

INSPECTION REPORT

The Walnuts School
Milton Keynes

LEA area: Milton Keynes

Unique Reference Number: 110584

Headteacher: Mrs Patricia Ofield

Reporting inspector: Mr Lynn Lewis

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708325

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 - 12
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Simpson Milton Keynes MK6 3AF
Telephone number:	01908 670032
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Dr K J Odeku
Date of previous inspection:	24 – 27 June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr Lynn Lewis, RgI	Science Physical Education Religious Education	Teaching Pupils Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development Leadership and Management Residential Provision Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development Attendance Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare Partnership with Parents and Community The Curriculum and Assessment Equal Opportunities
Mrs Suzanne Smith, Lay Inspector		
Mrs Esther Digby	English Art Music	
Mr Colin Richardson	Mathematics Design and Technology Information Technology	Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources
Mr Graham Matthews	History Geography	Attainment and Progress Efficiency Special Educational Needs Integration

[this table should list all team members and also indicate, in the subject column, the team member with responsibility for under fives, special educational needs, equal opportunities and English as a second language]

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- The staff have recently developed high quality policies and schemes of work for most subjects.
- The quality of teaching, and the support given by learning support assistants, is very good.
- Relationships at the school are very good.
- Provides pupils with very good moral and social education.
- Provides very good quality learning in science and art.
- The integration programme is of high quality.
- The initial implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy has been very good.
- Speech and language therapy is of very high quality.
- The boarding provision is of a very good standard.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. The school is not meeting requirements to teach the full curriculum in information technology, physical education and music.
- II. Monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning is not effective.
- III. There is a lack of consistent procedures for assessment, recording and reporting in subjects.
- IV. Accommodation remains a concern and has a limiting effect on pupils' learning.

The school has significant strengths, which far outweigh the current weaknesses. These areas for development are recognised by the school, and will form the basis of the governors' action plan which will be sent to all parents and guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

There have been considerable efforts made to address the major findings in the last report, and significant improvements have resulted in the progress that pupils make and the quality of teaching. However, the monitoring and evaluating of whole school and subject issues remains a concern. It is the inspectors' view that the school has the capacity to make further good progress in addressing its current weaknesses. The school has made very good progress in developing schemes of work for all areas of the National Curriculum. Learning expectations are now high for all pupils, especially the most capable. The use of school assemblies and collective worship has been reviewed. Many more opportunities have been provided to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16	By 19	
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*		B			
English:					
listening and speaking		B			
reading		A			<i>very good</i> A
writing		A			<i>good</i> B
Mathematics		B			<i>satisfactory</i> C
Science		A			<i>unsatisfactory</i> D
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)		C			<i>poor</i> E

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

Most pupils are making very good progress in lessons and over time. In English and science, two core subjects, pupils are making very good progress, and in mathematics, it is good. However, progress in the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills and understanding in information technology is unsatisfactory. Progress in music is also unsatisfactory. Where progress is unsatisfactory, it is as a result of a lack of teaching or deficiencies in the curriculum.

Quality of teaching

	Overall quality	Most effective in:	Least effective in:
4 – 12 years	Very good	Science, art	Physical education, music, information technology
English	Very good		
Mathematics	Good		
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Satisfactory		

Teaching is satisfactory in 31% of lessons, good in 17% and very good in 43%. 6% of lessons were judged to be excellent.

In the most effective subjects, planning is a strength. Relationships are very good, and teachers' deployment of learning support assistants is very effective.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. The management of the most challenging behaviour means that any outbursts are calmed effectively and do not interrupt the learning of others.
Attendance	The attendance record of most pupils is very good. They enjoy coming to

school, and there is no unauthorised absence.

Ethos*	Relationships and the pupils' response to the teaching are very good. Expectations of progress and behaviour are very high.
Leadership and management	Satisfactory. However, there is currently no senior management team, nor time allocated to monitor and evaluate performance.
Curriculum	The curriculum is currently unsatisfactory as it lacks breadth and balance in information technology, music and physical education.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Overall very good. Moral and social education are very strong, and spiritual and cultural education are good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	This is satisfactory overall, but accommodation is poor. There is no library, and storage is very limited.
Value for money	Good; pupils make very good progress and receive a good quality education.

**Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

· **The parents' views of the school**

What most parents like about the school

- V. Parents feel welcome and encouraged to be involved.
- VI. The school is responsive to parents' concerns.
- VII. Parents feel well informed on progress.
- VIII. Positive attitudes and values are promoted.
- IX. Children feel happy and secure.
- X. Behaviour is managed well.

What some parents are not happy about

- XI. Parents would like better liaison about suitable
- XII. They would like more information about what

Inspectors' observations confirmed parents' positive views about the school. Concerns about the suitability of the homework given in some classes is justified, although there are improvements when parents make direct approaches to teachers. The school provides a good range of information about what children are learning, and is prepared to speak with those parents who feel they require further detail.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise further the standards of attainment and pupils' progress, the governing body, senior management and teaching staff should:

1. Improve the quality of the curriculum by:

- ensuring that information technology is taught as a discrete subject (*see paragraphs 34, 127*);
- that staff receive training both in the use of the adopted scheme of work and for the planning of the scheme's modules into the curriculum topics appearing in the information technology development plan (*see paragraph 129*);
- ensuring that pupils receive their full entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum in physical education and music which is based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study (*see paragraphs 34, 132, 134, 136, 140*);
- re-establishing a senior management team with sufficient time to monitor and evaluate whole school issues (*see paragraph 65*);

- . ensuring that subject co-ordinators have sufficient time to promote and monitor the standards and quality of their subjects across the school (*see paragraphs 41, 68*),
- . and developing consistent and systematic assessment, reporting and recording of pupils' progress to better inform curriculum planning (*see paragraphs 39, 41*).

1. The governing body should continue to pursue with the local education authority and seek a solution to the deficiencies in the accommodation (*see paragraphs 75, 76, 79*).

Other areas

In addition to the Key Issues, the governors may wish to include the following areas for improvement in their action plan:

- . establishing an integration development plan to ensure that all pupils who would benefit from a placement do so as early as possible (*see paragraph 150*),
- . and by assisting the integration support teacher in extending the number of mainstream schools involved (*see paragraph 150*).

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 The Walnuts is a local authority day/residential school for boys and girls with severe communication difficulties including autism, which affect their ability to learn and progress at the same rate as pupils in mainstream schools. The age range is 4 to 12. When pupils enter the school, their attainment is poor, particularly in the development of language.
- 2 The school is situated in the eastern suburb of Simpson in Milton Keynes. It provides for pupils from north Buckinghamshire, including Milton Keynes, Aylesbury and Buckingham. There are 40 pupils on roll, 30 boys and 10 girls. There are 11 pupil beds in the boarding provision, and all pupils have a statement of special educational need. Five pupils are eligible for free school meals (12.5 per cent). The social backgrounds of the pupils cover the whole spectrum of society. There was only one pupil below the age of 5, and two who were 12+ at the time of the inspection. Inspectors were satisfied that these pupils are receiving an appropriate curriculum within their Key Stage 1 and 2 classes.
- 3 The school was previously inspected under Section 9 of the Education (Schools) Act 1992 in June 1996 and was deemed to have some weaknesses, for example, the development of schemes of work for all areas of the National Curriculum, review the role of the curriculum co-ordinator and improve communication between teachers.
- 4 The school is organised into five classes, for reception to Year 7, and is staffed by six full-time and two part-time staff including the headteacher, plus 3 trained nursery assistants, 8 special needs support staff and one other special support staff. The pupil teacher ratio is 5.96:1 and the pupil adult ratio is 2.02:1.
- 5 The aims of the school curriculum would include:
 1. The pupils develop an awareness of themselves as individuals and that they are like others in the community.
 2. That the children have enjoyable and meaningful life experiences in this community.
 3. That they learn to be contributing members of the community.
 4. That they communicate with others using whatever means are available to them - speech, gesture, rebuses or through writing, music, song, dance, art and drama.
 5. That they move towards a feeling of independence.
 6. That they develop an enquiring relationship to life.

.. **Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	9	2	11

.. National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Results				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Total	6	4	4
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	54	35	36
	National	n/a	n/a	n/a

.. Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Total	4	4	4
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	36	36	36
	National	n/a	n/a	n/a

Attainment at Key Stage 2

There were no pupils attaining Level 4 or above in 1999.

