

INSPECTION REPORT

VALENCE SCHOOL

Westerham

LEA area: Kent

Unique reference number: 119032

Headteacher: Mr R. Gooding

Reporting inspector: Mrs Frances Gander
21265

Dates of inspection: 16th –19th June 2003

Inspection number: 249381

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community School
Age range of pupils:	4-19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Westerham Road Westerham
Postcode:	TN16 1QN
Telephone number:	01959 562156
Fax number:	01959 565046
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J. Paul
Date of previous inspection:	June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
21265	Mrs F. Gander	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology Citizenship	Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed What should the school do to improve further?
8941	Mr J Fletcher	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values, and personal development. How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
	Mr R. Brent	Team inspector	History Geography	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
22391	Mr N. Smith	Team inspector	Science Physical education Art and design	
	Mrs A. Mallett	Team inspector	English French Music	
	Ms K. Robertson	Team inspector	Mathematics Design and Technology	
	Mrs S.Flockton	Team inspector	Post 16 Religious Education	

The inspection contractor was:

Penta International
Upperton House
The Avenue
Eastbourne
E. Sussex
BN21 3YB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	12
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	14
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	26

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Valence School is a day and residential school catering for pupils and students who have physical difficulties. They are currently 100 pupils between the ages of five and nineteen attending the school. Two thirds of these pupils are boys, and almost half of the pupils are between the ages 11 and 16. There are 29 pupils in the Further Education Unit (FE). The pupils come from all areas of Kent, with a quarter of them coming from other surrounding Local Education Authorities. Almost two thirds of the pupils and students board on a weekly basis, and it is the policy of the school that all Post 16 students are residential. There are six pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds of whom two use English as a second language. The majority of pupils and students use powered wheelchairs as a form of mobility. Many also have complex medical needs that require medical care, therapy support, and access to the environment and the curriculum through the use of technology or human support. The overall attainment level of pupils and students is below average, but the range is very wide with some older pupils attaining General Certificate of Education (GCSE) level and vocational qualifications. Some pupils leave at the age of 16 and transfer to mainstream or specialist colleges.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school because it ensures that pupils achieve very well, not only in academic subjects but also in their personal development, especially in their ability to make and communicate decisions and choices about their lives. The overall very good teaching ensures that pupils and students attain the highest possible levels and are well prepared for adulthood and further education. The leadership provided by the management team, including the care team and medical team, is very good overall. They are dedicated to ensuring that pupils and students have high quality care, education, and support. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school ensures that pupils achieve very well in academic subjects and that they make very good progress in personal development and independence.
- The teaching and learning are very good.
- The provision for students over the age of 16 is very good and prepares them very well for the next stage of education or training.
- The school promotes excellent relationships, attitudes to learning, and care and concern for others.
- The leadership of the school ensures that there is equality of opportunity for all pupils, that it meets its aims and values very successfully, and that there is an excellent commitment to improvement within the management team.
- The budget is planned and managed very well to improve resources and the quality of education.

What could be improved

- The physical access from the residential areas to the main school and teaching areas so that pupils in wheelchairs spend less time waiting to move from one area to another.

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

Very good improvements have been made since the last inspection in 1997. The majority of the key issues and other minor areas for improvement have been addressed and achieved. In addition, the school has developed an effective management team, appointed special support co-ordinators for each phase, and improved the teacher allocation in the Further Education Unit. Two issues, which are outside the control of the school, namely the installation of a lift, and the role of speech therapy in the classroom have yet to be achieved. The installation of a second lift in order to provide physical access has become more urgent with the increase of wheelchair dependent pupils and students in the school. The development of the role of speech therapy in the classrooms has been delayed due to a change in the provider of the service.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Overall, all pupils and students achieve very well and make very good progress. They overcome considerable communication and physical difficulties in order to achieve nationally recognised external accreditation. This is due to very good teaching, the support provided by support assistants and care staff who act as enablers, and the amount of specialist assessment and resources provided by the school. The majority of pupils and students by the time they leave the school at the end of Years 11 or 14 make very good progress in communication, reading, and writing. In the primary phase pupils make good progress in communication, and in writing, and very good progress in reading. Overall, pupils make very good progress in personal and social education, and good progress is being made in the recently introduced citizenship. Overall, pupils make good progress towards the many targets set in their individual education plans. Students who transfer into the Further Education Unit make very good progress by the time they leave.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils and students are positive about their experiences at the school and are very keen to participate in all that is offered to them. They are very proud of their achievements
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very Good. There is no unsatisfactory or oppressive behaviour in the school. Pupils respect and observe the school's behaviour codes.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. The strong relationships that exist between staff and pupils support their achievements. Pupils are polite and show increasing social skills and confidence as they progress through the school.
Attendance	Good. Unauthorised absence is very low. Absence for medical appointments is very low due to the arrangements for medical consultations to be held in school. There are delays in some pupils getting to lessons on time because they have to wait a long time for the lift.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 1 – 6	Years 7 – 11	Years 12 – 13
Quality of teaching	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 overall quality of teaching and learning is very good and meets the needs of all pupils. Where teachers have specialist subject expertise there are high expectations for attainment and achievement. There are examples of excellent teaching in design and technology, physical education and personal and social education. Very good teaching occurs in all subjects but is consistently very good in English, science, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, French and in the Further Education Unit. Overall, teaching and learning is good in all other subjects and across the school communication, literacy and numeracy are taught very well. A good start has been made in the sharing of good practice in teaching between the different phases in the school but there is a need to further extend this especially in design and technology and religious education. Overall, teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils very well, and as a result they plan, organise, and support a range of learning activities that match the pupils' and students' differing attainment. The support provided by the teaching assistants is of high quality and they use their skills and initiative well to help pupils learn and teachers teach.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. The school provides a rich range of opportunities and experiences that enable all pupils and students to gain a range of accredited qualifications at an individual level. These are supported by good opportunities in the residential setting. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements and provides excellent equal opportunities for all pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. There are clear expectations by the school that good work, behaviour, and positive attitudes are praised and that unacceptable actions have consequences. Moral issues are given high priority within the citizenship curriculum. Pupils and students have excellent opportunities to socialise during well-structured activities before, during, and after the school day.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. Procedures for ensuring pupils' and students' welfare and support are very effective, consistently applied and have a positive effect on pupils' achievement and personal development. Individuals are valued and their achievements are celebrated. Assessment is very comprehensive and thorough.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The majority of parents and carers hold positive views of the school. They are supportive of the school and grateful for its work and care.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The leadership is very effective and ensures that responsibilities are shared by the newly structured management team, and carried out well. All staff with responsibilities are fully involved in planning, developing and improving the quality of education. This has resulted in a very much improved school where the aims and values are excellently reflected throughout the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good overall. The governors manage the school well, understand the where it needs to improve, and seek ways to achieve this. However, they have no links with curriculum areas and do not make regular visits to classrooms to gain first hand knowledge on how pupils and students learn. Governors have yet to approve a racial equality policy.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. There is thorough evaluation of the priorities for development, and these are very well linked to raising standards and the quality of education. The school is beginning to use information and communication technology (ICT) to analyse and evaluate the information it gathers for tracking pupils' progress.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The managers and the governing body tightly control the budget. All monies coming into the school are creatively used to provide the most appropriate resources for groups or for individual pupils and students so that they make the best possible progress and have full access to the curriculum. The school applies the principles of best value very well.
Adequacy of staffing, accommodation and learning resources	Overall good. The number of teaching and support staff meets the needs of the pupils, and teachers offer high levels of subject expertise. However, it has already been identified that there are insufficient care staff for the number and needs of the pupils and students. The buildings adequately meet the needs of the curriculum but only having one lift restricts and slows down the movement around school for most pupils and students.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The pupils like attending the school. • The behaviour of pupils was good. • The teaching was good. • They felt comfortable approaching the school with suggestions or problems. • They children were helped to become more mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school did not provide sufficient homework. • The school did not work with parents. • They were not informed about progress.

The inspection team agrees with the positive comments concerning the school. It feels that the school communicates well with parents, and that the provision of homework is appropriate to the individual needs of the pupils and supports the work that they are doing in school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils across the school achieve very well in most subjects and especially in their personal development, and communication. This is an improvement from the last inspection when it was judged that there was some underachievement in science, and in music and religious education where the curriculum did not fully meet the statutory requirements. In addition, achievement and the progress that pupils made in geography, information and communication technology, design and technology, art and design, and physical education was only satisfactory. Pupils' achievements and the progress they make in these subjects have improved considerably.

2. Pupils make very good progress in English, science, information and communication technology, design and technology, history, geography, music, physical education and in the Further Education Unit. The improvement in the progress that pupils make has been due to curriculum and assessment development, and the improvement in the quality of teaching. In addition considerable refurbishment has taken place to specialist rooms and with it an increase in the resources. This is especially having a positive effect on the achievements of pupils in science, information and communication technology, art and design, and in design and technology.

3. Pupils in the primary phase achieve well and make good progress overall. They make very good progress in English, science, physical education, and music, and in all other subjects progress is good. They make very good progress in literacy and numeracy due to the high level of expertise that all four teachers have in implementing and adapting the National Literacy strategy to suit the needs of the pupils and to cater for a range of physical difficulties. By the end of Year 6, pupils make very good progress in reading, and good progress in communication and in writing. A lack of speech and language therapy in the school has affected pupils' progress in communication but this has now been resolved. While the achievements of primary pupils in subjects, such as design and technology and religious education are good, and they make good progress, it could be further improved by the sharing of good practice between primary staff and the secondary subject specialist.

4. By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 11 they have made considerable progress. Pupils achieve very well and all leave with a variety of external accreditation, including General Certificate in Secondary Education, (GCSE), Certificate of Achievement (Entry Level) and ASDAN Youth Award Scheme. This is due once again to the appropriateness of the curriculum, the very good teaching by teachers with a high level of expertise, and the support they have so that all pupils no matter how great their physical difficulties are, are totally included in all learning activities.

5. Students in the Further Education Unit make very good progress and achieve very well, both in different subjects and against their individual targets. They obtain a range of nationally recognised qualifications including General National Vocational Qualifications (GNVQs), and most transfer to college or further training when they leave the school. The different curriculum emphasis and teaching strategies used in the Further Education Unit ensure that students achieve very well and are successfully prepared for the next stage of education, training, and independence.

6. All pupils have individual education plans that reflect the targets in each curricular area, as well as in all aspects of personal development. These targets are precise, and relevant to pupils' needs. The assessment of these targets ensures that teachers plan activities and learning objectives that are matched to the attainment levels of the pupils. As there are numerous targets for each pupil the tracking and analysing of the progress of groups of pupils, or individuals, in specific areas over a period is time consuming and complicated. In the secondary phase the targets are of good quality with a clear focus on English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, and personal development. The school is about to use a comprehensive tracking system so that they can ensure that, while pupils make very good progress in curriculum areas, that they can also evaluate the progress made by different groups of pupils, such as by gender, or year groups.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7. These are strengths of the school and have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' attitudes to the school and to their work are excellent and make a significant contribution to the progress they make. Parents say that their children like school and are often upset if they are unable to attend due to illness or medical appointments. Discussions with pupils confirm that they happily identify with Valence, speak positively about their experiences at the school, and keenly participate in a range of lunchtime and evening activities. Arrival at the school in the morning is a happy and exciting time for day pupils. They greet friends and staff in a cheery manner and are clearly enthusiastic about the coming day. Those who are boarding pupils adapt to routines very well and are proud to show off their rooms and residential areas to visitors. In most lessons pupils maintain concentration and persevere with tasks, show an eagerness to learn and often become engrossed in their activities. They show considerable pride in their achievements. In everyday conversation, pupils confidently express their positive views of Valence. They feel valued and are happy at the school.

