be used. Staff ensure pupils have a clear picture of what they must do to succeed. The content of the lessons is appropriate to the age of the pupils and opportunities to use technology are chosen with much care to allow pupils to achieve well. The teachers and support staff work very well together using a good humoured and positive approach to ensure that all pupils take a full part in the lessons and that their contributions and efforts are recognised. All teachers plan lessons well to use switches and other equipment and make it meaningful and fun for pupils. This interests them and helps them learn. Because of careful setting of objectives, pupils are able to improve their skills, for example, learning how to operate switches to make things work. A wide range of resources is used well including mathematics programs to sequence numbers and a touch screen to make music. In geography they can find pictures using the computer. Pupils are encouraged by teachers to become more independent and their skills are assessed and recorded well.
119. The management of ICT throughout the school is good. The co-ordinator has a clear plan of action for improvement. Teachers are taking part in New Opportunities Fund training. They have

completed the first module and are beginning the second. The co-ordinator is planning to use this as an opportunity to work with colleagues to improve assessment procedures. The range of resources available in ICT is very good. The school has a very effective network system well managed and cared for by a technician who supports staff and pupils very well. Future plans include further links with parents and the provision of more equipment for pupils to use at home.

120. There has been good improvement since the last inspection particularly in the provision of technical support and networked services. This has provided staff with the support they need to use ICT effectively in lessons.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Provision for modern foreign languages is unsatisfactory because it is not taught often enough.

Strengths

- Good content of modules taught.
- Interesting theme weeks.

Areas for Improvement

- Gaps too long between teaching sessions.
- Inadequate progress.

121. It was not possible to observe French lessons during the inspection because French is taught in the spring term through a six-week course for pupils in Years 7 to 9. In addition there is a focused European week taking place at the end of the summer term when the whole school concentrates on the language, customs, food and music of different countries, for example, Italy, Germany, France and Spain. Last year, mainstream pupils from a local secondary school came in to the school to learn and practise German songs for German week and Redway pupils taught them the Makaton signs to go with the singing.

122. The curriculum co-ordinator is a language specialist but does not teach French within the six-week block. There is a good plan of what is to be taught each year and a policy document, good resources and six separate module learning packs. However, the organisation of French teaching within the school has significant drawbacks, especially for pupils whose ability to retain key facts is limited. As a result, pupils do not make the progress they should and opportunities to build on previous learning are lost. The school is considering extending the modern foreign languages (MFL) provision so that it is continuous throughout the academic year. There has been an unsatisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

MUSIC

Provision for music is good overall.

Strengths

- Impact of music around the school.
- Numerous opportunities to listen to and create music.
- Participation of all pupils.
- Provision of visiting musicians and other local music sources.

Areas for Improvement

- Development of plans showing what is to be taught each year.
- Time for the co-ordinator to monitor the teaching and learning.
- Procedures for assessment to inform future planning.

123. It was only possible to observe music lessons for pupils in Years 3 to 9; however; these lessons, teachers' planning and records indicate that pupils achieve well and make good progress. This is a very good improvement since the last inspection. There has been an increase in the amount of

creative music and composition, with more opportunities for pupils to experiment with a wide range of instruments including xylophones, chime bars, electronic keyboards and a range of drums. Each section of the school has a good selection of percussion instruments and good use is made of a music trolley to store a range of instruments and to make them readily available in the school when they are needed. There is also a good selection of recorded music on CD and tape. This resource is widely used by teachers in classrooms and to create mood and atmosphere in lessons and around the school. Music plays in the main corridor area and pupils, staff and visitors can be seen humming or singing to the tunes. The school technician plays a significant support role in helping teachers to provide music in lessons and creating an atmosphere of sound around the school; for example, the use of a sound beam to trigger synthesised sounds from a keyboard. Good use is made of ICT.