.. **Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:			%
	Authorised	School	4.4
	Absence	National comparative data	n/a
	Unauthorised	School	0
	Absence	National comparative data	n/a

.. **Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	1
	Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	49
Satisfactory or better	97
Less than satisfactory	3

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 6 The learning difficulties of the pupils for whom the school caters mean that attainment is low compared to national standards. Judgements on progress are, therefore, made in relation to attainment on entry and the targets set in pupils' individual education plans, annual reviews and their statements of special educational needs.
- 7 In ninety-four per cent of lessons, progress is satisfactory or better; of which, twenty-six per cent are satisfactory, twenty-one per cent are good, forty-four per cent are very good and three per cent are excellent. During the inspection pupils made unsatisfactory progress in two lessons. The good progress which pupils make matches very closely the quality of teaching which they receive. The procedures to assess pupils' attainment and the use of assessment to inform planning are not well developed and this does limit the progress pupils make. Pupils' behaviour is very good, they make very good progress working with their peers and adults in the classroom and they have a positive attitude to school. They sustain concentration well when lessons are of an appropriate length for the activity. Since the last inspection there has been significant improvement in progress made in the core subjects, especially science. This becomes very apparent in the latter stages of Key Stage 1 and throughout Key Stage 2.
- 8 In English, pupils make very good progress overall. Most pupils develop very good listening skills, with higher attaining pupils using appropriate vocabulary. At Key Stage 1, some pupils read text independently and at Key Stage 2, pupils join in reading a text and can predict what happens next. A few are able to read independently and enjoy longer books. Higher attaining pupils write short sentences, using word cards and adult support for spelling. At Key Stage 1, most pupils can copywrite and are beginning to write independently.
- 9 The previous inspection report noted that pupils made good progress in communication, including speaking and listening. They now make very good progress. Pupils now receive high quality speech therapy and this contributes to the very good progress they make in speech and language development.
- 10 In mathematics, pupils make good progress overall. At Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate their recognition and sequencing of numbers to 10, and recognise common shapes such as squares, triangles and circles. At Key Stage 2, most pupils mentally add two single digit numbers, count on in tens from a given number and solve problems based on the three times table.
- 11 In science, pupils make very good progress and are building well on their science skills. In their work on life processes and living things, pupils know that the tongue has areas which identify different tastes. At Key Stage 2, pupils name and identify a number of the planets. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, when progress was unsatisfactory in a third of lessons.
- 12 Standards in design and technology are satisfactory overall, with pupils at Key Stage 1 making good progress in designing and making. In art, pupils make good progress, although the progress of a few pupils is limited by their skills in handling tools. Most pupils show a good awareness of colour and make appropriate choices of materials.
- 13 In information technology (IT), progress is unsatisfactory and capability skills are not being taught in a planned way. Pupils make good progress in geography and are developing a good understanding of where countries are on a map of the world and in naming and identifying features of the countryside. In history there is insufficient evidence in pupils' work and teachers' records to make a judgement on

the progress pupils are making. No history was taught during the inspection.

- 14 Pupils' progress in music is unsatisfactory. Although some teachers use rhymes and songs to aid pupils' learning, music is not being used effectively to develop pupils' listening and speaking skills. Pupils do not play musical instruments regularly, nor compose and improvise.
- 15 Pupils make very good progress in religious education, and are learning to make the most of opportunities for reflection. In physical education, progress is satisfactory overall, but the subject lacks breadth and balance and does not include the full range of National Curriculum Programmes of Study.
- 16 Pupils' personal development is very good, and they are developing self-confidence and personal independence. Higher attaining pupils benefit from opportunities to attend a mainstream school as part of an integration programme. However, some of these pupils do not benefit from this experience as soon as they might, and are not being sufficiently challenged. Subject targets set for pupils are not always broken down into smaller steps which are sufficiently clear and measurable and can be used to inform progress.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 17 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. At both key stages they enjoy coming to school and are often enthusiastic about their work. They respond positively to their lessons, usually listening attentively to their teachers and responding suitably. Most find it very difficult to focus attention for more than short periods; however, they respond very well indeed to the intervention of staff when concentration is temporarily lost. A few are able to focus for longer periods; this is particularly so when lessons capture their interest and imagination. Most pupils are confident to answer questions and enjoy the opportunity to contribute to group sessions. Their attitudes to learning improve as they move through the school. Throughout the school there are good examples of pupils responding well to the many opportunities for co-operating with each other and sharing. Their ability to collaborate is also well developed, for example, when pupils worked together on a performance for a whole school assembly. Opportunities for collaborative working have increased since the time of the last inspection. The attitudes of pupils who board to the extra-curricular provision planned for them is very positive.
- 18 The very good standards of behaviour achieved have a positive effect on learning and on the life of the school. Pupils respond positively to the well-established rules and routines and to the consistently high expectations of staff. This is a significant improvement since the time of the last inspection. Where there are occasional outbursts of anger these are invariably a result of emotional difficulties or frustration. They are rarely directed at another pupil or member of staff. Strategies for managing behaviour difficulties are well established and effective, ensuring minimum disruption to learning for other pupils who usually maintain their interest in the work they are doing. There was one fixed-term exclusion during the last school year. Reasons for this were understandable, and the subsequent return to school was well managed.
- 19 Behaviour at the school is very good. In the playground, high spirits often result in boisterous behaviour; this is invariably good-natured and well managed by staff. Pupils show a re-assuring give and take towards each other, sharing playground equipment happily and taking turns in using it. Many socialise well in pairs and small groups. Minor squabbles and differences are quickly resolved. No bullying was seen during the week of inspection and discussions with pupils confirm the view of parents that such problems are rare and quickly sorted out by staff. Pupils value the quality of the school environment, resulting in care for school premises and equipment. This is particularly evident in the high standards achieved in the boarding accommodation. Displays of work around the school, books, together with various board games and other leisure facilities provided for boarding pupils, are treated with respect. The school operates as an orderly family community where care and concern for others have a high priority. This impacts positively on the very good standards of behaviour achieved.

20 Relationships are a strength of the school and are very good indeed. They are based on high levels of respect for the needs and differences of all. Pupils are often supportive and sympathetic towards the problems of their peers, for example during circle time when discussing their worries they show genuine pleasure when solutions can be found for others' problems. They are often interested in what others have to say, listening well without interruption. Both in lessons and the playground they are able to share. The few pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds are well integrated. There is a complete lack of either bias or prejudice in relationships throughout the whole school community. Pupils show high levels of respect for staff and are very confident about sharing their problems where there is a need. The same high standards are achieved in the boarding provision.

21 Planning of suitable opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for everyday routines in the school has improved since the time of the last inspection. Their response to these and other opportunities for personal development is very good. They discharge their various responsibilities for school routines with pride, for example taking registers to reception and changing the date and weather each day in the classroom. Their response to the many opportunities for developing personal independence, social skills and self-confidence during the wide range of trips and visits out of school, for example to go shopping, is very positive. Pupils show well-developed levels of care and concern for others in their dealings with their peers and high levels of tolerance to the difficulties experienced by others. The well-established routines to develop and re-enforce social skills during mealtimes results in polite interaction between pupils and the development of suitable table manners.

.. **Attendance**

22 Pupils enjoy coming to school. This results in very high levels of attendance in comparison with other similar schools. There is no unauthorised absence. The levels of attendance achieved, together with pupils' positive attitudes to punctuality, make a very good contribution to attainment and progress.

.. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

.. **Teaching**

23 The quality of teaching at the school is very good. It is satisfactory in 31 percent of lessons seen, good in 17 percent, very good in 43 percent and excellent in 6 percent. In the best lessons, teachers' planning is meticulous and includes all pupils in the learning process at a level which is challenging to them. Where teaching is satisfactory, a lack of pace in changing activities leads to pupils losing interest in what are otherwise good lessons. It is only in the better lessons that the quality and use of day-to-day assessment helps teachers' planning to move the learning forward.

24 Teachers and their learning support assistants (LSAs) have very good relationships and work very effectively as teams, each possessing an excellent understanding of the pupils' special educational needs. The work of the LSAs is a strength of the school, and their management of the most challenging pupils is fundamental to the success of the teaching across the school. Teacher planning for the youngest pupils focuses effectively on behaviour and socialisation, but does not identify a sufficiently wide range of activities and tasks that are appropriate for their stage of development. Marking is not guided by a suitable policy and, although there are examples of good practice that motivate and offer effective guidance, this is not consistently so. Some work is not marked.

25 In English, the quality of teaching is very good. Teachers have a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy and plan well structured lessons, using a range of teaching approaches to develop pupils' reading and spelling skills. The use of Big Books is well established and successful, but there is a lack of confidence in addressing other elements of the National Literacy Strategy. Where lessons are less successful, teachers have difficulty in controlling and motivating pupils, and lessons are not

planned in sufficient detail.