8. Pupils' behaviour is very good and no unsatisfactory or oppressive behaviour was seen during the inspection. There have been no exclusions in the last year. Pupils respect and observe the school's behaviour code and respond very positively to the individual care and support packages they receive. There are isolated examples of frustration, especially when pupils are coming to terms with their physical difficulties. The school is an orderly place and is conducive to learning and development. Pupils show a very good understanding of the effect of their actions on others, and very good respect for the feelings and views of peers. There are numerous examples in lessons of pupils working harmoniously together, sharing equipment, taking turns, and being of help to each other, especially the physically more able pupils supporting those with the greatest difficulty. For example, in a physical education lessons where pupils were practising and developing their ball skills, they showed a high level of understanding of other's disabilities and difficulties, and were very patient and genuinely delighted at other's achievements. During breaktimes and lunchtimes behaviour is very good. Pupils are confident to enter into conversations with adults in an uninhibited and genuinely interested manner. For example, a group of Year 11 girls were extremely keen to discuss their ideas for the forthcoming "school prom" that they are organising.

9. Relationships between staff and pupils are excellent, a strength of the school, and make a strong contribution to pupils' learning and development. Pupils interact in a polite manner with all adults and show increasing levels of social skill and confidence. Interchanges with staff often involve the positive use of humour. Pupils trust staff and have no inhibitions in turning to them with problems. In the context of the school, pupils' levels of personal development are very good. They benefit from the consistent approach of staff, which values all pupils' efforts and achievements, and from the very good opportunities provided to develop personal and social skills. Most pupils, as they progress through the school, make significant

gains in self-esteem and self-confidence and the majority start to take more responsibility for aspects of their own learning and development.

10. Attendance at the school is good and unauthorised absence is very low. The disruption to learning through absence to attend medical consultations is effectively minimised by the school organising these consultations and providing many services on site. Punctuality of pupils arriving at school is good. The school works very hard to ensure that pupils arrive at their lessons on time. They minimise delays caused by movement along corridors that are not wide enough for two wheelchairs, and generally punctuality is good. However, the school cannot prevent pupils arriving late to lessons, and losing valuable learning time, because of the inadequate lift facilities in the main building.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

11. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. It meets the needs of all pupils and students, the curriculum and the wide age range within the school. This has improved since the last inspection when teaching was good. The school's policy of appointing teachers in the secondary phase who are specialist subject teachers, and who have mainstream experience, has resulted in some very good or excellent teaching in school. This is because they have an in depth knowledge of their subject, and set high expectations of attainment and achievement.

12. The quality of teaching and learning is good or better in 9 out of 10 lessons and in more than 4 out of 10 lessons it is very good or excellent. The exemplary teaching occurs in physical education, design and technology and in personal, social and health education. Although there was some very good teaching in all subjects in all phases of the school, it consistently occurs in English, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, music, physical education, French, and in the Further Education Unit. Teaching and learning is good in all other subjects. Across the school communication is taught very well. Teachers pay attention to the promotion of literacy and numeracy in other subjects, and the use of ICT to support learning.

13. Teachers, especially in the primary phase, work collaboratively with each other when planning the lessons, and the teamwork between special support assistants and teachers is a strength. It enables all pupils to be fully included in all activities, have their care and personal needs met, and to be supported in the learning process. The good staffing ratio in classes means that pupils' responses are immediately noted and encouraged. Teachers record pupils' achievements after lessons, and this provides assessment information concerning the lesson targets and the expected learning outcomes. This ensures that no opportunity is missed to encourage pupils to achieve well. The support provided by the teaching assistants is of high quality. They are hardworking, knowledgeable and use their skills and initiative well to help pupils learn and teachers teach. They make a significant contribution to pupils' progress.

14. The high quality of teaching and learning is the result of the high expectations of achievement that teachers have and the consistent approach to ensuring that all pupils have equal access to the activities. The quality of the lesson planning is consistent across the school and medium term planning provides teachers with a firm basis for planning lessons. Teachers use praise and humour very well to motivate pupils and in all classes there are very good relationships between pupils and the adults. Pupils respond by trying to produce their best work, wanting to succeed, and listening to instructions carefully. All lessons are very well organised and run smoothly. This is a credit to the teachers and the support assistants, as the personal needs of the pupils are complex, but these are never allowed to get in the way of learning.

15. All adults who work with the pupils communicate very well with them, and use a variety of different ways of communicating. They are very adept at altering the complexity of the language they use depending on the maturity and understanding of different pupils, for example, when questioning pupils about their learning at the ends of lessons. A strength of the communication is the time that adults give to pupils who have the greatest difficulty responding so that all have a voice and opportunity to show what they know and understand. As a result, pupils listen well and communicate confidently. Teachers and teaching assistants know the pupils very well, and therefore plan, organise and support a range of learning activities within the overall learning objectives, which match the pupils' and students' differing attainment.

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

16. The school provides a very good curriculum for every pupil and good improvements have been made since the last inspection. There is a strong sense of community and the curriculum ensures that all pupils and students regardless of their needs, degree of difficulty, or gender are included in activities. The school provides a rich range of opportunities and experiences and enables pupils to gain nationally accredited qualifications from Year 10 onwards. It meets statutory requirements fully by teaching all subjects of the National Curriculum, personal, social and health education, and religious education.

17. All subjects have schemes of work, there is good continuity between key stages, and geography and history are now well developed. However, the amount of time allocated to the teaching of music, and to religious education in the primary phase is a little short and it cannot be guaranteed that all aspects of those subjects can be covered in that time. Full use is made of the time before and after school for pupils who are residential. Core subjects receive enough time and there is a very good balance between National Curriculum requirements and the additional therapy needs of pupils. The school ensures that pupils do not consistently miss large amounts of time out of the classroom for therapy and medical needs. This is achieved by very good organisation, joint planning and departmental cooperation.

18. The curriculum planning for teaching literacy, numeracy and ICT is good. The school ensures that literacy and ICT are very well used and reinforced across all subject areas. Although teachers give pupils satisfactory opportunities to practise and consolidate mathematics learning throughout the school day, the specific identification of mathematics in the lesson planning for other subjects would ensure greater emphasis. However, there are some good examples, such as in a food technology lesson and in design and technology. Curriculum planning for personal, social, health and citizenship education is good and the school has plans to extend it further. All classes have appropriate amounts of time and activities are wide ranging and of high quality. Provision for careers education, including work experience where possible, is good. There are also a significant number of visitors from outside school, who bring their experiences and skills into the lives of pupils. Sex education and drugs awareness policies are in place and their implementation is helped by the work of the Kent Police, and the care and nursing staff. There are good arrangements for transition to the secondary phase, and to the Further Education Unit.

19. The curriculum meets the additional needs of pupils very well. A great number of pupils have difficulties accessing the curriculum because of severe physical difficulties, or severe communication difficulties, and a few have sensory impairments. The school has developed an effective format for pupils' individual education plans that ensures teachers identify relevant learning objectives in the key areas of literacy, numeracy, personal

development and, for the relevant pupils, behaviour. Where necessary pupils may have communication, curriculum access, speech and language, physical management, occupational therapy, visual or hearing plans. Targets agreed in these plans are then addressed through the lessons; activities are planned for the various classes and are reviewed on a half termly basis. The targets are used well to support the pupils' access to the curriculum and to learning, and are supported by a very good range of individual technological aids, such as individual switches and communication aids. The school is in the very fortunate position of having the Communication and Curriculum Access and therapy sessions based in the school as these can be directly involved in meeting pupils curriculum and access needs. The school has been experiencing some difficulties with the speech and language support needed for the communication curriculum due to a change in the National Health Trust provider, but the situation is improving.

20. Very good provision is made for extra-curricular activities, both within the school day and after school for those pupils who are residential. The school provides a wide range of activities including art, dance, swimming, and youth club and they are all well linked to the school curriculum. Older students take advantage of the school's relationships with local driving schools and learn to drive the school's car as a further step towards independence. The school is part of the Sevenoaks Local Learning Group, and good links have been forged and established with the local community. The staff in the primary phase have worked hard since the last inspection to establish some educational and social links with local primary schools, and despite a disappointing start with one school now have a worthwhile link where pupils share social and academic experiences.

21. The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development. The spiritual development of pupils is good. This is a school where individuals are valued and their achievements are celebrated. During assemblies pupils regularly sing songs, such as *This Little Light of Mine* and all members of the school community treat each other with dignity and respect. Well chosen assembly themes provide good opportunities to explore the values and beliefs of others, and parents and visitors from the local community share their customs and faiths with pupils and students. Some subjects make a notable contribution to spiritual development: history emphasises the motivation of individuals who made sacrifices for a particular cause, as when pupils examine the lives of soldiers in the World Wars. Similarly, the high standards reached in physical education enable pupils and students to gain a sense of achievement and develop positive attitudes towards themselves.

22. The very good provision for moral development noted during the previous inspection has been maintained and it is now excellent. The school's clear expectations help pupils know from an early age what is right and what is wrong, and the Valence Code means much to everybody. Pupils and students understand that good work and behaviour and positive attitudes are praised and that unacceptable actions have consequences. Assemblies celebrate kindness and sharing as well as good work and effort. Pupils are encouraged to take part in the School Council and to think of others by giving to a range of charities, such as Red Nose Day and Shelter. In English, students explore ideas of right and wrong and in geography they consider the effect of their own and others' actions, such as dropping litter, on the environment. The school has a good balance of male and female staff and they present very good role models. This is strongly appreciated by pupils and students.

23. The social development of pupils is excellent. Pupils have excellent opportunities to meet friends from other classes during well-structured activities before, during, and after the school day. There is very good provision for students and pupils to take responsibility and the school takes full advantage of the opportunities provided for those who board to undertake a range of duties. Successful visits to supermarkets, the village and museums and

participation in sports give all pupils and students the opportunity to display the social skills they have learned so successfully.

24. The cultural development of pupils is good and has improved since the last inspection. The school celebrates the festivals of the Christian church as well as those of other faiths and cultures. Music and singing are common features of lessons, assemblies, and whole-school activities and pupils and students are often allowed to choose their own music. Cultural development is well supported by both visiting companies and school productions in which the pupils participate. Pupils learn of their own heritage through visits and local studies and geography provides opportunities to find out about activities of families in less developed countries.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

25. Procedures for ensuring pupils' welfare and support are very effective, consistently applied and have a positive effect on pupils' achievement and personal development. Education and care staff all know pupils very well and have their best interests and well being in mind at all times. The excellent trusting relationships that have developed ensure that pupils discuss openly any concerns or worries that they may have. Procedures for child protection are comprehensive and the school is vigilant in exercising its responsibilities. The school deals with concerns effectively and sensitively. Medical and therapy specialists provide high quality, on-site services and make a significant contribution to the very good care and support package available for pupils and their families. There has been a big improvement in speech and language therapy provision over the last year and if this is maintained the school is well placed to ensure that the needs of all statements are fully met.