124. By Year 6, pupils have explored a wide range of noise-making instruments and developed their knowledge and understanding of cause and effect. They experience good opportunities to listen to different types of music involving a wide range of instruments. Some pupils make their own instruments and play them. They are also given opportunities to select and play with their favourite instruments. For example, pupils explored wind instruments to discover how they worked. The quality of teaching and learning are good. Teachers ensure technical vocabulary is understood and pupils learn the meaning of words like 'blow', 'more', 'sing' and 'listen'. Lessons are planned well and well-prepared materials and instruments ensure pupils' interest is gained and maintained. For example, a balloon is used to illustrate the activity of blowing, and then the process is related to the playing of a wind instrument. The use of music in an introductory activity for the day is effective. For example, the mood is set through pupils listening to Irish and guitar music and they then play their chosen instrument.
125. Older pupils make very good progress in learning how to control increasing levels of sound both in the classroom and in related activities. For example, pupils visiting the local church played notes on the organ. At this stage communication is linked to music for many pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties. They learn to improve their communication and listening skills and respond to volume, tempo, rhythm and tone. Music is related to daily activities such as 'Hello', 'Can you join in?' 'Can you copy me?' and the importance of sound and silence. More able pupils listen to contrasting sounds and music related to nature. They explore a range of musical instruments and are given opportunities to compose and perform. Pupils listen to selections of recorded music and explore outdoor sounds like birdsong and sounds associated with the beach. In these lessons the teaching and learning are consistently good and, at times, very good. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and challenge pupils of all abilities so that their listening skills develop. Staff ensure that all pupils have opportunities to use instruments to explore sound and to enjoy singing. They also begin to develop their creative skills.
126. The subject is led by an experienced and well-qualified co-ordinator. Although no time has been made available for music lessons to be observed, the planning of lessons is monitored regularly and advice offered to staff when it is required. A good subject policy is in place and work has started on developing the scheme of work. Assessment is at an early stage of development. At the moment it is measured by individual teachers and what pupils are expected to learn is stated for each band in music. There is currently insufficient linkage between assessment and the individual progress of pupils in the different bands.
127. Pupils' experience of music is broadened through visiting performers, attending musical events, concerts and assemblies. For example, pupils enjoyed an enriching experience provided by members of the Milton Keynes City Orchestra. They developed their listening skills and were challenged to explore sounds with the players. Pupils have a wide experience of music. During the inspection, the following were heard: Eva Cassidy, Vivaldi and French Canadian pieces as well as jazz, folk, and country-dance music. A particular strength of the subject is the way teachers make every effort to ensure that all pupils are able to participate and enjoy the experience of music in a variety of forms including singing and listening to music as well as exploring sounds with their selected instruments.

128. A music therapist supports a small group of pupils weekly. Good links exist between the therapists and the teachers concerned to ensure that, when appropriate, the therapist supports the work done in classrooms. The sessions emphasise the importance of music as communication and expression and provide opportunities for pupils to make choices.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, provision for physical education is good.

Strengths

- Very good teaching and learning for pupils in Years 7 to 11.
- Good social and personal development.
- Good accreditation.
- Extended sport community links with local schools and a local prison.
- Very good accommodation and resources.
- Good physiotherapy support.

Areas for improvement

- What a few pupils wear for gymnastics.

129. There has been good improvement in physical education since the time of the previous inspection. Standards of achievement and pupils' progress are now good and, for pupils in Years 7 to 11, they are very good. This is because the new co-ordinator has worked very hard producing a new policy and planned all areas of the subject curriculum. New links have been forged with local schools and very good use is made of amenities in the local area including provision at a local prison. Additionally, the standards of teaching have improved, particularly for Years 7 to 11.