- 26 Teaching in mathematics is very good, particularly at the top end of Key Stage 1 and at the lower end of Key Stage 2. Teachers understand the pupils' learning and behavioural difficulties, and this is reflected in the practical and visual nature of the teaching approaches. Teachers use a very good range of questions and language to guide the learning. Where teaching is less successful, teacher expectation of the pupils is too low and questioning leads to confusion.
- 27 In science, teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers plan very well and often link key visits to support the understanding and learning. This was particularly so on a series of lessons on the planets which had begun with a visit to the London Planetarium. Teachers concentrate on getting pupils to explore and experiment, as in a Key Stage 1 lesson where they discovered the properties of feathers, and at Key Stage 2 they explored the taste areas of the tongue.
- 28 The teaching of art is very good. Teachers are very good at giving instructions, explanations and commentary. In an excellent lesson at Key Stage 1, pupils were totally absorbed in their task of printing on silk until it was completed. The quality of teaching in design and technology is good at both key stages. Tasks are explained clearly, and lessons proceed at an appropriate pace. At Key Stage 2, however, the support given can at times have a limiting effect on the acquisition of skills.
- 29 No teaching was observed in history during the period of the inspection, and there was insufficient evidence to judge the quality of teaching from pupils' work and classroom displays. Teaching in geography is good. Lesson planning builds on what pupils have learnt. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils can achieve, and behaviour management can be excellent.
- 30 The teaching of information technology (IT) is not a strength. IT skills are not being taught in a planned way to ensure pupils make continuing progress. Some pupils were observed using IT in other subject areas, notably English, and they were able to open and close programs with good control of the mouse.
- 31 Music teaching in the school is not well developed. In the few lessons where it is taught, there is an over-emphasis on singing. In only one lesson was another area of the music programmes of study observed, and that concentrated on the identification of percussion instruments and using them appropriately with a choice of dynamics and tempo.
- 32 Teaching in physical education is satisfactory, and it can be very good. It is better at Key Stage 1, where the limitations of the accommodation are less evident than for the older pupils at Key Stage 2. In the lessons seen, teachers followed a routine which included warming up, skills development, vigorous activity and a quiet period to warm down. Teaching in religious education is good, and it is occasionally excellent. Teachers use resources well to create an atmosphere where pupils are encouraged to reflect on areas developed during the lesson.
- 33 There is no detailed homework policy and teachers are inconsistent in their approach to homework, including taking books home to read. The home school agreement provides insufficient detail of homework expectations.

.. **The curriculum and assessment**

- 34 The school has not made sufficient progress in addressing some of the curriculum issues that were identified in the last inspection report and the curriculum does not fully meet statutory requirements. The curriculum is broad but still lacks balance. There is insufficient coverage of the programmes of study in information technology, physical education and music. The school has produced policies and schemes of work but the latter often lack sufficient detail to ensure continuity and progression. The

school's statement of curriculum aims and philosophy is detailed but has not been re-visited recently to reflect national initiatives and provide a clear and positive focus for the work of the school. The good planning in personal, social and health education is not always consistently implemented. The statement on sex education in the school brochure is not supported by a policy and clear procedures to ensure parental understanding and support.

- 35 The school has implemented both the national literacy and numeracy strategies. Some teachers plan well to meet the special needs of their pupils through using the literacy and numeracy frameworks. However, further work is yet to be done to monitor implementation and to ensure a consistent approach and to link the existing subject policies with the national frameworks. The introduction of the numeracy strategy resulted in an over-emphasis on number work and a lack of focus given to the use and application of mathematics during the inspection.
- 36 The school has put much effort into improving the long term planning which is based on a topic cycle and provides good links between subjects. Medium term planning is usually effective but not all teachers clearly differentiate between the learning objectives and activities.
- 37 The school places emphasis on communication and social development and the planned curriculum effectively reflects this focus. The speech and language therapist plans well to support this focus in her withdrawal work with pupils as well as working with teachers in class. There is equality of access to the curriculum for boys and girls. Special equipment and use of computer word processing supports those with specific difficulties.
- 38 The boarding facility provides an appropriate 24 hour curriculum for pupils with a range of activities and support for specific needs. Other pupils are given opportunities to participate in some of these activities and to stay overnight to develop independence and improve personal and social skills. Residential visits and other short trips enhance the curriculum and help pupils become more independent and responsible. Very good use is made of the local community. Opportunities for day pupils to participate in extra-curricular activities are limited to a few lunch-time activities or clubs and, where transport can be arranged, they are able to join the activities offered to the boarders.
- 39 The school has developed a comprehensive assessment policy but this has not been fully or consistently implemented. A new individual pupil record file identifies pupils' termly targets which contribute towards the annual targets set in individual education plans. These are sometimes not sufficiently detailed and the resulting assessment statements recorded by teachers are not specific enough. Pupils' individual records of achievement provide an overview of the work covered but inconsistent annotation means that these can not be used consistently as evidence of pupils' progress. The current baseline assessment scheme does not provide sufficient information for the teacher so an additional system of teacher assessment supplements the formal scheme. This makes it very difficult to evaluate pupils' progress in a systematic way.
- 40 The school meets statutory assessment requirements. Until very recently there were no disapplications from the National Curriculum. Currently one pupil has been disappplied from mathematics. Last year all eligible pupils were statutorily assessed at the end of Key Stages 1 and 2. Annual review procedures are carried out appropriately.
- 41 The headteacher and curriculum co-ordinators have insufficient time to review the implementation of curriculum plans to ensure appropriate coverage of all National Curriculum subjects and a consistent approach to the implementation of the national strategies for literacy and numeracy. Assessment procedures are currently being developed and clarified further to improve the quality and consistency of assessment information to inform teachers' target setting and whole school planning. The roles of co-ordinators are currently insufficiently developed to enable them to carry out these responsibilities effectively.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 42 The school makes very good provision for the moral and social development of pupils, and good provision for their spiritual and cultural development. Staff make every effort to recognise pupils' achievements. Classes take responsibility for organising the theme for the school assembly which, during the inspection, was a drama linked to a topic on dinosaurs. It also coincided with the first day of the Christmas month, and an advent calendar was opened by two pupils who had birthdays during the week, and this was neatly linked to the birth of Jesus Christ. There were many opportunities during the week for pupils to reflect, with lighted candles used as a focal point, and recorded music. Displays about the school indicate the value adults place upon pupils' work and the range of other faiths covered in lessons. Divali had been a popular recent celebration and, during the inspection, the focus moved towards Christmas, with advent calendars and a nativity scene on display. The school does not make the most of opportunities for collective worship to enhance the quality of spirituality.
- 43 The school successfully encourages pupils to develop a clear understanding of right and wrong. Staff maintain control in classrooms with quiet firmness, to which pupils respond. Pupils are given many opportunities, both in the academic and boarding provision, to show their trustworthiness. In one class, the weekly job rota includes calling the register. When pupils return registers to the secretary, there is little evidence of tardiness. At meal times, there is a clear understanding of what is acceptable, and great care is taken by pupils not to interfere with the dining of their peers. LSAs promote good manners when plates are being collected or when second helpings are required. Throughout the week, there was little evidence of spitefulness or aggressive behaviour among pupils.
- 44 Social development is of a very high quality. Meal times are very well managed, with noise levels well within acceptable limits. LSAs play an important role in promoting good manners and consideration of others. Pupils accept the organisation implicit in lessons. In science, for example, pupils were given a range of foods to taste. When the lemon slice was tasted, there was a sensible reaction to it being bitter and not pleasant on its own, and a mature approach to putting it down before trying the next item. The limitation placed on social development by the current lack of breadth in the physical education curriculum and the poor quality of music is a weakness. However, very good use is made of the local community, with visits to the shops and high quality integration into a mainstream primary school. Staff plan well to provide opportunities for pupils to take responsibility and use initiative, for example in marking registers and changing the date in classrooms. There are well established routines to ensure that meal times are used effectively to develop pupils' social skills and re-enforce good manners. The wide range of trips out of school organised for pupils, including residential visits, are planned effectively to develop self-confidence and personal independence.
- 45 The cultural development of pupils is much improved since the previous inspection, and is now good. There are many well planned visits to places of cultural interest, such as museums and places of worship. As part of a topic on the planets, pupils visited the London Planetarium and could relate their experiences of the trip. There have been visits from artists, and a sculptor is to work with the pupils to produce work for their millennium garden. An art therapist has also taken sessions at the school. Displays around the school indicate a rich and varied coverage of our own cultural heritage and that of others. A good example was seen in the development of footwear and the posters obtained from the Northampton Shoe Museum.
- 46 The previous inspection report noted that spiritual development was poor, that cultural experiences and the study of other faiths and beliefs were noticeably absent in the school, and that minimal work had been undertaken to develop a suitable cultural programme. These weaknesses have been addressed and much effort has been directed to improving pupils' spiritual and cultural development, both of which are now good.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 47 Since the last inspection, there has been a significant improvement in the consistency of behaviour management. This is very evident at meal times when opportunities are taken by staff to develop and promote social skills. In all other aspects there has been little change.
- 48 The standards set for the health, safety, wellbeing, guidance and protection of pupils are satisfactory overall. Relationships throughout the school are very positive, resulting in pupils feeling confident, secure and happy. Members of staff know the pupils and their personal circumstances very well indeed and this enables them to provide high standards of guidance during lessons. Progress is regularly reviewed. Targets set, however, are often too general to share with those pupils who would benefit from a clear understanding of what they must do to improve. The work of the school is enhanced by good quality support from local pupil services together with a speech and language therapist. Good working relationships with local schools effectively promote integration into mainstream education where this is appropriate. Individual planning and careful monitoring ensures this is accomplished with minimum stress to pupils.
- 49 There is a well-planned personal, health and social education programme. This places a high priority on the development of personal effectiveness and positive values. Timetable pressures have, however, reduced the time available for the programme and there is no formal arrangement to monitor the effect of this. The school has not yet formalised its sex education practice through a suitable policy.
- 50 Pupils who board at the school are set suitable targets for their personal and social development, usually by the head of care in consultation with the care team. Progress towards these is regularly assessed and reviewed. Targets set are shared with the headteacher, but not routinely discussed with class teachers or linked to targets contained in individual education plans. Care staff show good understanding of the needs of individual pupils and there are effective and well established routines to ensure they feel secure and happy during their time as boarders. At the beginning of the school day boarding pupils are taken to their classrooms where their teachers are appropriately briefed about any difficulties experienced over night.
- 51 Despite having many pupils with challenging behaviour, this is always managed well by teachers and learning support assistants (LSAs), and did not impede the learning of other class members. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and attendance, these have improved significantly since the time of the last inspection. There is a behaviour policy and clear procedures that are implemented consistently. Expectations are very high and the encouragement and praise pupils receive support the high standards achieved. Where behaviour causes concern the school seeks to work with parents to identify underlying problems and implement suitable strategies to support change. Procedures for monitoring attendance are effective and implemented consistently. Unexplained absence is swiftly followed up. Registration arrangements meet statutory requirements and provide an accurate record. Morning routines are well planned to provide a suitable start to the day; they have improved since the time of the last inspection.
- 52 There are appropriate arrangements for child protection and the designated person responsible has been trained. Procedures are posted on the staff room notice board and staff are aware of their responsibilities. New induction arrangements include child protection procedures.
- 53 The person responsible for health and safety has been trained. The school has adopted the health and safety policy of the local education authority. It is inspected each term for maintenance needs and, in addition to this, there is a checklist for caretaking staff to identify points that require attention. Procedures for prioritising subsequent action and monitoring work to be done are largely informal and this sometimes leads to work being over looked. There are good arrangements in the boarding house to monitor pupils during the night and the school has recently conducted an assessment of risk for boarding provision. Staff show a high level of vigilance in their care of the pupils both in lessons, the playground and boarding accommodation. There is a sufficient number of trained staff to deal with first aid emergencies, and procedures, including those for dispensing prescribed medicines, are correct. The requirement for annual testing of physical education equipment, fire protection systems and portable electrical appliances is met. There is a practice emergency evacuation of the premises each