26. Staff in the residential units effectively ensure that pupils are cared for in a positive way and that their health and safety, welfare and rights are a central feature of the provision. Inspectors agree with the recent National Care Standards report that inadequate lift provision in the main building is restricting access to some residential areas and unnecessarily limiting personal freedom. The school and the local authority are examining ways to install an additional lift to address this personal care restriction.

27. Health and safety procedures are very good and all adults conscientiously ensure that pupils know and adhere to safe practice. Good systems are in place to ensure that identified hazards or safety concerns around the site are quickly reported and eliminated. There are regular evacuation practices and records show that electrical, alarm and fire prevention equipment is frequently inspected. First-aiders hold up to date accreditation and there are appropriate first aid supplies available. Risk assessments relating to individuals, to building use and activities both on and off site are in place and regularly updated. There are clear procedures relating to medicines on site and all staff have received training in manual handling techniques. Comprehensive records of incidents and accidents are maintained and good procedures ensure parents are quickly informed of any illness or injury.

28. The procedures in place for monitoring and improving attendance are good. The school effectively monitors attendance on an individual pupil basis and analyses trends for day and boarding pupils. Action to address poor attendance is taken quickly but this is rare as the vast majority of pupils enjoy school and attend very well. Sensitive strategies are used effectively to encourage pupils with severe medical conditions to attend as much as possible and to develop their interest in school and in their learning.

29. There are very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting good behaviour at Valence. Clear behaviour expectations are understood and respected by pupils. The consistency of approach and commitment of all staff to establishing very good levels of

behaviour ensure the school is a calm and orderly environment conducive to learning and development. Staff use praise, rewards and the public celebration of effort and achievement very well to encourage pupils. The formal review of progress against behaviour and personal development targets at termly and annual reviews effectively establishes challenging but achievable development goals for all pupils. Daily observation and discussion amongst staff ensure that any pupils experiencing difficulties are quickly identified and short term, measurable improvement plans are agreed with parents.

30. Whilst pupils' personal development targets are effectively refined at termly and annual reviews, and at medical clinics, it is the on-going monitoring of individuals and the consistent support that ensure very good progress. All staff constantly encourage pupils to develop their personal and social skills. Pupils' awareness of the wider world and preparation for life after school is well supported through the residential experience, through interaction with the local community, by ensuring a range of interesting and relevant visitors and by giving pupils the opportunity to take responsibility for aspects of day to day school life.

31. The school's procedures for assessing pupils' attainment when they come into the school are very good and have improved since the last inspection. All pupils are thoroughly assessed in personal development, academic attainment, and in specific areas linked to their particular difficulties. The information from this baseline assessment provides an accurate profile of the pupil and enables teachers, support staff and therapy staff to ensure that pupils are working on appropriate targets, using adapted equipment, and have access to a range of technology. This also extends to assessing pupils' and students' progress across the whole curriculum, and in this respect, the school has made a positive response to the findings of the last inspection.

32. The information regarding pupils' and students' gains in learning gathered from the Individual Education Plans makes a highly pertinent and constructive contribution to the annual review of their statements of special educational needs. There are appropriate arrangements for transition reviews and educational psychologists and external agencies, such as the careers service, together with local health care professionals such as speech and language therapists, are able to make a positive contribution. The school invites and encourages parents to be involved in the process, and identifies ways that parents can work on their children's targets at home, particularly with regard to those focusing on communication skills. As a result, parents are able to make an effective contribution to their children's learning.

33. The school is at the early stage of analysing and using whole school assessment data to set performance targets in relation to pupils' progress. The evaluation of information collected from assessment data and tracking the progress of different groups of pupils and the school's effectiveness in meeting their diverse needs is not yet in place. The school is aware of the need to use assessment data more effectively to raise standards and the quality of its provision. Comparisons of pupil progress in different subjects or in different classes are not yet carried out. A commercial software package to collate assessment information will be utilised for this purpose in the future.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

34. The relationship between the school and the majority of parents contributes favourably to pupils' learning and development. Parents unanimously agree that their children like school and they are particularly happy with the standard of behaviour in the school, the good teaching, the approachability of the staff and the fact that the school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. Parents are particularly vocal about how their children enjoy attending Valence and are upset if unable to be there. A few parents expressed some

concern over the amount of homework being set, about being kept well informed about progress and about the school working closely with parents.

35. Inspectors agree with the positive points raised by parents and judge that homework is used well to support classroom learning and to encourage the development of individual learning skills. The quality of information provided on pupil progress is very good although there are some inconsistencies across subjects for in the Further Education Unit. The school works closely with parents, is quick to involve home if there are any concerns and welcomes parents into school to discuss their children and aspects of the provision at any time.

36. The school uses newsletters, telephone calls, and home/school books to ensure an effective flow of information to parents about school organisation and the day-to-day effort and successes of their children. Formal reviews of progress and development take place at well-attended consultation evenings, annual reviews and at medical reviews held in the school. Annual reports have improved since the last inspection and now give very good summaries of what pupils have studied, what they know, understand and can do and what needs to be done to improve. Regular contact is maintained with all homes and for pupils experiencing difficulties there can be daily calls. Teaching staff and key workers regularly convey good news messages about effort and achievement. The school makes good efforts to ensure that parents are involved in agreeing pupils' targets for improvement and there is a good level of support from parents reinforcing the expectations of the school at home.

37. The school has built a good partnership with the majority of parents. The medical and therapy specialists located at the school have developed positive dialogues with many parents seeking specific advice and guidance on dealing with their children. Occasional workshops dealing with general aspects of physical disability have been well supported and the on-site specialists are planning a more regular programme of talks and workshops next year. General school activities are well attended and parents respond keenly to specific requests for help with outings and events and for support for curriculum teaching. The school is committed to developing further the partnership and regularly consults and seeks parents' views on aspects of the provision and organisation.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

38. The school is very well led and managed. This has improved since the last inspection because there is now a strengthened senior management team, as well as an educational management team, all of whom play an active role in managing the school. Each member of the education management team is a phase leader and has the overall responsibility for long-term development of that phase of education as well as day-to-day management. They also take an active role in the management of the school as a whole, which has filled the void of not having a deputy headteacher. The headteacher and governors have created a group of managers who work very well as a team in the overall development and improvement of the school, and there is an excellent commitment to improvement. Since the last inspection there is a more focussed approach to development and improvement through school self-evaluation, the setting of targets, and monitoring of the quality of the provision and teaching. The headteacher, along with the senior management team, and in conjunction with the Governing Body have addressed the key issues in the last report. Self-evaluation is providing appropriate priorities for continuing development and improvement to the educational and residential provision. These include the use of ICT in tracking pupils' progress, the refurbishment of the changing facilities in the swimming pool, and the health and safety issues within the old building, and the continuing issue around physical access between the ground floor main building and the residential accommodation.

39. There is a clear educational direction provided by the headteacher, and echoed by the senior management team, and arising from this is a strong philosophy of equal opportunities, and a belief that all pupils whatever their difficulties are entitled to all opportunities. There is excellent reflection of the school's aims and values in its work. Subject leaders have been provided with the skills and entrusted to manage their subjects efficiently and effectively. As a result, staff with responsibilities carry out their roles very well, subjects are very well managed, but there are few opportunities for co-ordinators to observe the practice of others teaching their subject across the school. Others in the school who have responsibilities, such as, for care, welfare, and financial management also carry out their roles effectively with a high level of professionalism. A particular strength is the use of staff, such as teaching assistants, in management roles so that day-to-day organisation of pupils' personal care needs and support is not part of the teacher's role. While this is an efficient use of time and support it also effectively promotes the professional development of support staff well. The school has implemented performance management very well. It links well to raising standards, the setting of individual and group targets, and the training needs of staff. There are good opportunities for teaching staff and non-teaching staff to take part in further training, such as additional training for Literacy and Numeracy, and ICT. The school has recently achieved Investor in People status and is also a registered NVQ centre with a number of care and education support staff gaining level 3 NVQ's in Care.

40. The Governing Body fulfils its responsibilities well, is very supportive of the school, offers very good advice, and provides solutions to discussion items. Although they are aware of the all the strengths and weaknesses of the school from reports provided by the headteacher, and shape the direction of the school well, there are no links between the subject leaders and individual members of the governing body. There are very limited visits to classrooms to see how and what pupils learn, or observe learning at first hand although the Governing Body has agreed a plan to link Governors to Curriculum areas in future. They have yet to put in place a policy for race relations.

41. The school makes good use of new technologies for both administrative and curriculum purposes, and has through the appointment of a second technician improved the existing systems for administration and curriculum development. It is beginning to use information and communication technology to monitor pupils' progress.

42. The school managers have developed systems that manage the budget very well. The Governing Body finance committee has produced a review of financial delegation in response to the issues raised in the previous report and the local authority audit. Limits of delegated authority are clear, signatories identified and details of information are presented to the governors. Monthly reports to the headteacher and phase budget holders provide monthly monitoring reports, and a formalised monthly cash flow forecast reporting is being developed. There is a wide range of very detailed processes which indicate how well the Governing Body maintains knowledge and understanding of the financial procedures.

43. Finances allocated to the school, including additional funding and specific resources are used very well. The governing body discuss and approve the school's budget plans, and along with the headteacher, monitor it regularly through the finance committee. They establish priorities in line with the development plans, check spending, and regularly challenge specific spending. This careful and efficient process supports the educational developments of the school. Extra funding from charity events, such as a Golf Day, the school's lottery, as well as the on-line shopping scheme, is well managed and used to very good effect. The improvements and additions to the school systems ensure that the financial management is very good.

44. There is a good mix of experience and qualifications amongst teaching and education support staff, and because of this the school is very well placed to deliver the curriculum. The deployment of classroom support staff, both to classes and within lessons, is very good with consideration being given to the needs of the class as a whole. This significantly improves pupils' access to the curriculum, and consequently learning and personal development. However, there are difficulties associated with recruiting and retaining care staff. The school has established a career development path for care staff and supports those individuals seeking to gain formal qualifications. The number of care staff at Valence is low in relation to the number of boarders, although the quality of support provided is well above the minimum required. The school is aware that an increase in the number of care staff would enable more focussed development work with individual pupils and is constantly seeking to recruit more suitable staff.

45. Resources for learning have improved since the last inspection and are now good overall. Resources are particularly good in English, science, and in information and communication technology, where the number of computers has been significantly increased, as well as the amount of individual technology pupils use to access the curriculum. However, there are times when the use of interactive whiteboards would improve teaching and learning even further. Resources to support the teaching and learning in religious education are satisfactory overall, but would benefit from an increase in the quality and quantity of books and artefacts on a wider range of faiths.

46. Teaching accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection. The rebuilds and refurbishments to the science, art and design and technology facilities now mean very good accommodation is available. The residential facilities are good overall, and in some areas refurbishment and upgrade programmes have ensured very good accommodation for boarders. The residential accommodation for some Further Education students, however, does need redevelopment to secure improved standards of privacy and the school has targeted this as a priority. The significant weakness in relation to accommodation and facilities is the single, slow lift in the main building. This unsatisfactory facility restricts access to residential accommodation, imposes personal care restrictions on pupils, and is the cause of unacceptable disruption and time loss during the day.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The governors and headteacher, in consultation with the local education authority need to:

(1) Improve the physical access for pupils through the installation of a second lift.