130. From the earliest age it is obvious that all pupils enjoy physical activity. This enjoyment contributes to good achievement because they are all prepared to work hard. By the end of Year 2, pupils enjoy rolling balls in different positions to each other and they can express preferences. All staff are very supportive and trust in adults helps and encourages pupils to be adventurous, for example, as they crawl through and over apparatus. Although a number of pupils have difficulties with controlling their movements, the safe environment provided by the gymnasium (gym) helps to develop confidence and control. By the end of Year 6, pupils roll over large balls and they learn to kick balls to each other and to staff. Pupils with autistic spectrum disorders begin to develop skills in working with others through helping staff to climb up slopes and ladders. However, not all pupils dress suitably for physical education: for example, a few staff and pupils had inappropriate footwear in the gym. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties work effectively with physiotherapists, often alongside the teachers to implement individual programmes of exercise. Pupils stretch and move limbs helping to develop and maintain flexibility and strength where appropriate. Year 9 pupils improve their balance very well during trampoline sessions taken by a visiting instructor. Less able pupils improve their mobility during a treasure hunt around the school and grounds. The parachute is used very effectively to provide a varied and stimulating activity where pupils learn to anticipate movement and many grasp, stretch and lift their arms. By the end of Year 11, pupils have developed further skills using facilities during a weekly visit to a local prison. Prisoners, who are studying for their instructor's certificates, work with the pupils in a very well-equipped gym. Pupils improve their use of space and link a series of movements using parachutes, balls and the trampoline. Pupils and prisoners alike encourage each other and relationships between staff, pupils and prisoners are very warm.

131. All pupils' swimming skills and confidence improve in the warm water pool, which is a very good resource. The continuous hoist facilities are used very well to assist non-ambulant pupils to get to and fro from the changing rooms into the water. The less physically able pupils receive very good quality individual support from staff. They learn to float and relax, using the support of the warm water to ease tension. By the time they are in Year 6, most pupils are confident in the water, many use buoyancy aids effectively and a few move themselves through the water. Their confidence improves through the use of well-chosen equipment, for example, toys that squirt

water and playing games such as 'Ring a Ring of Roses' in the water. By the time they are in Year 11, more physically able pupils swim, many with the aid of armbands, improving their arm and leg strokes. They rise to the challenge of walking backwards in the water, blowing bubbles, going under foam arches and wetting their hair in a circle game. Very good support is provided by physiotherapists, and pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties clearly enjoy the freedom of movement the water provides, especially the jacuzzi facility.

132. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall and ranges from satisfactory to excellent. Where teaching is at its best, planning is detailed, ensuring the complex needs of all pupils are effectively met through appropriate use of the knowledgeable and committed staff. The accommodation is very good and contributes to the provision of stimulating and enjoyable lessons. Staff use humour well to encourage competition and achievement. For example, everyone laughed when a pupil in a hoist laughed and shouted whilst being lowered into the water. Links with other subjects are encouraged as pupils help to count plastic bottles in the pool and the number of trampoline jumps made by each pupil. Staff are enthusiastic and expectations are high, leading to good improvements in independence, confidence and physical skill. Because of this, pupils' behaviour is very good; they have faith in the staff that all activities will be within their physical capabilities and that they will be well supported. Assessment procedures are good. 'P' levels scales are used well to record levels of achievement and pupils help assess their own performance during lessons. Accredited certificates such as Amateur Swimming Association (ASA) awards in swimming levels 1 and 2, leisure modules from ALL for pupils in Years 10 to 11 and the Trampoline Award grades 1 and 2 reward achievements and encourage pupils to do well. A very good partnership with the physiotherapy service ensures pupils gain maximum benefit from this provision. It is usual to see them working with pupils in lessons or, for example, working with pupils in rebound therapy.
133. The curriculum for physical education is broad and includes horse-riding sessions for all pupils who will benefit. Recently the school took part in the Kielder Challenge, an outdoor pursuit challenge, with a local secondary mainstream school. This is a challenge for able bodied and less able bodied to work together. It was extremely successful. Pupils raised £200 for a local charity swimming marathon and took part in an event organised by the Dance Group of Milton Keynes Arts Education Forum last January. In addition there is a very good weekly after school Sports Club where older pupils and students have a range of opportunities. Currently, one group goes bowling to the local bowling alley and another group receives coaching in various games skills including hockey from local and county professional coaches in school. In the very near future there is a residential course planned for older pupils and students to attend trampoline award days in Nantwich.
134. The co-ordinator's knowledge and enthusiasm have been instrumental in raising achievement in the subject. Despite not yet having the opportunity to monitor teaching formally in the primary department, she provides good advice and has developed a good policy and plans of what is to be taught each year, which are helpful to non-specialists. The subject contributes very well to pupils' social and personal development.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall provision for religious education is good.