term.

- 54 The school has generally well thought out policies and procedures to support its routines. There is, however, at present no agreed programme for the regular review and updating of these.

.. **Boarding provision**

- 55 The last inspection report indicates that boarding is well organised and managed. This inspection agrees with this judgement and, despite the departure of the head of care, the care staff have rallied to continue the high quality of provision. The boarding provision is very well managed by the care assistants in the absence of a head of care. Staff roles and responsibilities are well defined and they meet regularly to ensure that there are smooth handovers between morning, day, evening and sleeping and waking staff. The recent staffing difficulties have been managed well by the school which has ensured that there are always sufficient suitable staff to provide effectively for the needs of pupils during both waking and sleeping hours.
- 56 The boarding facilities are very well kept with cleanliness being of a very high order. When pupils are in the main school, the dormitories are left very neat and tidy. They provide a warm and homely unit for pupils who are keen to personalise their bedrooms with posters and belongings. The many wall paintings in the corridors and stairways do much to enhance the ambience and help create a family environment.
- 57 Arrangements to deal with medical appointments and the routines for first aid are effective, as are those for the administration of prescribed medicines. Well established routines ensure all matters relating to pupils' welfare, behaviour and personal development are suitably recorded. Regular care staff meetings are used well to monitor progress against agreed individual targets. There is currently no formal arrangement to link these with targets set in individual education plans. Relationships throughout are very good, based on mutual trust, care and concern for others. There are effective arrangements to alert staff to pupils' needs during the night. Care staff take pupils to their classrooms in the morning and alert teaching staff to any difficulties experienced since the day before.
- 58 Breakfast for boarders is of a very good standard and the lunches and evening meals are good. Pupils begin the day with a substantial meal. On the two occasions breakfast was observed there were plentiful supplies of various cereals, back bacon, mushrooms and French toast, followed by toast and jam or marmalade and accompanied by a hot drink or fruit juice. On the second occasion, the main course was boiled eggs. Lunches are also of a very good quality, with pupils appreciating the care which staff take to ensure that they are well fed. The evening meal was not inspected. Care staff also did the washing and made certain that all boarders had adequate supplies of clean clothes and care was taken to ensure they had clean clothes on a Friday when they returned to their homes.
- 59 The personal development of boarding pupils is a high priority. Staff plan effectively for extra curricular opportunities that involve them in group activities, such as choosing and decorating a Christmas tree. The temporary loss of an evening mini bus driver has recently restricted evening outings. However, arrangements are firmly in place to put this right next term. Pupils usually have the opportunity for a wide range of extra curricular activities including swimming and visiting a Youth Club. Social development is given high priority at meal times and pupils respond well to this. Additional circle time offered during the evenings is effective in involving pupils in discussing and exchanging views and opinions.
- 60 The high quality of the boarding provision plays a significant part in supporting the good quality of education provided by the school.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 61 The school's links with parents are good and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning. Parents feel welcome and valued. They are confident about sharing their concerns and feel that these are dealt with effectively. The prospectus is well written and gives clear information about routines and expectations. Home/school books are usually used well as a two-way means of communication and their content in respect of what pupils have been learning has improved since the time of the last inspection. Some parents receive information about what work is to be covered at the beginning of each half term. Where this is available it is appreciated and enables them to take advantage of suitable opportunities to support learning at home. Parents are interested in the work their children do at home. As at the time of the last inspection there are a few parents who are not happy with the amount and type of homework set. Where individual parents have approached staff there has been a good response. The school has produced a useful booklet for parents about how to help their children at home.
- 62 There are good arrangements to consult with parents prior to the annual review. They are invited to the review and take a full part in discussions about the targets to be set, receiving a copy of the review when it is published. They do not, however, receive copies of the subsequent individual education plans and no specific targets are routinely agreed for them to work towards at home. There are regular consultation meetings with staff each term and parents value the opportunity to view their children's work and discuss progress with teachers. Staff put a great deal of effort into writing annual progress reports, which parents appreciate. The reports provide a good understanding about pupils' attitudes but do not consistently offer sufficient information about what they know, understand and can do in all subjects. As at the time of the last inspection levels of attendance are not included in progress reports. Parents' understanding of the literacy initiative has been enhanced through a session run for them at one of the regular consultation evenings.
- 63 There is a strong Parent and Teacher Association that has been formed since the time of the last inspection, 'Friends of Walnuts,' that holds a range of social and fund raising events. These are well supported and raise appreciable sums for equipment and materials to support pupils' learning. Despite the wide catchment area, parents provide valued help in lessons and on trips and visits.
- 64 The use of the local community has improved since the time of the last inspection. It is used well as an additional resource and makes a very good contribution to pupils' attainment and personal development. The positive relationships with local schools enable pupils to take advantage of sports facilities when available and help familiarise them with other educational settings. This is particularly valuable where there are plans for main stream integration. Topic work is enhanced through a wide range of visits, for example to places of worship, museums and a local recycling unit. Visits to local shops and parks are designed to develop personal effectiveness and self-confidence. Planning for pupils who board ensures they have the access to the local community usual in many family situations. This has been somewhat restricted for a few weeks because of temporary staffing difficulties; however, records show regular community visits to such places as a local Youth Club and for swimming. During the week of inspection, boarding pupils visited a supermarket to buy a Christmas tree.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

.. Leadership and management

- 65 The leadership and management role of the headteacher is effective and gives a clear direction to an educational provision of good quality. She is highly regarded both by teachers and support staff, who feel enabled to develop the classroom provision. This has been fundamental in developing the high standards of teaching and learning across the school. However, there are weaknesses in the current management structure. The absence of the deputy headteacher and the head of care has resulted in there being no senior management team (SMT) at the time of the inspection. There is currently no effective way of promoting and evaluating the curriculum and the quality of education provided. The headteacher recognises the need to re-establish the SMT and to allocate time for its members to manage their responsibilities.
- 66 The governing body is very supportive of the headteacher and the work of the school. They are a small group and work in two committees, finance and personnel. All other areas are covered by the full governing body at their termly meeting. Governors have been allocated to subject areas and have been monitoring these by visiting classrooms. An example of this is a parent governor observing religious education lessons, speaking with the teacher about it and then reporting her visit to the subject co-ordinator. There are plans for further visits based on an agreed focus. Inspectors were impressed by the work of the governing body, and by their dedication to and involvement in the school.
- 67 There are some very talented subject co-ordinators who work hard to develop their subjects. They have regular contact with teachers but, currently, no regular allocation of non-contact time to manage and promote their responsibilities across the school. There is no co-ordinator for physical education or music.
- 68 Support and monitoring of teaching and curriculum development across the school is unsatisfactory. Governors are taking their responsibilities very seriously, especially in the monitoring of teaching, but co-ordinators have insufficient time made available for them to promote and monitor the standards and quality of subject provision at the school. Curriculum development is affected by co-ordinators not having budget allocations to promote and develop their responsibilities through long-term. Although co-ordinators feel that they could have resources if they requested them, the current system does not encourage forward planning. School development planning (SDP) is long term and extensive, setting targets, costings and completion dates. However, it is not evident how priorities are identified, and the role played by staff in agreeing these. The monitoring and evaluation of the SDP is very much in its infancy.
- 69 The implementation of the school's aims, values and policies is satisfactory. There is a very high commitment by staff to promote high standards. Pupils are happy at school, and those who spend time in the boarding provision have used posters and brought in personal items to improve the ambience within their rooms.
- 70 The school's ethos is very good. The emphasis on caring and developing a feeling of belonging is very evident. Pupils are responsive to the demands of the teaching, and they want to learn. Relationships are a strength of the school, and they underpin a desire and commitment to high standards. The management and organisation of the boarding facility and of the integration programme are of a very high standard. During this inspection, the school did not fulfil the requirement for an Environmental Health inspection.
- 71 The school was inspected in March 1996 and was deemed to have a number of weaknesses. In particular, there were concerns expressed about a lack of schemes of work in some subjects of the National Curriculum, with the role of the curriculum co-ordinator to be reviewed and monitored to improve communication between teachers so that the good practice in place acts as a model for others, continuity and progression are assured and pupils receive more consistent educational experiences.