(Paragraphs: 10, 26, 46 and 133)

Governors should also consider including the following minor issues as part of their school improvement planning:

- The linking of governors to curriculum areas.
- The sharing of good practice in teaching and learning across the school.
- The use of interactive whiteboards to support teaching and learning.
- The analysis of information collected from the tracking of the progress of different groups of pupils linked to the school's effectiveness in meeting their needs .
- An increase in the number of care staff.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	76
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	28	36	8	0	0	0
Percentage	5	37	48	10	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. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	100
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0

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

Attainment at the end of Years 2, 6 and 9 in 2002.

There were no pupils who attained the nationally expected levels in the national tests at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11) in 2002.**Certificate of Achievement (Entry Level)**

Subject	Pass	Merit	Distinction
English	4	1	1
Mathematics	1	3	0
ICT	1	5	1
Design and Technology	0	7	4
French	0	0	5
Humanities	0	7	0

General Certificate of Education (GCSE)

Subject	Grade C	Grade D	Grade E	Grade F	Grade G
English	2	2	0	1	0
Mathematics	0	0	0	1	3
Science	0	3	1	1	0
ICT					

Ethnic background of pupils**Exclusions in the last school year**

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	94	0	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

The table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only. It gives the number of exclusions, which may be different from the number of pupils excluded.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	17.29
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.78
Average class size	8.3

Education support staff: YR – Y14

Total number of education support staff	103
Total aggregate hours worked per week	2971

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-2003
	£
Total income	2821422
Total expenditure	2753732
Expenditure per pupil	27537
Balance brought forward from previous year	65146
Balance carried forward to next year	132836

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4.4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5.6

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	100
Number of questionnaires returned	40

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	63	38	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	35	53	8	5	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	55	43	3	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	23	53	23	3	0
The teaching is good.	50	35	3	3	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	38	13	5	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	70	18	5	8	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	53	43	5	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	48	40	3	10	0
The school is well led and managed.	70	18	10	3	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	55	38	3	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	48	5	3	10

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

48. It is not appropriate to report on the provision for children in the foundation stage, as until very recently there has only been one pupil in that age range. The school has a Foundation Stage policy in place but as children of reception age are taught alongside pupils in Year 1 and have individual curriculum targets based on comprehensive assessment, their needs, in keeping with the overall provision in the school, are being met at an individual level.

ENGLISH

49. Since the last inspection, there have been good improvements to the provision of English. The quality of teaching and learning has improved, and as a result, pupils in both phases are achieving very well and making very good progress against their individual targets. By the time they leave school the majority read well, have effective conversations with peers and adults, and write creatively. Higher attaining pupils attain GCSE accreditation in English, and in English literature, while lower attaining pupils gain accreditation in the Certificate of Achievement. The increased use of alternative and augmentative communication systems has led to improvements in speaking, listening, and writing. The development of an adapted National Literacy Strategy, and the accessibility of appropriate reading resources in classrooms, and in the residential areas, have increased the opportunities for pupils to practise and improve their reading skills. Teaching has benefited from improvements in planning and from liaison between English subject co-ordinators in the primary and secondary phases.

50. Pupils in the primary and secondary phases who have complex communication needs are provided with good opportunities and support to develop individual communication strategies, which help them to learn and access the curriculum. This has a positive effect on pupil's achievements in speaking and listening. Primary pupils make good progress. Progress has been hampered by a lack of speech and language therapy input into lessons but this is now being addressed by the new service provider. Younger pupils listen carefully and say "Hello" to visitors using their personal methods of communication. They are keen to discuss with visitors the work they have been completing, or what they are having for lunch. Some very young pupils are confident communicators and, for example, asked the inspectors searching questions about what they were going to be doing in school and where they were going. Older pupils in the primary phase use good expressive language, are able to communicate their needs clearly, answer questions, and discuss stories with their peers. They describe and explain in detail and clearly how a computer game works. As pupils move through the school, they become more proficient in using their communication aids and overcome their speech and language difficulties, and as a result they are confident communicators. By the time they reach Year 11, the majority have made very good progress. They demonstrate very good conversation skills and use a range of language skills for reflection, negotiation, giving praise, and explanation. Year 11 pupils use peer discussion effectively to make group decisions, and give verbal support to their peers in class discussions, such as during citizenship lessons on their personal preferences of different newspapers.

51. The achievements of pupils in reading are very good overall, and as they progress through the school the majority of pupils become proficient readers. The younger pupils, who use alternative and augmentative communication are developing good pre-reading skills, and recognise pictures, match symbols and words, and know the names of characters in simple

stories. All younger primary pupils develop word recognition skills, phonic skills, and sentence building skills. They recognise and talk about the books they are reading. Younger higher attaining pupils recognise words, with some using the context of the story or the picture as an additional clue. Lower attaining pupils have individually made books that have picture symbols to help them with word recognition and understanding. The school works hard to produce individual materials so that all pupils have equal access to reading and make the best possible progress. The majority of older pupils in the primary phase read fluently and accurately from information books, such as *Jungle Animals – Eye Openers* and from books in their reading scheme. They understand the stories well enough to discuss the contents with their friends and classmates, and make decisions about the preferred books to be included in class libraries. Lower attaining, older primary pupils match pictures with computer images using picture dictionary programmes.

52. As pupils progress through the school they continue to develop their reading skills and increase their levels of comprehension. During Years 8 and 9 higher attaining pupils read with fluency and show good comprehension of books, such as *The Beast of Bobbin Moor*. They enjoy reading; carry their reading books around with them and the majority read accurately and fluently. They discuss their choice of reading books. Lower attaining pupils at Years 8 and 9 use phonic strategies to read words they do not know, but are sometimes hindered by their lack of comprehension and may introduce extra words to the text. By Year 11, all pupils achieve very well in relation to their prior attainment and make very good progress. These standards have been reached because of the collaboration, and sharing of good practice in the teaching of literacy, between the primary and secondary staff.

53. Throughout the school many pupils do not have sufficient hand function to write and, consequently, their written work is completed by the support of adults or the use of computers and switch access devices. Pupils as they progress through the primary phase make good progress in developing pre-handwriting and handwriting skills. Many younger pupils are emergent writers and make marks or symbols on worksheets. Some develop their fine motor skills very well, and are able to point to symbols and use switch access computer programs. The majority of older primary pupils progress well. Lower attaining pupils use word lists in the computer program to construct simple sentences. Higher attaining pupils work individually or in groups to produce a variety of stories and extended pieces of writing.

54. The achievements in writing of pupils in the secondary phase are very good and they make good progress as they move towards their final years in school. This is the result of the high quality teaching by a specialist English teacher. By Year 9, some pupils successfully use an independent structured approach to practising spelling, and use writing and expressive language creatively, for example about events which have happened in school or in their lives. Higher attaining pupils compose poems with four-line stanzas, and write in a lively and creative manner. They use paragraphs, write instructions, and describe the role of characters in plays. By Year 11, pupils plan and creatively produce yearbooks, which including digital photography. Others write creatively about incidents that have happened in school.

55. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Lessons are very well planned, with time at the beginning for pupils to be reminded of earlier work and reflection on their learning at the end of sessions. This reflection sometimes requires pupils to make decisions about the level of difficulty of work and how challenging they found it. Older pupils respond well to this self-evaluation and the information from this helps the teacher to plan future work. All teachers are skilled at using stimulating questions that extend pupils thinking and reasoning. All work is planned at an individual level and very well linked to the pupils' individual education targets in each aspect of the subject. This allows the work set to match pupils' levels of attainment and as a result they achieve well. Teachers provide individualised

resources and support in order to support pupils' overall development. For example, a pupil has intensive work with the ICT teacher, whilst others work in small groups on their own initiative. Relationships between teachers and pupils, and between teaching assistants and the pupils, are very good and this enhances pupils' motivation to make progress and achieve. Teaching assistants play a particularly effective role across the school in observing, assessing, and enabling pupils to learn.

56. The co-ordination of English is very good. The primary and secondary phase co-ordinators liaise together and primary sessions in Year 6 are observed by the senior co-ordinator. Each pupil has individual targets based on National Curriculum levels or "P" Levels. Although National Curriculum guidelines are followed, planning takes into account individual levels of physical ability. In the primary phase pupils are grouped according to the focus of the specific English lesson and primary teachers collaborate and review lessons on a 6 weekly basis. In the secondary phase all English lessons are taught by the subject coordinator and another English specialist and there is a consistent approach to the quality of teaching and assessment. Assessment is very good and the development of tracking grids means that the results of ongoing assessment and progress can be easily accessed. However, there is currently no analytical comparison of the results of progress of year groups, or of different aspects of English.

57. The National Literacy Strategy is carried out throughout the school following planning by both literacy co-ordinators. The same reading scheme is used well in primary and early secondary classes to ensure a smooth transition for readers between phases. There has been a good emphasis on training for the implementation of the National Literacy Strategy for the whole school, and this is having an effect on the emphasis teachers place on literacy when teaching other subjects of the curriculum. The team for alternative and augmentative communication is an excellent resource that provides advice and helps to develop individual communication programmes for pupils throughout the school. The team has a large variety of equipment and aids and they liaise with the speech therapist, who provides guidance on language developmental issues. Staff from the team work alongside classroom staff and they are readily available to be consulted by pupils in the school. Throughout the school there are many examples of pupils who are enabled to develop educationally due to the use of alternative and augmentative communication.

MATHEMATICS

58. There has been satisfactory improvement in mathematics since the last inspection. Improvement has been affected by staff illness, but with the recent appointment of a subject specialist appropriate development plans are now in place. Progress and pupils' achievements remain good in all year groups. This results from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy, staff training to support it and the development of resources throughout the school. All pupils have equal opportunities to participate in the range of learning opportunities with specialised technology or adapted aides. Due to this pupils achieve well against targets set in their annual reviews and in their Individual Education Plans.

59. By the end of Year 2, the higher attaining pupils, some of whom have a wide range and complexity of learning difficulties, demonstrate a range of mathematical skills. In Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities make good progress. They are developing good skills in counting by rote, are beginning to match objects, and see that counting helps in identifying 'more' and 'less'. They are also developing a small, reliable vocabulary of concepts, such as 'full' and 'empty,' and recognise 'too much' and 'too little'. By the end of Year 2, pupils with profound and complex difficulties are beginning to recite numbers, counting forwards and counting objects in the room, some are supported in sorting activities by the use of switches. Higher

attaining pupils are starting to deal with some abstract concepts, such as 'half' of an object, the passage of time, the days of the week, and months of the year.

60. Good progress continues throughout the primary phase, and by Year 6 higher attaining pupils recognise odd and even numbers and have a good grasp of place value. They recognise a number of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and can identify some of their properties. They have used tally charts when recording data from simple surveys to produce bar graphs, for instance of favourite fruits, weight, and hand sizes. Those who have more complex learning needs still require support in developing skills relating to size and basic matching, but understand some number sequences. Use of ICT programs enables them to record answers to simple number problems, and pupils use aids, such as communication books, well to show recognition of numbers.

61. As they progress through Year 7 to Year 9, higher attaining pupils develop skills relevant to the first levels of the National Curriculum. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of decimal notation, and have developed their understanding of shapes by using nets and measuring area and perimeter with a good degree of accuracy. They extend their understanding of shapes and their properties and explore units of measurement using rulers and scales, measuring length accurately in centimetres. They add coins and small amounts of money as sums, with increasing accuracy. Some pupils understand the basic concept of probability and begin to use the appropriate vocabulary, for instance in a Year 9 lesson, pupils recognised that pulling a blue 'brick' from a bag would be a *certainty* if all the bricks were blue. Lower attaining pupils find the areas of shapes by counting squares, some with the aid of support assistants, and complete simple addition and subtraction problems. Those pupils with complex learning needs continue to need support, which is provided very well by both support assistants who record work for pupils, and by the use of equipment, such as laptops and communication books.