Strengths

- Positive attitudes and response of pupils.
- Good quality of teaching and learning.
- Spiritual development linked to religious education lessons.

Areas for Improvement

- Plans of what is to be taught each year and monitoring and assessment procedures not fully developed.
- Insufficient resources and artefacts for the study of the different faiths.

135. It was possible to observe only a few lessons of religious education. However, discussions with staff and a scrutiny of the documents and records indicate that all the pupils achieve well and make good progress. By the end of Year 6, pupils have learned about body awareness and formed friendship groups. They participate in lessons, assemblies and make visits. Teachers create moments where pupils experience awe and wonder through quiet reflection in these activities. For example, pupils were made to feel special in shiny clothes as part of a sensory experience. A very good atmosphere was generated using calming electronic wave music as they handled a variety of shiny objects: jewellery, clothing and ornaments. In another instance, pupils visited the Church of Christ the Cornerstone near to the school and became aware of a different environment outside school and the atmosphere of quiet and reverence in the church. Afterwards, they talked enthusiastically about their visit and the photographs that had been taken with the digital camera. They answered questions such as 'Why is this a special place?' 'What happens here?' Another class of pupils gained a clear understanding of the meaning of 'special' through skilful teaching and emphasis on the word and its meaning. Good use of 'special' items helped the pupils to be aware of the need to treat items with care. Pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties in lessons focus upon their immediate environment, moods and reflection. They experience a sense of occasion by handling, touching and feeling special objects.
136. By the end of Year 11, pupils have developed a sense of awareness of major festivals and events. They make hot cross buns at Easter and study the Muslim festivals of Eid and Divali, thinking about the clothes, customs and food before making cards and masks. They learn about Buddhism and the Buddha and make flower garlands. Pupils visit special places such as the local church, which broadens their understanding and vocabulary. They listen to the local vicar's talk about the significant features of the church including the font, altar, cross and the Bible.
137. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. The planning is detailed and directed towards meeting the diverse needs of pupils in the classes. Pupils are all kept fully involved in the learning. Teachers and support staff manage the pupils well and because of their good knowledge of all the pupils can respond to their needs and questions appropriately. The lessons have a sharp focus on the topics studied and clear targets are set so pupils know what is expected of them.
138. There is a good policy statement, which focuses upon the range of pupils' experiences to be covered and the aims for the subject. Clear guidance is provided on content and the importance of meeting the range of individual pupils' needs. The policy includes aspects of Christianity and other religions, focusing on stories, special places, symbols and festivals, which are planned throughout the year. Assemblies also reinforce spiritual and moral values and provide opportunities for quiet reflection about the lives in school. A candle is lit on entry and the atmosphere is set by the use of guitar and taped music. Religious education is perceived by staff as being crucial in informing the school's philosophy and pupils' attitudes and behaviour.
139. At present, plans showing what is to be taught each year are in the process of development. The co-ordinator already scrutinises all medium-term planning but there is no monitoring of teaching or

the implementation of these plans. The use of 'P' levels does provide a framework for improving assessment and recording procedures but the lack of precise procedures at the moment make it difficult to ensure consistency in teaching of the subject across the school. The resources for the subject are satisfactory but the school acknowledges the need to improve the resources available to support the studies of the different faiths. There have been improvements since the last inspection. Staff have more positive attitudes towards the subject and they are more knowledgeable about their work. There has also been an improvement in the attitudes of pupils to the subject and the progress they make. Religious education continues to contribute very well to the spiritual, moral and cultural development of pupils.

POST-16 COURSES

Provision for students who are over the age of compulsory schooling is very good.