The major areas of concern were:

- . ensure the full implementation of the current school development plan;
- . revise the school statement of philosophy and aims to place the focus more clearly on learning and to ensure pupils receive the full entitlement to the National Curriculum;
- . develop schemes of work for all areas of the National Curriculum, to improve curriculum planning and assessment, and monitor their implementation;
- . review and monitor the role of the curriculum co-ordinator;
- . establish systems for checking that learning expectations are sufficiently high for all pupils;
- . review the whole school policy on behaviour management and monitor its implementation to ensure that it is applied consistently;
- . review the use of assemblies and collective worship, and provide more opportunities to promote pupils' spiritual and cultural development,
- . and continue to monitor the outcomes of key spending decisions to assess their impact on pupils' learning.

1 The governing body and school staff have ensured the full implementation of the current school development plan. They have made very good progress in developing schemes of work for the subjects of the National Curriculum. The school has not addressed the key issue stated in the previous inspection report, to improve the role of the curriculum co-ordinator and to model good practice throughout the school to promote continuity. Co-ordinators do not yet apply their own expertise across the whole school to monitor provision and support teachers. There has been a significant improvement in the development of pupils' spiritual and cultural understanding. However, the recurring theme of monitoring remains under-developed, although the school is in a strong position to make a significant improvement in this important area of its development. Their plans for this are very sound and have already resulted in members of the governing body visiting classrooms to observe lessons.

72 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

73 The caring attitude, enthusiasm and commitment shown by all staff contributes greatly to the learning experiences and achievements of their pupils. There are sufficient qualified teachers to meet pupils' learning needs. The teaching commitments of the deputy headteacher, on long term absence, has been filled by the appointment of two part-time members of staff. A suitably qualified head of care has been recently appointed and takes up post next term. Currently many of the post's functions have been assumed by the headteacher. All staff have job descriptions. However, these are generic in nature and do not refer to particular management and curriculum responsibilities of staff. Teachers are very well supported by a favourable number of specialist and general support assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' progress. Pupils' speech and language development is greatly assisted by a dedicated and experienced speech and language therapist who is a part-time member of the school staff. All members of staff are involved in the annual appraisal cycle and staff are given opportunities for their personal professional development. Two teaching staff members are currently undertaking a National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), and a learning support assistant is undergoing initial teacher training, which the governing body has agreed to finance.

74 Despite many changes and improvements since the last inspection accommodation remains poor. There are now specialist facilities for home economics, made possible by the building of a conservatory as a staffroom, and new areas for art and information communication technology. With the transference of car parking to the front of the school the original car park has been fenced off and used as a hard play area. A new terrapin has been erected to accommodate increasing numbers. However, the grassed areas around the old terrapin and between the school building and the new terrapin remain waterlogged for six months of the year due to poor drainage and cannot be used by the pupils. The hard play area in front of the school suffers from subsidence, due to poor installation of pipes, resulting in a significant amount of standing water during times of rain. The guttering around the front of the

school does not allow water to run away but drips through holes and forms puddles. The dining accommodation, sited in the residential accommodation, is not large enough to accommodate all the pupils and some classrooms are also having to be used as dining areas. Plans have been submitted by the school to the local education authority to build a conservatory extension onto the present dining room. They have also submitted an application to a charity for funding to create a millennium garden in the school grounds. The stake fencing at the rear of the school is in a bad state of repair and is not serving its function.

- 75 Other accommodation issues are affecting pupils' learning. There is no specialist facility for teaching physical education (PE). Pupils are having to travel a ten minute bus journey to use another school's facilities. However, at the time of the inspection, these facilities were not available due to work being carried out at the other school. The old terrapin has been refurbished by the local education authority and is used for some activities within the PE curriculum. The newly created art area has a door which is also the main access point to the school for pupils in the two terrapins, to use the toilets in the main school building, with a consequent disruption to art lessons. Although a considerable sum has been spent on books the school has no library where pupils can select and read. Such facilities are at the moment in the main school corridor.
- 76 There is no 'time out' area for pupils exhibiting challenging behaviour. Extreme occurrences of such behaviour, of which several occurred during the inspection, are currently handled by a member, or members, of staff taking the pupil to the staff room. There are no specialist changing facilities for pupils who are incontinent. At present, they are changed in the boys' toilet which is cramped and does not offer privacy or respect for individual dignity. The residential accommodation is maintained to a very good standard, and is appropriate for the pupils who are boarding.
- 77 Learning resources are satisfactory in the humanities and literacy, good in science, art and religious education and very good in information communication technology. They are unsatisfactory in both music and physical education where lack of specialist facilities and equipment prevents the depth and breadth coverage of the respective Programmes of Study. Not all subjects have an inventory of resources to enable staff to know what is available throughout the school.
- 72 **The efficiency of the school**
- 78 Financial planning to support educational developments is good and the school's finances are being carefully monitored by the headteacher, the governors' finance committee and the governing body. The school development plan and action plans clearly identify the costs of listed priorities and success criteria are identified. The governing body considers thoroughly how proposed developments will improve the educational standards and efficiency of the school, and then evaluates the cost effectiveness of these spending decisions. The use of reserves carried forward at the end of the financial year are clearly targeted to meet identified improvements, staffing requirements and also to maintain standards in the event of any fall in pupil numbers.
- 79 All full-time teaching staff carry a curriculum responsibility. Good use is made of teaching and support staff but subject co-ordinators do not have a budget to manage and most are not clearly identifying the resource needs for the subject for which they hold a responsibility. This task is often left for the class teacher to do. There is a good staff to pupil ratio and learning support assistants are well deployed in the classroom, providing a high quality level of support to both pupils and teachers. Good use is made of curriculum resources, but the computers in the computer room are an under-used resource. A flexible approach to the timetable by some staff results in a loss of teaching time for some subjects, the impact of which is not suitably monitored. Good use is also made of the limited space and storage facilities in classrooms. The recently constructed conservatory is effectively used to provide a staffroom facility, an additional teaching space and a meeting room, for example, for annual review meetings. However, the terrapin which is a temporary classroom, is under-used, for example, to provide accommodation for the teaching of music.

- 80 Day-to-day financial control is good and is effectively managed by the headteacher and the part-time school secretary (bursar) who is well organised, knowledgeable and efficient. There is a very good emphasis in seeking value for money when ordering goods and supplies and in giving consideration to the school's limited storage facilities. This work is complemented by a part-time secretary who deals with, for example, all the annual review reports and arrangements. The necessary actions have been taken to implement the main recommendations of the last auditor's report (February 1998) and the inventory of resources and equipment costing over £100 has been recently transferred to the school's computerised financial management system.
- 81 The school's administrative procedures support staff in enabling them to focus on their work in educating pupils. However, lessons do not always start on time and often finish early. The length of lessons is often too long for pupils to sustain concentration. In addition there is no systematic monitoring of curriculum time and it is not clear how much time is actually being used to teach the different National Curriculum subjects through the programme of topics.

82 The previous inspection of the school noted that the school provided sound value for money. Given the very low standards of attainment on entry, the good progress which pupils make, the very good quality of education and care which pupils receive, the reasonable unit cost for a school of this type and size, and the efficient management of finances, the school now gives good value for money.

72 PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

72 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

72 English

83 Pupils make very good progress overall at Key Stages 1 and 2. This is an improvement since the last inspection. All pupils were statutorily assessed at the end of each key stage in 1999. At the end of Key Stage 1, over a third of the eligible pupils achieved in line with national expectations in the teacher assessment and a similar proportion achieved the expected level in the writing test. Over half the pupils achieved this level in reading. At the end of Key Stage 2 no pupils achieved the nationally expected Level 4 in English but some pupils achieved the lower levels 1 and 2 in the teacher assessment.

84 Most pupils are developing very good listening skills through the focused direction and support of all adults working with them. Some higher attaining pupils are quite articulate and use an appropriate vocabulary for their age. Many, however, do not yet talk in sentences and use a limited vocabulary. A few pupils are unable to communicate effectively through speech. The development of oral and communication skills is a priority of the school. The 'Hello' session with the youngest pupils is used well to reinforce signing as well as social skills of greeting and taking turns. Teachers throughout the school encourage pupils to communicate clearly using speech and signing and they have high expectations of pupils' response. The Speech and Language Therapist makes a significant contribution to the development of pupils' skills, through both withdrawal sessions and whole class work. A good example of this was her work with the class of oldest pupils on the social use of language developing descriptive vocabulary, positional words and using marks, such as underline and circle, for a purpose. Drama sessions and cross-curricular activities further develop pupils' concepts and understanding of language.