62. By Year 11, many pupils use their mathematical skills to work out the amounts needed to make purchases, use weights with increasing accuracy to weigh and measure ingredients. They also understand the school timetable and the order of daily events. These skills have an obvious and positive effect on their personal and social skills as they become increasingly confident and independent. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 follow either a Certificate of Achievement (Entry Level) or a GCSE course. Higher attaining pupils understand fractions and percentages, and complete increasingly complex calculations, such as long division. Pupils with complex learning needs complete mock examination questions with the support of teaching assistants, who patiently give pupils enough time to indicate their response to problems. Lower attaining pupils can indicate the next number in a sequence, counting backwards, and use simple fractions in practical situations. Lower attaining Year 11 pupils have further opportunities to develop a practical understanding of mathematics through an additional 'application of number' project where, for instance, they research into a holiday abroad, finding out about locations, prices and the weather.

63. The good progress results from the good teaching in mathematics. All pupils are given an opportunity to participate, while good use of questioning and adaptation of tasks by teachers and teaching assistants allow pupils to work at an appropriate level with suitable challenges. Lessons are most successful when activities are varied. Thus, in a very good lesson for pupils in Years 3 to 6, a number of activities were used to extend pupils' understanding. Resources were used well to support learning; for instance, a group of higher attaining pupils were provided with real fruit for their survey, and computers were used well to record and print the resulting graphs. Lower attaining pupils complete tasks which are supported by worksheets at an appropriate level and therefore helps them to achieve. The teacher used language well to asked questions that were relevant to pupils and support assistants used this approach when working with groups or individuals. Lessons are less

successful when activities are too repetitive and are not supported by opportunities for practical work.

64. Because the work is supported by the use of ICT, and/or the use of symbols pupils show an interest in mathematics, are productive, work at a good pace, and gain knowledge and understanding. Good teaching builds successfully on early learning and by Year 11 pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills are being developed well. Good planning and the successful application of teaching techniques from the National Numeracy Strategy are influential in helping pupils with their accredited courses.

65. Teachers give pupils satisfactory opportunities to practise and consolidate mathematics through the school day, but pupils would gain greater benefit if opportunities for the use of mathematics were specifically identified in the overall planning for other subjects. In one very good food technology lesson, however, number skills were reinforced very well in a practical setting as pupils worked with timers and weighed ingredients. In design and technology pupils learn the importance of accuracy when measuring. In a Year 5 and 6 numeracy lesson, pupils were highly motivated by the practical use of a stopwatch to time races. Higher attaining pupils demonstrated their growing understanding of time by estimating with a good degree of accuracy the amount of time it would take to cover a certain distance. Pupils sometimes have the opportunities to develop their mathematical skills with a computer. This is an area has been identified by the school for further development.

66. The new secondary subject leader is a specialist and has recently developed the schemes of work for pupils in Years 7 to 11. Planning links between the primary and secondary phases of the school are not strong and have been identified as an area for development. The subject is well resourced and ICT is beginning to be used more regularly and effectively. Although assessment information identifies what pupils know understand and can do, it has not yet been sufficiently analysed to indicate areas of strength and weakness in mathematics.

SCIENCE

67. The provision for science is very good and throughout the school pupils make very good progress, whether it is in learning about different forms of life, forces, chemicals, or about how to conduct investigations. This is a good improvement since the previous inspection.

68. By the end of Year 2, for example, pupils have learned the features of a flowering plant, and recognise that flowers come in all shapes and sizes. They collect flowers from the gardens and match them with the models they have made. The more able pupils use the computer to confirm their findings. Differences between materials, such as wood, plastic and metal, are understood, and pupils use a good range of descriptive words, such as 'heavy', 'short', or 'sticky' when explaining how objects feel. Every pupil is building a very good scientific background. By the end of Year 6, pupils are able to collect samples of soil, explore the texture, and record their observations. They enjoy the scientific approaches used in experiments in the laboratory, especially those where they use a video-camera on their microscope. Pupils begin to evaluate their work. They can identify apparatus and collect it to set up practical tasks with their support staff. These pupils understand that animals grow, and that humans develop in a similar fashion.

69. By the end of Year 9, pupils have learned how to use the computers to find the results of their experiments on starch; these had been stored correctly and were needed to continue with the investigations on nutrients. They understand some basic facts about energy and carbohydrates and diet. Different parts of the body are studied, and pupils learn the structure

of, for instance, the lungs and the respiratory system. Their understanding of how to improve reactions helps them to plan experiments to produce salts. Pupils are developing their scientific knowledge and understanding through practical reinforcement.

70. By the end of Year 11, pupils use their scientific background to develop a programme to monitor the school's physical environment. They carry out risk assessments of outdoor activities before setting off to collect water samples for analysis. All pupils are aware of the need for safety when working with acids and alkalis; they understand that gas can be produced, sometimes violently. Their scientific language is good, naming metals and metal compounds correctly. When working on a no smoking campaign, pupils use their scientific understanding to explain why nicotine and carbon monoxide are not healthy. These pupils know that light travels in straight lines; they use this knowledge when using a prism to deflect a beam and to produce a spectrum onto the television.

71. Science is taught very well, and pupils' learning is very good. Lessons are planned very carefully and are often based around good practical investigations. The teaching takes account of the different needs of the higher and lower attaining pupils. This is achieved by re-grouping pupils, different styles of teaching, level of support, and type of support. The support staff are particularly effective, having trained especially to improve access for all pupils. Pupils are encouraged to work together and share ideas. Teachers and support staff have very positive relationships with their pupils and motivate them very well. For example, pupils are given a warm welcome; they are relaxed and ready for work. They get house points for talking about work and for arriving on time. Pupils respond well with very good efforts, being attentive, keen to take part, and willing to explain and write about their experiments. The staff expect everyone to succeed, work is well matched to pupils' individual ability and as a result they learn. Experiments are very interesting, some grab attention, for example, when mixing materials with acids. The pupil response to this is delightful. Pupils' behaviour is often excellent, the interest and excitement shown by the younger pupils on their visit to the garden is a joy to see. Many good resources are used well to demonstrate how, for instance, soil is made up, or what is involved in the process of breathing, or how light can be blocked to produce shadows, or refracted to form the spectrum. Pupils learn very well through these practical sessions. Teachers use lessons very well to examine the scientific methods, pupils learn to predict and to record the findings. They also learn how to judge their own work, teachers enable them to use earlier lessons to make these judgements and improve.

72. The leadership and management of science are very good. The overall coverage of what is taught is particularly well organised, especially with the very good emphasis on practical work. One primary group is taught by the secondary coordinator in the science laboratory. The other primary lessons are taught in their own classes, one by a science specialist. The subject has a high profile and is enjoyed by all. The 'science challenge' is well supported, showing a whole school interest in the subject. The high expectations are matched by very good teaching and planning and assessment of how well pupils are doing. The courses that are nationally accredited are a great incentive to the older pupils, and they do well in these. The new science laboratory is very well set up and equipped which has a very positive effect on pupils' achievements.

73. Pupils' progress is very well monitored, and the information is used very effectively to change what will be taught in the future. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision of how he wants the subject to develop. The budget is well managed and the co-ordinator uses people and places very efficiently to enrich the teaching and learning. The co-ordinator has addressed the issues raised at the time of the previous inspection; pupil progress is very good overall; teaching and learning have improved also. Staff training has improved the efficiency of support staff. Individual targets are accurate. There has been a steady improvement since the last inspection, to the point where the overall delivery of the subject is

very good. The co-ordinator has identified areas for development as part of the development plans, these are accurate; to improve data logging and to further improve the inclusion for pupils in mainstream schools.

ART AND DESIGN

74. The provision for art and design is very good. Teaching and learning are consistently very good, record keeping has also improved, and the standards that pupils achieve and the progress they make is good overall. This good improvement since the last inspection.

75. By Year 2, pupils can reproduce a picture through a viewfinder. They are able to use good techniques in drawing and block printing. They understand very simple wax resist methods in their work on topics based on materials. Pupils know the senses and respond to a sensory approach with textiles, to select and to glue materials to produce their initials. This work is produced with support from staff. They can use pre-cut shapes in their work on journeys. The use of themes allows pupils to study nature and to be able to produce a collage and comment on the colours. By Year 6, pupils can represent textures in high quality presentations. They know how to produce circle prints to illustrate different environments, such as water or the woods. They are able to paint in watercolours, the atmosphere of a dream. Pupils understand design in chairs and work well in designing for special occasions. They also understand the idea of trying to picture the world of their drawing from the position of a bird. When faced with an exercise based on layering to decorate a picture, pupils understand the task and work with classmates to share thoughts on materials that may be needed.

76. By Year 9, pupils can extend their skills in sculptures of tigers, snowmen and Christmas figures. They study the work of famous artists and are able to draw scenes from around the lake, in the style of surrealists. They can share their ideas on presentation and tell their support staff exactly what they wish to represent in their pictures of Irises for example, 'We need to elaborate the middle'. By Year 11, pupils are able to manipulate a range of materials such as clay and produce very good work in ceramic chess sets, boxes, and faces. They are developing an understanding of composition and use collages to illustrate both composition and motor skills. By Year 13, students can choose which skills they wish to develop, and they are able to mould faces, using a range of techniques to illustrate character. This is very good work, using awareness of the body in designing the faces.

77. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Relationships are very good also, support staff being appreciated by pupils for the work they do to produce high quality presentations. The teachers use praise and humour to motivate pupils, who respond by trying to produce their best work. Pupils want to succeed; they behave and listen to instructions. The teachers use technology very well to enable pupils to present their work and to compare it with others. The work by the lake was photographed, along with the original topic and the theme was developed when the pupils returned to class. The pupils enjoy their art. They like to see it on the walls around school. Teachers use the environment and the resources to enrich the topics to be taught. Teachers understand the needs of pupils and this enables them to set challenging and interesting tasks. They use this understanding to provide the correct equipment for drawing; they consult therapists for advice on pencils, for example. Pupils have many opportunities to choose materials and to experiment with their choices. Staff use good examples of work to enable pupils to have ideas of their own. The topics or journeys are well planned to encourage pupils to think and to consider the fullest possible applications of art.

78. The leadership and management in art are very good. The co-ordinator has developed what is to be taught into a series of extremely interesting and challenging themes

and topics. These ensure that the requirements of the National Curriculum are well met. Portfolios of work show that the pupils are making very good progress. The new accommodation has improved the storage and display areas, pupils like to work in the rooms. The co-ordinator has also developed a very good use of technology, cameras for representation, and the database for recording what pupils have learned. The links with colleges have enriched the art provision; the artist in residence and the projects over the last years with Stour Valley Arts have made improved provision a reality. The resources and budget are managed well.

79. The art club is popular; the output can be seen on windows and in projects around the school. The planning for the subject takes differences of age and need into account and provides a clear view of the future. Monitoring of the work in the primary phase is not fully developed. Upgrades and refurbishment have helped to maintain improvement since the last inspection. The use of the environment is very good but access to the furthest parts is not possible, despite power chairs.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

80. There has been good improvement in the accommodation and organisation of resources since the last inspection. This has ensured that the possible health and safety risks identified at the time of the last inspection are no longer a problem. Standards of achievement are good throughout the school and very good by Year 11. Throughout all year groups, pupils are given appropriate opportunities to use and develop their literacy skills, especially in the use of words that directly relate to design and technology. Number words are used, as are opportunities to develop the use of number within the context of measures.