Strengths

- A very appropriate and relevant curriculum.
- Very good preparation for the next stage in students' lives.
- Confident students with high levels of self-esteem.
- Very good links with the community and other institutions.
- Improves life skills through work experience.
- Good teamwork by all the staff.

Areas for improvement

- Further accreditation for more able students of vocational skills.

140. High expectations by teaching staff lead to good, and often very good, levels of achievement by the students, who make very good progress in their work and their social development. The department is well organised by two teachers who collaborate and work together ensuring that individual students' needs are identified and met. The curriculum is divided into a series of courses. It is carefully designed to be appropriate to the age of the students. The Post-16 provision provides a challenging, yet supportive, environment in which students are able to make choices, take responsibility and become more involved in their community.
141. The quality of teaching and learning is at least good and often very good. Staff work with the students in a more adult way than with younger pupils in the school. As a result, students take their responsibilities seriously and have a high regard for the staff who work with them. Any problems are often solved through the use of humour, which also helps to keep the pace of lessons brisk. Expectations of work and behaviour are high. Students respond well by trying hard even when they find activities difficult or when they dislike what they are asked to do. For example, during a session on skills for adult life, one student did not enjoy cleaning a bath, but did it well. Very good use is made of sessions at the beginning of lessons to recap on previous work and at the end of sessions to recall what is learnt and celebrate students' achievements.
142. There is a newly appointed co-ordinator for the Post-16 provision. Throughout the department, work is now well managed and very good use is made of the local community and all that it has to offer. More able students' work is at present accredited through OCR NSP at grade one. It is planned to introduce further accreditation using ALL for less able students from September. Although formal accreditation was not gained for students last year, due to staffing difficulties, all of the students eligible are continuing to complete modules this year. Students attending college receive certification for the courses they complete. The school does not at present offer accreditation for vocational skills for the most able students.
143. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection, particularly in providing an appropriate curriculum, increased opportunities to interact with the community and in the provision of work experience.

Communication skills

144. Students make very good progress in improving communication skills. They have many opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills during English lessons and in discussion sessions in other subjects. Students are able to give opinions and make suggestions. They listen carefully to each other and make suggestions. Students improve their reading skills in many of their lessons; they read for pleasure and for information. More able students can read letters that have been sent to the group. Other students can identify supermarket signs and other labels and notices. Good progress is seen in writing. Students can write their names and complete lists. Many use word processors independently writing messages and poems. They can use e-mail and edit their work. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers plan very effectively and provide very high quality age appropriate activities for their students. High expectations provide real challenges for students, which allows them to grow in independence and confidence.

Numeracy

145. Students make good progress in numeracy. They use their mathematical skills in a wide variety of situations. During preparations for their mini enterprise they visit shops to buy provisions, which they weigh into packages ready for sale. They manage money and identify and count coins preparing change for their stall. When selling produce they use calculators to add together the value of purchases and can count out change. Other less able students use the telephone identifying numbers from a written model and making a call. Students can tell the time and understand the use of numbers on dials and controls, for example on a volume control or on a microwave timer. Teachers' plans clearly identify opportunities to include learning about numbers and students' numeracy skills are improved by being able to practise them in everyday situations.