85 The youngest pupils still present challenging behaviour and a lack of awareness of school routines which results in very small steps in progress for a number of them. This had been identified at the last inspection. These pupils enjoy shared reading sessions using 'Big Books' and some are able to look at and enjoy books independently. Pupils can match spoken names to photographs. Pupils make marks and, to some, these convey meaning. Higher attainers are beginning to follow writing patterns and some are beginning to over-write letters and numerals and to recognise their own written name.

86 Pupils make very good progress by the end of Key Stage 1. They can read simple 'Big Book' text together and identify missing words using textual and pictorial prompts. They know vocabulary associated with books, such as author, illustrator and title. Some pupils can read simple text independently, although in some cases it is decoding words only with little understanding of meaning. Most pupils can copywrite and are beginning to write independently. Higher attainers can identify full stops, question marks and capital letters but are not yet able to use them in their own work. These pupils are developing knowledge of letter sounds and are beginning to use them to spell simple, regular words. This very good progress is sustained at Key Stage 2. Pupils can join in reading a repetitive text and predict what happens next. Lower attainers follow writing patterns and make their own marks to convey meaning. Average and higher attainers can write short sentences, using word cards and adult support for spelling, with some sentences correctly demarcated with capital letters and full stops. By the end of the key stage, pupils read together and a few are able to read independently and enjoy longer books, talking about character and plot. These pupils are usually able to write independently to recount news or structure a simple story. Some pupils lack the motor control or communication skills to participate independently in English lessons.

87 The school has recently improved resources for reading. There is a satisfactory range of individual readers and Big Books for shared reading. However, the lack of a school library limits the opportunities for more competent readers to browse through well displayed fiction and non-fiction books and acquire higher order skills for accessing and retrieving information. Not all teachers hear

pupils read sufficiently regularly. School procedures for pupils taking books home to read and the use of a home school reading record are inconsistent.

- 88 Most pupils have positive attitudes to language and communication activities. They enjoy reading Big Books together and many take books home to read. Pupils respond enthusiastically to questions. Behaviour in most classes is very good, particularly where teachers plan their teaching and follow up activities well to interest and involve pupils. The Year 3 pupils were entranced by the teacher pulling out from a bag large leaves with a hole in each as an introduction to the story of 'The Very Hungry Caterpillar'. This was followed by a large toy caterpillar who participated in the story and encouraged the pupils in their work. Most instances of difficult behaviour are managed very well by the adults working in each class.
- 89 The overall quality of teaching is very good. The school has chosen to implement the national literacy framework and the best teaching is seen in those classes where teachers have a good understanding of the strategy and plan a well structured lesson whilst ensuring that the needs of individual pupils are met appropriately. These teachers have high expectations of pupils' work and behaviour and use a range of teaching strategies to develop pupils' reading and spelling skills. Work is well marked and annotated to show pupils how to improve and to provide a record of the level of adult help provided. In some of the other classes, the use of Big Books is well established and successful but teachers lack confidence in addressing the other elements of the national literacy strategy. Good teaching is very clearly linked to effective behaviour management. Teachers who have difficulty in controlling and motivating pupils often have not planned in sufficient detail and do not provide a good range of activities and tasks that are well matched to pupils' wide range of learning and developmental needs.
- 90 The literacy co-ordinator is currently absent on sick leave and the lack of subject leadership has had a detrimental effect on the development of the literacy strategy since its initial implementation. Insufficient monitoring has taken place to ensure a consistent approach and to share good practice. Assessment procedures overall are variable and often do not provide enough detailed information about pupils' progress towards their targets. Some teachers have carried out very useful self evaluation, but this does not ensure that all pupils are receiving an appropriate and challenging curriculum.
- 72 **Mathematics**
- 91 In the last report, behaviour management was a concern in some lessons, but it was not a problem in this inspection. Teaching at that time was good overall, whereas on this occasion it was judged to be very good.
- 92 Pupils' progress in mathematics is good overall, with some examples of very good progress in both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils consolidate their recognition and sequencing of numbers to 10, are able to recognise common shapes such as square, triangle and circle and have learnt the mathematical language of 'greater than', 'less than', 'before' and 'after'. By the age of 7, the majority of pupils are able to add and subtract numbers to 6 and the more able to answer problems on the three times table using a 100 square table. On the occasion when progress was unsatisfactory the pupils were not sufficiently challenged and the disruptive behaviour of some of the pupils in the class resulted in a lack of learning opportunities for the others.
- 93 At Key Stage 2, the majority of pupils can mentally add two single digit numbers, count on in tens from a given number, add tens and units and solve problems based on the three times table. Although pupils' progress in the lessons observed at this key stage is good, it is more difficult to identify clearly the progression of pupils who attend inclusion lessons at a nearby main stream primary school, as there was no information available on their work there.
- 94 The teaching of mathematics is very good. A feature of all lessons observed is the very good, and

sometimes excellent, relationship between teacher and pupil. Teachers are aware of their pupils' learning and behavioural difficulties. This is reflected in the practical, visual nature of tasks they set their pupils, the good use of questioning and language to guide learning, and the provision of appropriately differentiated tasks. Resources are well suited to tasks and are effectively developed and used by the teachers to stimulate and motivate their pupils' learning. There is, however, too great a concentration on number and insufficient on the use and application of mathematics, particularly at Key Stage 2. On the few occasions when teaching was less than good, the teacher's expectation of the pupils was too low and questions were not always explicit enough for the pupils to understand..

- 95 Many of the pupils have autistic tendencies, with instances of challenging behaviour occurring. These are, however, very well managed by both teaching and non-teaching staff, and the pupils are normally able to return to their lesson. Class peers do not react to these outbursts and generally continue with their work. Even though many of the pupils have short attention spans, their teachers' very good planning of lessons with their use of visual, concrete resources enables the majority of pupils to persevere and complete their tasks. The relationship between pupils and staff is very good and is a contributing factor to the pupils' progress.
- 96 The subject is very well co-ordinated by an enthusiastic, experienced and very good practitioner who is committed to the further development of mathematics in the school. The National Numeracy Strategy was very effectively introduced into the school at the start of term. All staff are now committed to its use. They have already adapted it slightly to be more appropriate for the type of learning difficulties of the pupils. Greater emphasis is placed on the mental and teaching part as pupils have difficulty in remaining at a desk undertaking the more formal part of the strategy.
- 97 There is a good reference to pupils' learning objectives, taken from their statements of special educational needs, in the medium and short term planning of the use of the National Numeracy Strategy. Assessment procedures are based upon the National Numeracy Strategy, the Heinemann scheme and pupils' study/achievement of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. The school recognises the need to combine these methods. Apart from the allocation of time given by the National Numeracy Strategy for the monitoring of its introduction into the school, there has been no further time allocated for monitoring the subject.
- 98 Resources for the teaching of the subject are satisfactory. All classes have a basic core of resources, with the more specialist resources kept in the co-ordinator's classroom. Given the nature of the pupils' learning difficulties, insufficient use is being made of the very good information communication technology resources both to consolidate learning and extend it for the more able pupil.
- 99 The non-teaching staff who support pupils in mathematics lessons are a very real source of support. They know pupils' behavioural characteristics and were often observed sitting by a pupil who was starting to exhibit disruptive behaviour, enabling the teacher to continue with the lesson.

72 **Science**

- 100 Pupils across the school make very good progress in science. There is high expectation of pupils' behaviour, and they are stimulated and challenged to do well. There is much evidence of pupils building incrementally on their science skills. This was clear from the scrutiny of their science work files. The emphasis during the inspection was on experimentation and investigation, life processes and living things. Following a lesson on the senses, pupils were able to identify different flavours and knew that the tongue has areas where these tastes are identified. In a Key Stage 2 lesson, pupils could name the nine planets and were able to identify them when they were shown on a slide projector.
- 101 Pupils enjoy their science lessons and strive hard to improve their understanding of the subject. They concentrate and listen to instructions, and respond with enthusiasm to highly skilled teaching. Pupils respond especially well when there is a clear structure and many opportunities for them to be involved

in practical activities. There were numerous examples of pupils being able to work together, to take turns and appreciate that the efforts of others deserve their attention.

102 Teaching in science is very good across the school. Teachers' planning is meticulous and ensures that all pupils are able to access the learning. Teachers are very much part of a team and are very well supported during their lessons by their learning support assistants. In one Key Stage 2 lesson on planets, pupils had visited the London Planetarium on the previous Friday, and had gained a great deal of understanding from the experience. The teacher built on this knowledge and the eagerness of the pupils to explore through skilled questioning what planets were, and the central role of the sun in their orbiting. All of the lessons had a good plenary to draw together the learning and give very good opportunities for teachers to record pupils' knowledge and understanding.