81. For younger pupils design and technology is taught as part of a topic based approach and achievement is good. A range of projects linked closely with the topic enable teachers to plan activities that are accessible to pupils. For instance, in a topic on water pupils investigate different materials and test them for absorbency. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 consider keeping dry in the rain and look at designs for raincoats and umbrellas. They understand that a pram with a hood will keep out the rain. They use books to research how a clock moves and one high attaining pupil realises that the shadow moves because of the sun. For pupils with more complex learning needs annotations indicate the contributions they make to discussions using communication devices. In Years 1 and 2 pupils use a talking word processing program to record their views of shop bought sandwiches. Whilst studying food they make a curry using spices appreciating '*a taste of India*' and design their own menu for a meal. In a topic on transport they identify emergency vehicles and learn that a variety of vehicles are used for different purposes.

82. By the end of Year 9 pupils have experienced a wide range of activities. They have designed and made flashing badges, clocks, games, boats, and jigsaws. They use glue to assemble the parts when making frame games. Pupils with complex learning needs who cannot physically make products are given very good one-to-one support enabling them to communicate their ideas to support staff who know them well. For instance, one high attaining pupil in Year 9 articulately described the problems she had encountered whilst making her skittle game. She recognised that the ball was too light to knock down the skittles and had modified her design to make the ball heavier with the aid of the support staff and teacher.

83. By the end of Year 11, pupils' achievements are very good using a broad range of materials to both design and make artefacts. Many pupils achieve distinctions in their final examination work. The design process is followed supported by a structured framework for organising the written element, and finished products for accreditation. The quality of work is

very good and pupils achieve very well, many pupils making very good progress against individual targets. They work with increased independence and, with varying degrees of support. For example they construct *Products for a Teenager*, which they make to their own designs. For instance, having decided to make a jewellery box one pupil researched magazines before designing her own. She recognised that elements of the designs would not be suitable for her because there was 'not much space for necklaces though and this material could get ruined quickly' (denim). Wherever possible pupils are encouraged to use tools themselves and are proud of their achievements. Their success in design and technology contributes very well to a rise in their self-esteem.

84. In food technology, pupils learn about healthy eating and prepare the ingredients for a variety of healthy dishes, such as fruit salad. Pupils in Year 7 make a step-by-step time plan for making a sandwich, for instance. Less able pupils can select appropriate tools and explain the choices they have made. All pupils learn to cost items and evaluate the dishes they have made in addition to shop bought products. For example, a Year 8 group considered the cost, colour, fat content, texture and taste of sausages and burgers prior to making their own. In a very good follow up lesson pupils watched with amazement when a sausage machine was demonstrated broadening pupils experience of how products are manufactured. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 work towards the Entry Level examination and have covered a range of assignments including food and health. They prepare and cook an example recipe for inclusion in the *Leaver's Recipe Book*. For instance, in one lesson observed pupils followed recipes for *three cheese pitta pizza*, and *savoury puff pinballs*; digital photographs were taken to enhance the presentation and make instructions more accessible. All pupils are aware of the rules of hygiene and safety in the kitchen and meticulously follow the routines of washing hands and wearing aprons. The teacher demonstrates skills well, so pupils soon learn to prepare food. Pupils with more complex learning needs are included well, and achieve well because they extend their sensory experiences. Switches are used very effectively to enable pupils to operate food processors to grate cheese and chop onions. Pupils make good progress and prepare ingredients with a reasonable degree of independence.

85. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good because basic skills are taught very effectively and high expectations exist in all years for pupils' learning. The subject specialists in the secondary part of the school have very good subject knowledge and make good use of materials and specialist accommodation. Teachers throughout the school know their pupils well and ensure, through good planning, that high standards are set for learning and behaviour. In one excellent food technology lesson where Year 9 pupils were investigating how pasta is made, all pupils participated in designing a pasta dish with a complementary sauce. The excellent organisation and planning and use of support staff enabled all pupils, including those with communication difficulties, to succeed. Pupils respond very well to the challenges set by very good teaching. They watch and listen well and learn to work with greater independence. They are pleased with the results of their work and this does much for their self-esteem. Many pupils show good levels of independent interest and concentration. The very good relationships in classes motivate pupils and students and they work hard to carry out the planned lesson objectives. These relationships also make the lessons relaxed and enjoyable for all. All pupils, whatever their attainment, are fully included in the activities and encouraged to make choices and decisions. Teachers and support staff liaise well about the needs of individual pupils. Support staff make a significant contribution to pupils' learning with the right blend of support and challenge. Teachers' planning includes anticipated learning outcomes for groups of pupils and assessment correctly focuses on pupils' achievements and future learning targets.

86. Co-ordination of the subject is very good. The co-ordinators for design technology and food technology work closely together. They are both specialists and they keep up to date

with developments within the subject. However, greater liaison and sharing of expertise between the primary and secondary phases would enrich the provision. Resources are good and support learning in both areas of the curriculum. The new design and technology room has had a positive effect on delivery of the subject. Opportunities for accreditation are good. Information and communication technology is used well to aid design and for pupils to record their work.

GEOGRAPHY

87. Overall, the quality of provision is good in geography. Its strengths are an effective secondary specialist and experienced subject co-ordinator and good quality teaching across the school. There is now a good scheme of work and there has been good improvement since the last inspection. Resources are good and help to raise pupil achievement.

88. At the end of Years 2, pupils achieve well. The position is similar at the end of Year 6. This is the result of a number of factors. Firstly, the geography curriculum has been developed well, with the result that pupils have had a sure grounding in the study of skills, themes, and localities. Secondly, time allocations have been good, and more generous than at the time of the last inspection. Finally, there has been good assessment of pupils' progress to help teachers to plan their lessons. Pupils in Year 2 ask and understand straightforward geographical questions and show interest in the study of the seaside and how to get there. They understand ideas of distance and change and this is reflected in their work on Barbados. Good progress is made up to the age of eleven as pupils begin to understand through their physical geography work that physical and human processes affect places and the environment.

89. The scheme of work allows further very good progress from Years 7 to 11. This is sharpened by specialist teaching. As a result achievement is very good. Particularly good progress is made in human geography: Year 10 pupils complete imaginative work on their Kielder Dam project. Additionally, good comparative studies of Kenya, Italy, Whitley Bay and Magaluf help pupils to understand important geographical themes as well as localities. There are satisfactory arrangements to ensure that geography teaching contributes towards the sharpening of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. Pupils in Year 2, for example, produce graphs and those in Years 10 and 11 incorporate numeracy in ICT work. Older pupils design food labels and produce plans of villages using ICT and write up good reports of fieldwork. Through its emphasis on a range of different places, the subject makes a good contribution to cultural provision in the school.

90. In lessons seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were good; this was confirmed by the analysis of work. Lesson planning is linked to Attainment Targets and associated assessment and marking procedures are good. This has a good effect on pupils' learning: they know the outcomes of their work and how it links to both their past and future assignments. Strengths in planning and expectations have also helped pupils' attainment: for example, the present Year 7 is benefiting from a more demanding curriculum which has been re-shaped to meet their higher ability levels. Overall class management and relationships are very good, as are pupils' attitudes; both contribute to the quality of learning. Good examples seen were Year 7 and 8 classes being handled with humour and aplomb.

91. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The issues of the last inspection have been addressed, particularly that related to the curriculum, and there is now a good capacity for further advance.

HISTORY

92. Provision is very good. History has made very good progress since the last inspection and continues to improve. Standards are appropriately high and pupils make very good progress against their specific individual education plan targets. The work of a most capable subject leader in the secondary phase is well supported by the topics taught to pupils in the primary phase. Pupils' achievement is very good because of the quality of teaching, learning and assessment and a vibrant and well-organised curriculum. There are no significant areas for improvement.

93. By Year 2, pupils are developing an early sense of time and historical method when they take part in table-top archaeology and place objects in order of age; they can also identify the sort of toys which their grandparents may, or may not, have played with when they were young. By Year 6, pupils have progressed well and achievement is good. This is mainly the result of an interesting and well organised curriculum which is based on topics linked to their study of geography. Thus, younger pupils start the food topic by looking at grandma's favourite foods before making Roman bread in Year 3 and then studying the food of the rich and poor in Tudor England. Higher attaining pupils know about Florence Nightingale, Boudicca and Henry VIII but the school ensures that a multi-sensory approach helps the enjoyment and understanding of those with more complex needs. Photographs show how much is gained from role-play exercises, dressing as Romans, and visiting Lullingstone Villa.

94. By Year 9, standards and achievement are very good because of appropriate time on the subject and some imaginative teaching. Pupils' strengths in knowing and being able to explain important historical events are balanced by equally good skills of using evidence and communicating their findings. Very good examples were seen of pupils' narrative and empathetic skills when writing letters from the trenches or deciding whether or not King John was an evil man. This progress is maintained strongly so that by the end of Year 11 achievement is also very good. Pupils follow an accredited course and obtain good results. Higher attaining pupils are able to make links between events and changes and they have a regard for accuracy when describing them. With help, those with more complex needs can show an appropriate depth of factual knowledge when communicating about the history of Bodiam Castle.

95. The history curriculum has very good arrangements to ensure that subject teaching contributes towards the sharpening of pupils' literacy, numeracy and ICT skills. From the age of five, an emphasis is placed upon the importance of communicating and pupils' reading and writing are helped by the use of writing frames and careful attention to reading. By age sixteen, many are able to write good pieces of narrative and persuasive writing, as when explaining their agreement or otherwise to the beheading of Charles 1. Provision is satisfactory for numeracy and good for ICT where learning is helped by a range of interactive worksheets on the expansion of the railways and other subjects. History makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Students appreciate the achievements of the past and are aware of both the results of particular decisions and that societies have been ordered differently from their own.

96. In lessons and work seen during the inspection, teaching and learning were very good. This is mainly because lessons are geared accurately to the pupils' aptitudes, their management is good and there is a very good use of resources and support staff. Teachers' planning is closely linked to a very good scheme of work in which the National Curriculum Programmes of Study have been linked to P Levels. Assessment and target setting are of a high quality and most pupils correspondingly make good progress. In a Year 8 lesson based on the French Revolution, skilful questioning and an imaginative use of sources by the teacher enabled the pupils to understand the different interpretations placed on the storming of the Bastille.

97. Leadership and management are very good. The subject has addressed the outstanding issues of the last inspection well and there is a good capacity for improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

98. The school's provision for information and communication technology has improved considerably since the last inspection. It is being used in the majority of subjects as a means for teaching and for supporting learning, as well as a means for pupils to have complete access to the curriculum, and to communicate. By the time they leave school, they are attaining very well, have made very good progress, and are competent users. Much of this progress has been achieved in the last few years, and especially with the appointment of an ICT specialist, and the installation of a new ICT room that is well equipped. The school is achieving its long-term vision of having ICT as a resource for teaching and learning, as a subject in its own right, and as an access to the curriculum for those pupils who need it. The management set this area as a priority for development over the last three years, and with the support from the Governing Body, have allocated considerable financial resources from the school budget and national initiatives into developing the provision in all areas of the school.