Education for Adult Life, Personal, Social and Health Education and Citizenship

146. Students achieve very well in these very important areas. They make very good progress towards targets that they have set for themselves with the help of teachers. Less able students take part in fun cookery sessions and can mix and make buns using the microwave. Staff ensure that as high a level of independence as possible is developed. They can take messages going to the correct person and bring back requested items. Most students make very good use of the local community shops buying items and paying at the cash desks. More able students take part in enterprise activities selling a variety of goods including fruit and vegetables. They explain with enthusiasm how to look out for 'two for one' and 'buy one get one free' in order to make a profit on their sales. Students also correctly identify that selling cream with strawberries, ready to eat, will be popular with their customers.
147. Health education ensures that students know how to care for themselves: for example, students know that hand and nail care is very important and can say that germs must be washed from hands before cooking or eating. The very good accommodation available, including a self-contained flat, gives them good opportunities to practise their skills. Teaching and learning are very good with carefully planned and lively lessons that build upon students' prior knowledge and use careful questions to challenge them to make decisions or give opinions.
148. Many students attend the local college to take part in a very good range of courses that they have chosen. These include money management, quick and easy cookery, science, use your computer and drama and are usually a half-day session. Students in their last year may attend up to three sessions a week. Students enjoy the courses and do very well. They make new friends and improve their independence skills considerably in the college environment. During the last year, a number of students have begun weekly work experience, for example, at the local hospital, a hairdressers and a safari park. They are supported in these settings by both school staff and 'Equality Works', a local service. This has been very successful in providing real life experiences and opportunities for students to enter the world of work. This links with the work undertaken in careers and guidance where very good links with transition social workers and the 'Connexions' (careers guidance) service ensure that students receive help to make appropriate

decisions about their life after school. School plans and targets take very good account of these and prepare students very well for the adult world.

Creative arts

149. The creative arts part of the curriculum allows students very good opportunities to take part in a wide range of activities. Students make very good progress and become more skilful in a range of art activities such as collage and painting. They also take part in cultural visits, for example, to the Royal Ballet to see Romeo and Juliet. Students can recall the story and use their knowledge to begin to create their own dance sequences, showing that they can develop ideas and collaborate to achieve the results they seek. Teachers lead these lessons well, being very careful not to impose solutions but to set tasks and allow students to discuss, debate and experiment to achieve the results they want. Questions or suggestions are used well to help students to refine their thinking. Teachers ask students to evaluate their own work and give genuine praise for good efforts. The relationships between students and staff are very good and obviously based upon mutual respect.
150. More able students are working with a local arts group to make a film to be shown in Milton Keynes. They have learned about film making techniques and have made storyboards and planned props and actors for their scenes. The students know about such things as long shots and close-ups. They all have roles within the production and with help use professional equipment, cameras and sound systems. This has been well used by teachers as an excellent team building exercise.

Sport and leisure activities

151. Sport and leisure activities are planned to give the students many opportunities to try new things. The objective of the work undertaken is not only to provide a physical education experience but also to give experiences of sports and hobbies that can be carried on after leaving school. Very good use is made of local facilities. Students make very good progress in a variety of sporting skills and in managing their own leisure. The students have their own youth club in Milton Keynes; they are supported by Millennium Volunteers. The youth club meets weekly in the local YMCA. Students organise and plan activities. Teachers from school go to the club but 'take a back seat' so students choose the format of the evenings. There are many different sporting opportunities including swimming, ten pin bowling, badminton, horse riding, and golf, as well as using local sports centres. Students use the facilities available in school and take part in team events such as boccia, a form of bowling. Less able students show great concentration and pleasure in this and can take turns and decide which team has won.

Environmental awareness

152. Environmental awareness enables students to very effectively find out about and take part in their community. Throughout the past year students from the school have worked with a local group to help to plan, build and maintain a cultural garden at Peartree Bridge. This project has entailed planning and visiting and a variety of tasks out of doors clearing and planting. Very good use has been made of this opportunity to encourage students to take responsibility and learn about such areas as health and safety and use of tools and equipment. As the garden is designed to reflect areas of the world the teachers have used the opportunity to develop work on a multicultural theme. Working on the garden has encouraged students to think of themselves as a team and they are very supportive of each other and work together very well.

Religious education

153. Students discuss thoughtfully, for example, being aware of their own and others' need for help and support. They understand that support can come from a variety of sources. Their work at the cultural garden uses as a theme their knowledge about the cultures and religions of others successfully. Students understand the power of environment to evoke feelings and can say how

they feel when they are in the garden. They take a part in the religious life of the school by attending assemblies. At the end of the day students think about their experiences and develop the skills of self-awareness and reflection. As well as formal teaching about religion teachers offer students many chances to take part in sensory and other activities that enhance their understanding of the wonder of creation.