103 The subject co-ordinator, although not a specialist, has a very good grasp of how the subject should be delivered to meet both the pupils' special educational needs and statutory requirements. There is a clear policy, and schemes of work are based on the National Curriculum Programmes of Study and give very good coverage of the attainment targets. Across both key stages, pupils are learning how to plan experiments, obtain evidence and record their findings using well planned work sheets. During the inspection, one very good lesson required pupils to taste a series of foods and relate them to areas of the tongue including sweet, sour, bitter, spicy and salty. They were then required to identify the tastes and record them on a work sheet. Monitoring of the subject across the school is a weakness, as the co-ordinator has insufficient regular time allocated to undertake management and promotional activities.

104 The accommodation, especially the problem of storage space, does have an impact upon the quality of pupils' learning. This is very evident when teachers cannot provide adequate storage for resources which are easily accessible to pupils. Resources are adequate for the delivery of science, and there is an inventory available to all staff. At the end of each term, teachers are asked about their resource needs and the co-ordinator places orders for these requests. At present, information technology is under-used and there is no CD-ROM or software for measuring and recording.

105 Very good progress has been made since the last inspection. Progress was then described as reasonable for their abilities and, in a third of lessons, it was less than satisfactory. Information technology was under-used in relation to storing, retrieving and presenting information. Monitoring was a problem then and remains so, although evaluating standards and the co-ordination of the subject is very much improved.

72 **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

72 **Art**

106 Pupils make good progress in art and enjoy a wide range of experiences in two and three dimensional work. Progress and provision for art is better than at the time of the last inspection. Although the progress of some pupils is limited by their skills in handling tools, all pupils are able to participate in appropriate art activities.

107 Only a small number of lessons were observed but, in addition, a wide range of pupils' work can be seen in classrooms and around the school. This is attractively displayed and shows that teachers value the pupils' work. Pupils are able to use tools to paint using a variety of medium, to print, create clay artefacts and to weave. Most show a good awareness of colour and can make appropriate choices of materials.

108 In the art lessons observed, pupils follow instructions carefully and show great pride in their finished products. Standards of behaviour are high. Pupils co-operate well in sharing the resources and are

beginning to be able to appreciate each other's work.

- 109 The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers introduce the tasks well, linking them to the work of others, including that of famous artists. Much of the work is related to the topic focus. The quality of teachers' instructions, explanations and commentary is very good. An outstanding lesson was observed in which six and seven year old pupils painted on silk. They were totally absorbed in what they were doing and concentrated on the task until it was complete. The excitement and wonder as they saw the ink spread was very well developed by the teacher's commentary and questions to maximise their learning and understanding. Another group in the class worked very effectively with a learning support assistant in their observational drawings of a feather. The pupils' concentration and the adult's input was of a very high quality.
- 110 Lessons are less successful when teachers do not introduce the art activities sufficiently well to make them meaningful for pupils. Occasionally, the adult input is excessive in order to ensure a recognisable finished product at the expense of the pupils' personal development and independence.
- 111 The art co-ordinator is a talented and enthusiastic teacher but systems are not in place to ensure appropriate monitoring and support for the subject throughout the school. Provision is enhanced by specific events such as the 'Arts' Week' when visiting artists work in school and the school has exciting plans for a sculptor to work with the school for the millennium year.

72 **Design and Technology**

- 112 Since the last inspection, schemes of work have been produced on a two year topic cycle. These are an improvement on the previous schemes which, in 1996, were very much in their infancy. Although resources were insufficient, especially those related to materials and electricity, they are now satisfactory except for small tools.
- 113 Pupils' progress in the subject is satisfactory overall. At Key Stage 1, pupils are making good progress being given opportunities to design and make a pot pourri bag from material, measuring and cutting the material and joining it by stitching. There is also evidence of other pupils designing a home for a pet, constructing it from balsa wood and undertaking tests of the comparative strength of adhesives to find the most effective method of joining the wood by using adhesive tape and hot glue, and of making animal figures from clay.
- 114 At Key Stage 2, pupils' gained experience in using a pipe cutter to cut copper piping to a required length in the production of wind chimes. By the age of eleven, pupils are also able to design and construct models of dinosaurs after clarifying their own ideas and design criteria by using plaster bandages which gave the dinosaurs a more realistic feel. No food technology lessons were observed. This is related to topic work and there was evidence to show that this had been undertaken in the previous term.
- 115 Given the learning and behavioural difficulties of the pupils, their response to teachers' instructions and undertaking tasks is good. At both key stages most pupils showed an interest in designing and using materials. Almost all persevered with their task and showed an understanding of the knowledge and skills involved by asking questions.
- 116 The quality of teaching is good at both key stages, particularly at Key Stage 1. Tasks are explained clearly, lessons well paced and teachers use good questioning to draw out required facts. Their knowledge and understanding of their pupils' abilities was shown by their anticipating problems that may occur. However, at Key Stage 2, where pupils were supported in their activities, such support was at times too intense, limiting the pupils' acquisition of skills.
- 117 The present co-ordinator has recently taken over the post. There is a good, informative subject policy, which was produced by the previous co-ordinator. However, the management, co-ordination and monitoring of the subject is unsatisfactory. The scheme of work for the subject is taught through a two year topic cycle, which does not ensure that all of the Programmes of Study are being covered, and that assessment and recording ensures pupils' progression and continuity of the knowledge, skills and understanding across years and key stages. This is compounded by the absence of monitoring.
- 118 Resources for the teaching of the subject are satisfactory except for the quantity of tools such as hammers and saws.

72 **History and Geography**

- 119 History and geography are both incorporated within the planned programme of class topics. During the week of the inspection no history was observed being taught and there is insufficient evidence in pupils' work, classroom displays and pupils' records to make a judgement on the progress they are making.
- 120 Pupils are making good progress in geography. Pupils at Key Stage 1, for example, in their topic on 'Pets' are developing a good understanding of the position of different countries on a map of the world. They are learning that different animals come from different countries and know that the Sahara

desert is a hot, dry and sandy place. Pupils at Key Stage 2 in their topic on the 'Senses' can name features of the countryside, for example, rivers, hills and waterfalls and are learning to use directions. In the topic on 'Dinosaurs' good use has been made of discarded everyday packaging such as cardboard boxes to make a dinosaur and to learn about re-cycling and to care for the environment.

- 121 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are good. They are learning to sit and actively listen to the teacher and to wait their turn. They are confident in asking and answering questions. Most pupils are enthusiastic and their behaviour is very good. Pupils have learned to ignore poor behaviour by others and to get on with their own work. Relationships between pupils and teaching and support staff is very good.
- 122 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned to build on what pupils already know, understand and can do. Very good teaching was observed when there was very good pace and the lesson ended with pupils being supported to recall what they had learned. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils will achieve and there is excellent behaviour management, for example, when pupils are settled down to work when they come into the classroom from play. Teachers and learning support assistants also manage well pupils who become emotionally distressed. Teachers and learning support assistants work very well together as a team and are very knowledgeable about the needs of individual pupils.
- 123 There are good policy statements for both history and geography. Staff have worked hard on topic activity planning and have identified what pupils are to learn, what they will do and the assessment opportunities. However, schemes of work have not yet been developed and progression through the years is not ensured. A scrutiny of pupils' work and records indicates that a greater emphasis is being given to the teaching of geography at the expense of history. There is a lack of consistency in subject reports in clearly identifying what pupils know, understand and can do, and individual pupil subject targets do not always clearly identify what the pupil is to learn.
- 124 Time is not allocated for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and there is no allocated meeting time to identify curriculum issues or staff training needs. Although topic boxes contain a list of resources it is individual classroom teachers who are managing and updating these. The co-ordinator does not manage a budget or have an overview of the resources being purchased by each teacher. There is no checking of whether all classrooms are equipped with a range of basic equipment. Storage space in classrooms is very limited. Visits are used very well to support teaching and learning, for example, to a farm and a pet shop, a canal museum, the museum at Milton Keynes and a re-cycling centre.
- 125 Since the previous inspection both pupil progress and the quality of teaching have improved in geography and the more able pupils are being challenged in most lessons. Pupils now have much better attitudes to their learning and do persevere when they encounter difficulties. Planning in both subjects has improved and linked each subject to the requirements of the National Curriculum. However, assessment continues to be an area for further development.

72 **Information Technology**

- 126 No discrete lessons of information technology (IT) were observed in the school during the period of the inspection. Judgements are based on the limited evidence available from discussions with the co-ordinator, scrutiny of pupils' work and teachers plans and records.
- 127 There is no evidence of the teaching of discrete IT skills. Observations were made of pupils using various programs to reinforce subject learning. Two Year 2 pupils were observed using a program to reinforce word recognition based on their reading scheme, 'The Oxford Reading Tree'. Other pupils were observed using a program based upon their current topic of 'senses' and were matching pairs by sight, sound and memory. The pupils exhibited a good control of the mouse, and could open and close programs. Examination of pupils' work did indicate that some teaching in the use of a basic data

handling program, the use of a graphic program to produce a wallpaper design and basic word processing had been undertaken. However, IT capability skills are not taught in a planned way to ensure that pupils acquire them progressively, nor is the application of IT skills to subjects taught systematically. Progress in the acquisition and application of knowledge, skills and understanding in information technology is unsatisfactory.

128 Pupils were keen to use their computers on the few occasions observed. The programs enhance their understanding of the particular subject skills and the pupils are reluctant to end their computer session.