99. For all pupils, using information and communication technology is very much part of their learning. They have access to computers, switches and software, and teachers and the teaching assistants make very good use of it in most lessons. For example, teachers in primary literacy sessions use appropriate software to reinforce pupils' understanding of language. Pupils in the primary phase make good progress and confidently use a tracker ball, a mouse, or a switch, which for some pupils are adapted, to select items and move them to different areas of the screen. Some lower attaining pupils need verbal prompting or support from teaching assistants. Those with communication and language difficulties are beginning to use 'Big Mac' talkers, or speech technology as a form of alternative and augmented communication. Pupils are thoroughly assessed when they enter school and the needs of each pupil are well identified in relation to computer equipment, software applications, and the access devices they need. The school provides a very extensive range of switches and access devices so that every pupil can use information and communication technology as part of their lessons, either to learn new concepts, reinforce learning, communicate or produce work.

100. When they enter the secondary phase of education pupils are equipped with the basic skills and confidence, and in some cases individual expertise, to use ICT for recording and displaying work. This continues to be built on through its planned use in all lessons. By Year 9, pupils have extended their range of skills and demonstrate that they can retrieve and store information, and format text into different styles colours and sizes. They understand how files and documents are organised and stored, and independently search the hard drive of a computer to find the particular files they need, such as when inserting clip art into a document. They have continued developing skills and by Year 11 work independently on researching information for their areas of study. Pupils in the secondary phase are taught by a specialist teacher in a designated room who has recently put in place a comprehensive scheme of work that is well matched to pupils' different levels of attainment. This, along with specialised and adapted resources enables all pupils to currently make very good progress. Up to now the school has only offered Certificate of Achievement (Entry Level) in the subject. This is because the school has been without a specialist ICT teacher and co-ordinator for two years and developments slowed down. There are now plans in place to increase the range of external accreditation. Pupils who return to the Further Education Unit as students have a range of skills and understanding that enables them to access vocational courses, all of which involve the use of computers.

101. The quality teaching and learning across the school is good overall. In the primary phase teachers use ICT well to support their teaching and pupils' learning in subjects, but there is insufficient evidence in pupils' files to show the full range of skills and understanding they are gaining in ICT. This is beginning to be addressed through the teaching of discrete ICT lessons. In all lessons seen during the inspection, primary teachers used information and communication technology confidently and to the best advantage so that it supported pupils' learning. A strength is the way in which teachers and teaching assistants make use of communication aids so that pupils who have no speech have a voice, can make choices, and be fully included into all classroom activities. In the secondary phase it is good overall with some very good features which are the direct result of the level of expertise and knowledge of the specialist teacher who is also the co-ordinator and extremely enthusiastic and visionary. The expectations for pupils' achievements are very high and the all pupils are fully included in all learning activities no matter how great their physical difficulties are. In this school meets its inclusion policy very well.

102. The school is meeting all the requirements of the National Curriculum in both the primary and secondary phases but especially in the secondary phase where the curriculum has been planned by the co-ordinator who is an ICT specialist teacher. Links with the primary phase have been made with the ICT specialist teacher teaching discrete ICT lessons to primary aged pupils. This is a new initiative and is benefiting the school by bringing expertise in ICT to the primary phase, and providing valuable in-service training for the ICT specialist who has very little primary experience. The planning is good and links have been made to all areas of the curriculum, including its use in music, history, and art and design. The learning objectives and the activities are very well identified in the medium term planning. Pupils have targets both as individuals and as groups of pupils, and these are very well assessed. These enable the teacher to set new challenging targets and enable pupils to achieve. The school is beginning to analyse the information of how well pupils are progressing. As this is new the full impact of its success has yet to be seen in the standards pupils attain and an increase in the external accreditation in Year 11.

103. The school has developed its range of resources very well over the last few years, and has concentrated on providing a good ICT suite in the secondary phase, as well as two ICT rooms in the Further Education Unit, and maintaining at least three computers in all classrooms, so that they are used as part of all lessons. In addition, a few pupils have personal computers to record their work and many have specialised communication aids. A network has been installed across the three buildings and all teachers have access to a very wide range of software that caters for the differing abilities of pupils across the school and the different subjects of the curriculum. As a result pupils can develop independent research skills, use the Internet and electronic mail facility, use scanning applications and digital cameras. The school has yet to install interactive whiteboards to support teaching to whole groups of pupils who find it difficult, because of the size and number of wheelchairs in a group, to gather around a small computer screen.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

104. Since the last inspection the provision for French has continued to be good, and the overall achievements and the progress that pupils make are good. French is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11. In Years 7 and 8 pupils learn and understand single French words, and by end of Year 8, they are communicating using simple sentences and answering questions put to them in French. By the end of Year 9 pupils have progressed further, can recognise more complicated vocabulary such as “original” “practical”, and higher attaining pupils understand instructions and sentences. They can describe people, details of clothing and state preferences. In Years 10 and 11 progression over time can be seen by the completion of units in the scheme of work. In Year 10, pupils start the course work at entry level of an externally accredited course that they complete by the end of Year 11.

105. The teaching of French is very good as a very experienced teacher, who is also the co-ordinator, teaches all sessions. This ensures that the quality of teaching and learning, and assessment, is consistent. Materials, resources and activities are carefully planned to match individual needs and all pupils make progress at an individual level. A range of teaching strategies is used that motivate and emphasise listening and responding. Some pupils’ understanding is appropriately supported by the use of picture clues, and the school is experimenting with the use of switches and communication books to further develop achievement in French. Classroom organisation is good, and relationships between the teacher and pupils are very good and result in motivated learning. Teaching assistants support the physical needs of pupils very well, but occasionally, when teaching assistants cannot speak French, they only speak English to pupils and this does not support their learning.

106. The subject co-ordinator has an excellent understanding of the French language and the culture and customs of the country and, as a result, pupils have good access to well informed information about France. The cultural development of pupils is very good. Planning of the subject as a whole is good and long, medium and short term plans are in place. A good range of resources is used to support the units of work throughout the scheme and the co-ordinator produces good supporting materials.

MUSIC

107. Good progress has been made in the provision for music across the school. A specialist music teacher works in school for one and a half days per week, the National Curriculum requirements are met, and all pupils have targets based on either National Curriculum or “P” levels. Resources are now audited and over the past two years much more adapted equipment has been provided for the music room. New software, to enable the use of ICT in composing, researching, and appraising music has been purchased.

108. Evidence from school’s records, and from the few lessons seen during the inspection, shows that pupils make very good progress. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 develop familiarity with a range of music that depicts movement, instruments, and action. By the time they are in Year 6, pupils sing a range of well-known songs, and use instruments independently or with support to compose music.

109. Pupils in the secondary phase successfully build on the experiences in the primary phase and demonstrate that they are able to listen and appraise music, such as in Year 8, when pupils demonstrate these qualities during sessions involving *The Fanfare of the Common Man*. All pupils, with varying degrees of support, successfully produce the opening

bars to this piece of music using a range of appropriate equipment. For example, some work together on a quintet switch system, while others use keyboards, which enable them to produce the sounds and effects of a variety of musical instruments. By Year 9, higher attaining pupils contribute to group compositions, playing keyboards or light bells with good timing. Lower attaining pupils use step switches, and make choices about their likes and dislikes in music. In Year 11, the highest attaining pupil is working towards Grade 3 on the saxophone, and plays harmonies and composes short loops.

110. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. Lessons are well planned and equipment, resources, and activities are appropriate for the pupil's individual needs. Teacher expectations are high and pupils respond accordingly. They are motivated and show interest because at the beginning of sessions the teacher revisits the work from the previous week ago. This helps pupils to consolidate their learning and prepares them well for the next stage of learning. For example, pupils readily remember the names of pieces of music that they have been studying and the names of the composers.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

111. The school's provision for physical education is very good. This has been considerably improved by the teaching across the school by a specialist teacher, the refurbishment of the swimming pool, the provision of a sensory, safe play area for younger pupils, and the careful planning of activities for pupils of different physical ability so that they all achieve. Due to these, pupils achieve very well across the school. Some pupils achieve at national standards, the profile of the subject is high. There has been consistent improvement in every aspect.

112. Pupils in the primary phase, by Year 2, respond to the challenges set for them, such as in throwing, and or improving their holding and placing skills. Pupils become more aware of the need for care, precision, and safety. By Year 6, pupils have increased their ball skills and increased their range of catching and throwing skills. In the swimming pool, pupils have individual targets covering a range of skills, for example, swimming with one to one support and buoyancy aids, balancing more efficiently without fear, or swimming two widths independently. They all enter the pool in their own way, and understand the need for breathing properly when in the pool.

113. In the secondary phase all pupils improve skills greatly and are involved in developing an understanding of physical education skills in a huge array of sports, games and experiences, including power chair football. They know the rules of boccia, golf, handball and volleyball, and they apply this knowledge to a variety of sports. As they reach their targets, pupils develop independence and team skills. By Year 9, pupils in electric wheelchairs, when taking part in slalom competitions, drive and manoeuvre their chairs with increasing skill and accuracy. All pupils have increased their understanding for the need to warm up before games, and compete well as part of a team. They maintain a high level of interest and interaction, and mutually support each other. During swimming sessions, pupils discuss safety, depth, and choice of stroke. They develop confidence in the water so that they can take part in water games and sports. By Year 11, pupils continue to link skills and techniques and apply them accurately. In health-related fitness programmes they understand why exercise is good for fitness, health and well-being. They find their way round an orienteering course, and apply tactics in a range of sports.

114. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall, being excellent in some swimming sessions. Lessons are very well planned and prepared so that pupils' learning builds up in sequences, with ever more challenging and difficult activities. Teachers insist that pupils, whether the youngest or the oldest, pay good attention and follow instructions.

The teachers set very high standards in every lesson. Lessons are demanding but very enjoyable, especially in the pool where every pupil makes very good progress. Programmes are designed to meet every need; pupils' individual progress is recorded meticulously, both in swimming and physical education sessions. Pupils' response is marked by very good behaviour; they develop many skills, self-confidence, and self-esteem. Lessons are well organised, following routines to reinforce learning. Teachers praise their pupils constantly; the result is highly motivated pupils wanting to perform well.

115. Pupils are encouraged to improve communication skills; the emphasis on literacy has had very good results. Support staff are critical to pupil improvement. Their very skilled input is vital, and they work tirelessly and skilfully to enable pupils to achieve so well. Equipment is very well used to encourage pupils to stretch their abilities, whether special balls and hoops in school, or on visits to sports halls. Teachers and pupils have warm and positive relationships that ensure that there is great enjoyment, as well as excellent behaviour, and very good learning in lessons as different as dancing, basketball, and swimming.

116. Physical education is managed and led very well by a very well qualified, experienced, and dedicated teacher. She is full of very good ideas and proposals for further development of the subject. She has extremely high standards and expectations, and a vision for the future. Staff training is comprehensive, covering minibus driving and lifeguards for the pool. There are detailed plans for what is to be taught in every class. Methods for checking pupils' progress in each aspect are also well developed in detail. The range of what is taught is now very broad, including outdoor and adventure activities, and residential weeks. The swimming programmes are outstanding; the detailed records of mobility and ability in the pool are excellent. The range of sports and activities is comprehensive and includes every pupil.

117. The accommodation is satisfactory and the pool is very good. The covered playground needs resurfacing, and plans for further improvement of playing fields are necessary as the pupils play on the car park at present. The budget is well managed and fund raising is a strength of the co-ordinator. There is encouragement for high quality performances from pupils and staff, which results in high achievement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118. There has been a satisfactory improvement in the provision of religious education since the time of the last inspection. For pupils of secondary age the provision is now good. It is not possible to judge the achievement of pupils in the primary phase, because little work is recorded and, due to timetable restrictions, it was possible to see only one lesson during the inspection. The work available shows that pupils have experiences of listening to, and talking about, stories from Christianity, Judaism and Hinduism; for example, the story of Noah and the events of the last week of Jesus' life.

119. Pupils in the secondary phase make good progress. By the end of Year 9, pupils have developed a good general understanding of the world's main religions. They know some of the key stories from the life of Jesus, and use these to consider the type of person he might have been. More able pupils comment on the feelings of people involved in some of these stories. They consider the Hindu idea of God and identify some of the ways in which God is portrayed through different deities. They know the Hindu story of creation and are aware of festivals such as Diwali. They are able to explain the different colours used at different times of the church's year. Pupils comment on responses to moral issues in everyday life such as cheating and stealing, and more able pupils are able to link these responses to religious ideas. They know about rules in the different faiths, and write their own commandments for the present day.

120. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make good progress, building on their previous learning. Those in Year 10 take a module of the humanities entry level in religious education. Pupils suggest the facts about the life of Jesus, which would be important to know and they consider what some early writers said about Jesus. They name the four gospels, and know when these were written. More able pupils are able to explain why the gospels differ from one another. They know the stories of some of the parables and miracles of Jesus. They name the apostles, and extract information about them from the Bible. Pupils in Year 11 study a module on moral and religious issues, discussing, for example, the sanctity of life. They discuss why human beings are special, and the more able produce a variety of ideas, such as uniqueness and the knowledge of right and wrong. They use their understanding and knowledge of religions and their own ideas to discuss issues such as euthanasia and marriage.

121. Teaching in the secondary phase is good with some very good features, enabling pupils to make good progress in lessons and to achieve well. In the best lessons good questioning strategies ensure that all pupils are involved. The work is often very challenging, but the skilled questioning by the teacher enables all to make progress. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, the explanations given by the teacher, and the follow up question and answer session, enabled pupils to begin to understand the Christian belief in the Trinity. Relationships between adults and pupils are very good, giving pupils confidence to discuss complex issues. For example, in a lesson on Buddhism, pupils were challenged to suggest ways in which breaking rules might cause suffering, and all were able to contribute to a discussion on this. Teaching support assistants are well used to assist with communication and to record work for those who require this.

122. The inclusion of pupils is very well sustained so that, if they have to be taken out of a lesson for personal care issues, the teacher ensures that they are able to pick up on the lesson on their return. Very good use is made of illustrations of religious themes in painting, drawing, and sculpture, as the basis for introducing and developing religious ideas. Lessons are well rounded off with a review of what pupils have learnt, which enables the teacher to check their understanding. On occasion, there is too much reliance on support or on the outcome of a task to provide for pupils' individual needs, when different tasks might have been a better way to encourage learning. Pupils are given opportunities to develop literacy and numeracy skills, for example by the use of key words or reading aloud or by the use of time lines of the lives of key people such as Mohammed. However, as these experiences are not identified in planning, opportunities are sometimes missed. Work is marked regularly, but more information about the amount of help pupils needed would help with assessment.

123. The subject now benefits from having a co-ordinator who is a religious education specialist, which ensures that pupils are being taught by someone with good knowledge of the subject. The curriculum is planned to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and in Year 10, of the syllabus of the accredited course. The topics planned ensure that pupils are able to build on their previous learning, and that the different areas of the curriculum are covered. Further planning to identify what pupils of different abilities should learn could underpin planning of lessons. In the primary phase the planning is also based on the locally agreed syllabus, and linked into the topic themes that are used across the curriculum. However, the time allocated to the subject is limited, so that pupils are not able to cover all aspects of the syllabus. A system of assessment is being developed, and pupils are beginning to be given nationally recognised levels. Further improvement of this could follow from the further development of the scheme of work. Resources have improved since the time of the last inspection, but more visual resources, books and videos are still needed. There are plans to develop the use of ICT in the subject that will extend the resources available. Limited use is made of the local community, for example, in visiting places of

worship. Development of this would enable pupils to have clearer understanding of the religions they discuss.

POST 16 (FURTHER EDUCATION) PROVISION

124. Overall, the quality of the provision is very good. This is an improvement from the last inspection when the provision was described as good.

Strengths

- Teaching is very good, which enables students to achieve well.
- A very good curriculum has been developed which gives students a wide range of opportunities for learning and to obtain qualifications; preparation for leaving school is very good.
- Very good provision is made for students' personal development; students' attitudes are very good and relationships are excellent.
- There is very good leadership from the Head of Further Education Unit.

AREAS FOR IMPROVEMENT

- Ensure that students' reports give a clear record of achievements
- Continue the development of data tracking systems so that students' achievements from the time of entry are clear.
- Ensure that all staff are aware of students' targets which need to be followed up in different areas of the curriculum.

125. There are twenty nine students on roll of the FE provision at present. These include students who attended Valence for their secondary education and some who entered the school for the post 16 courses. A three-year course is offered to all students.

126. Students make very good progress and achieve very well, both in different subjects and against their individual targets. They obtain a range of nationally recognised qualifications, and most are enabled to go to a college or work placement when they leave school. In Summer 2002, in the Key Skills, six students gained passes in communication (1 level 1; 5 level 2); one achieved Application of Number at level 2; seven were successful in ICT (2 level 2; 5 level 3). In the GNVQ Health and Social Care (Foundation) students obtained one merit and two passes, and in the GNVQ ICT (Foundation) they gained one merit and one distinction, while in the Intermediate there was one pass and two merits. In addition there was a number of passes in different units, which students are now completing

127. Students are developing communication and literacy skills at levels in line with their abilities. They are confident in discussing and putting forward suggestions, for example, the contents of their personal presentations or issues for the school council. Students make very good progress with the development of reading and writing (recording) skills. They practise reading aloud in a variety of situations, for example, in lessons and in literacy groups, and they record information from lessons and other experiences, either in writing or on the computer. They learn to write for different purposes, for example, writing letters or instructions. Students, who are unable to write or use a computer because of their individual disabilities, dictate work to their support assistants. They draft and redraft work in a variety of subjects. Literacy is also being supported by the use of symbols, but the use of these is not yet fully developed. Mathematics skills are developed as students learn practical skills such as money handling. They revise basic information such as measurement, and calculate areas and volumes. They make good use of ICT, for example, to record and calculate expenditure. Lower attaining students revise their knowledge of, for example, two dimensional shapes and mathematical vocabulary such as more and less, so that they can identify when

they spent the most money. In ICT students develop confidence in the use of different programmes to present and handle information. They produce items such as newsletters, agendas, letters, and programmes. The higher attaining students produce documents such as reports, including charts and graphs. They use PowerPoint for presentations and some of these are of very high quality as students display information about their favourite music or sport. ICT is well used in most curriculum areas to record work and to support, for example, the use of calculations.

128. In Health and Social care students know the key features of a healthy lifestyle, and how drink or drugs could adversely affect this. They know about different foods and of what is needed for a balanced diet and the higher attaining students use technical vocabulary when discussing these. Through all areas of the taught curriculum and life skills programme students are establishing the decision making and independence skills they need for life after school. By the end of Year 13, students can set up the apparatus for cricket and follow a game, making decisions about the rules and behaviour. During their time in school, students experience a range of games beyond the curriculum of most schools. They swim, play football, in power chairs or table football, handball. They know riding, trampolining, basketball, unihoc and dance. They have opportunities to take part in athletics and boccia, volleyball, throw golf, rounders and New Age Kurling.

129. Students' personal development is very good, and the way in which this is supported is a strength of the provision. Students are interested in, and enthusiastic about, the many activities in which they are involved. The differences between the main school and the Further Education provision are emphasised and students are given many opportunities to develop independence. The relationships that students have with adults and with one another are excellent. Students' relationships with one another are very supportive, for example, in working together or when one of the group finds some work difficult. These relationships extend into all aspects of their life at school, with students helping one another with tasks, encouraging one another to complete tasks and being very caring when others are upset or worried. All of the adults - teachers, support assistants, care and medical staff - provide the students with a caring and secure environment in which their independence can be developed. These relationships are enhanced through the system of tutors and key workers, and by tutorials that are held every three weeks, providing an opportunity for students to discuss successes and concerns and to decide actions and set targets for the following weeks.

130. Teaching is very good overall, enabling students to achieve very well. A particular strength is the careful monitoring of students' progress, based on regular marking of work, and the guidance given to students about what they need to do to improve. This is also a feature of the best lessons in which students' attention is drawn to exam requirements. Lessons begin with a recap of previous teaching to ensure that students have understood and remembered what they had learnt. Throughout lessons key vocabulary is developed and checked and students make use of this in the correct contexts, for example in maths and health and social care. Students are encouraged to contribute ideas and make decisions, for example, in preparing their leavers' presentations in ICT. There is a high level of challenge, whether in problem solving activities or in practising fielding in KWIK Cricket. Teachers have very good subject knowledge that enables them to extend students' knowledge. For example, in ICT, one teacher made very good use of errors to help students to progress, while in art the teacher's very good demonstration of the use of modelling tools ensured that students were able to develop their own skills. In the very few lessons where teaching is less successful there is an imbalance between the teacher's talking and the students' contributions, so that they begin to lose interest.

131. The curriculum that has been developed is very good and provides students with a variety of opportunities. These include courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications, such as the GNVQ, the National Skills Profile, and Key Skills. Within these students are able to develop skills in literacy, numeracy and information and communication technology. The curriculum is broadened with lessons such as art, music, graphics, religious education, physical education, and swimming. Life skills activities, which are planned within the 24-hour curriculum, help to develop students' independence in preparation for leaving school. A strength of this is the independent living area (Jubilee), a place which is much sought after by students, and where they have more opportunities to develop these skills. These include activities such as independent travel, wheelchair skills, shopping and cooking. Where appropriate, arrangements are made with local schools or colleges for students to take part in courses leading, for example, to GCSE qualifications. Preparation for moving on from school is very good, and students and parents have regular opportunities to discuss the range of experiences open to them. Students gain an understanding of these opportunities through well-organised work experiences and college visits.

132. Students' statements of special educational needs are reviewed annually, and parents and students take part in the discussions. The report for the annual review forms the student's annual report to parents, but the usefulness of these reports varies in that they do not always give an indication of students' achievements. Targets for the year are agreed and these are used as a basis for discussion at tutorials. However, there are occasions on which not all staff are aware of targets, such as those for literacy, which need to be considered in planning for all areas of the curriculum. Staff are aware of the progress being made by students in the different areas of the curriculum; the development of a whole school tracking system which is being developed should enable students' progress from the time they enter the Further Education Unit to be part of the overall picture for each student.

133. The Head of the Unit provides very good leadership and management, and is well supported by other staff in key roles including tutors, the senior support assistants and senior care worker. All staff work together as a strong team to meet the needs of the students. The accommodation is generally good, and classroom areas are made attractive by the use of displays that celebrate students' work. However, the residential accommodation in the Further Education area needs to be improved, and students in the Jubilee area are adversely affected by the queues for the lift.