129 The subject is co-ordinated by an experienced and dedicated person. There is an informative, but brief, IT policy, in-house training has been given in the use of the new computer suite of four multimedia computers linked to the Internet and non teaching assistants have attended accreditation courses in basic IT skills. The school is following the Qualification and Curriculum Authority (QCA) scheme of work for IT. Staff training in the use of the scheme is underdeveloped and the planning of IT modules into the school's topic approach are not yet in place.

130 The present assessment procedure of informal observation of pupils' work is insufficiently comprehensive and focused on the QCA scheme to ensure the continuity and progression of pupils' IT capability. Currently there is no monitoring of the teaching of the subject taking place to ensure teachers' coverage of the Programmes of Study. This is a weakness, particularly with the introduction of the new scheme of work. Currently there is no provision for teaching control beyond Level 2 and, although monitoring is only introduced at Level 4, this should be made available to the more able pupils.

131 Resources for the teaching of the subject are very good. The school has invested by adding to their National Grid for Learning (NGfL) provision to provide a network of four stations. There is a range of appropriate CD ROMs. The use of differentiated word processors, data handling packages and graphic programs are to be investigated to provide the differentiation by task which pupils require. Although a dedicated computer area has been made by partitioning off the art room with cupboards, the resulting space is small and does not encourage whole class teaching.

72 **Music**

132 Pupils' progress in music is unsatisfactory. This judgement is based on the limited range of music lessons and activities taking place during the period of the inspection and talking to staff and pupils. The school does not teach a sufficiently wide range of aspects from the Programmes of Study for music. This is no better than at the time of the last inspection. Opportunities for singing are satisfactory and pupils sing well together in class and whole school groups. There are few planned opportunities to teach the musical elements. Pupils do not play musical instruments regularly and compose and improvise. There are many missed opportunities for pupils to listen to music and experience a range of music from different places and times.

133 The few lessons observed were in Key Stage 2. The oldest pupils practised a song for their assembly. This was well linked to some drama and movement and the pupils obviously enjoyed it and co-operated well. When this was sung in the whole school assembly, all the pupils joined in enthusiastically. At this session pupils also sang a well known carol from memory. However, there was no music to introduce or finish the session. Singing is also used well in many of the classes during the introductory 'hello' sessions. Only one lesson was observed addressing a part of the music Programmes of Study other than singing. This was taken by the subject co-ordinator and combined identifying percussion instruments and using them appropriately with a choice of dynamics and tempo.

134 The music co-ordinator is not a specialist teacher. She is responsible for the music resources but feels that she lacks the time or the expertise to monitor or develop music throughout the school. The school has a limited range of untuned percussion instruments. These are not used efficiently and access is

difficult with no central storage. Recorded music is not used frequently. A commercial scheme of work was adopted several years ago but this is not being implemented.

135 The school urgently needs to address this issue and provide the full range of musical experiences which can contribute significantly to pupils' development and wellbeing.

72 **Physical Education**

136 At present, there is no subject co-ordinator for physical education at the school and, as a result, the subject lacks breadth and balance and does not include the full range of the National Curriculum Programmes of Study at both key stages.

137 In the lessons observed, pupils made at least satisfactory progress, which at times was very good. In the best lessons, pupils sharpen their response to commands, improve their balancing skills and posture through the interpretation of movement by making themselves large or small, moving rapidly or slowly, and by taking heavy or light steps. Elements of dance were evident in the interpretation of Autumn's falling leaves and Winter's scooping up of falling leaves and throwing them to the wind. Where progress is slower, insufficient attention is given to the planning of activities, resulting in pupils losing concentration and impetus.

138 Teaching is satisfactory and occasionally very good. It tends to be better at Key Stage 1, where the restriction imposed by the size of the accommodation is less apparent. An example was seen in a Year 2 class where there was very good teaching of movement. Pupils were encouraged to warm up by moving their limbs at different speeds, and to move backwards and forwards on command. This was followed by some energetic movement incorporating elements of mime and dance to interpret dressing for Winter or going out into the rain, or the heavy trudging experienced when walking in deep snow. Very good use was made of the pupils as models. Where teachers are restricted by the accommodation, especially at the top end of Key Stage 2, there are periods of inactivity for many pupils as they wait patiently for their turn.

139 Pupils' behaviour is always very good, as is the management of those with extreme behavioural difficulties. In the best lessons, pupils' response was very positive. They enjoy the vigorous exercise and behave sensibly when they are at rest. Pupils work hard on gaining and improving their catching and hitting skills.

140 There is no co-ordinator to manage the subject which, at present, does not meet the full requirements of delivering the National Curriculum Programmes of Study. Efforts have been made to use the facilities at a neighbouring special school, but it has not been possible this term because of restoration work being carried out. In any event, it is not feasible to undertake this sharing of facilities for each class at the school. The lack of adequate accommodation to deliver the subject both inside and outside is a serious impediment to delivering a broad and balanced physical education programme at the school. Resources are limited by a lack of storage space for any larger equipment. There is a lack of small apparatus and equipment to offer the full range of activities in a broad and balanced physical education curriculum.

141 The previous report stated that the subject "is not adequately provided for by the school". There was not a scheme of work and the National Curriculum Programmes of Study were not covered. "This is partly connected with the deficiency of the accommodation and the lack of resources, but partly because there is no whole school planning which takes account of the National Curriculum and which guides staff." There has been very little change since the last report in 1996.

72 **Religious education**

- 142 Very few lessons were observed during the inspection, but it was clear from records and displays around the school that pupils are making very good and occasionally excellent progress. In one lesson, pupils' awareness of symbolism was heightened by the playing of organ music, the burning of incense and the lighting of candles to create an ambience for reflection. Many felt this quiet time had been a soothing experience for them as they concentrated on something they felt to be good or beautiful.
- 143 Pupils show a high degree of concentration and interest. An assembly which linked two pupils' birthdays during the week to the birth of Jesus Christ and the opening of the first window of the advent calendar, captivated the whole school. The birthday children they blew out the candles, which had been a focal point of the assembly, whilst the remainder showed great respect for the dignity of the occasion. Behaviour throughout was of an excellent standard and created a very strong feeling of belonging.
- 144 The quality of teaching is very good overall and at times excellent. Teachers use resources well to illustrate and support their lessons, as was the case when pupils were shown how a wine goblet would be held at communion. In this lesson, there was an emphasis on touch, with pupils carefully handling a crucifix and a rosary. In this lesson, good use was made of recorded music. A strength of the teaching in the best lessons is the meticulous planning to ensure that the wide ability range is challenged by the learning. Relationships across the school are very good, and visitors gain a distinct impression of a family and team approach. The learning support assistants play an important role in supporting the teaching, they are planned for well and make a significant contribution to lessons.

145 The co-ordinator has successfully established the subject within the curriculum and it is now taught to all classes throughout the school. The policy statement has been formulated, having regard for the Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education in Milton Keynes. This policy was reviewed during the present calendar year. There are schemes of work and planning sheets for each class which provide very helpful guidance and form a sound basis for the further development of the subject. Monitoring and support for teachers is not yet well developed, although advice is always available from the committed co-ordinator. Assessment is not linked closely enough to the attainment targets set in the schemes of work. The scheme of work at Key Stage 2 is not well developed. The co-ordinator recognises the need to build on the resources, especially artefacts and information technology software to add to the sole CD ROM.

1 There has been a great deal of progress since the last inspection. Progress in the subject is now very good, and occasionally excellent. Schemes of work are now linked to the Agreed Syllabus of Religious Education in Milton Keynes. Statutory requirements for teaching religious education are now being met.

146 **Integration**

147 The school has a strong commitment to providing integrated learning experiences for pupils at a mainstream school. Clear criteria are set to ensure that the pupils are ready and able to benefit fully from such a placement. There is very good planning and preparation with the mainstream school and placements are effectively co-ordinated by the integration support teacher. Pupils are well prepared to work in the mainstream classroom by spending initially short periods of time at the mainstream school. This time is gradually increased as pupils learn the rules and routines and learn to work and socialise with the other pupils. Parents are fully consulted and involved. Most pupils eventually transfer to full time placements at mainstream schools.

148 Three pupils who were observed working in a mixed Year 2 and 3 class at a first school followed the teacher's instructions very well. They are fully aware of classroom routines and the teacher's expectations and are becoming successful learners in a mainstream class. They are socialising well with the other pupils and developing their skills as independent learners. Pupils have access to support from a member of staff from the Walnuts School and this support is also aiding pupils to be as independent as is possible.

149 The Walnuts School has a draft integration policy but this has not been ratified by the governing body. Most parents purchase the mainstream school uniform for their children as the Walnuts School does not keep a supply of clothing. One of the pupils observed was the only pupil in the class not wearing the mainstream school's uniform. Staff supporting pupils record information in the home - school diary but do not keep any written records of their work to pass on to other colleagues who support the same pupils on other days of the week. An integration report contributes to the annual review of the pupil's statement of special educational needs but does not contain information to further inform the pupil's progress in the subjects studied at the mainstream school. Each pupil's entitlement to a broad and balanced curriculum, including the National Curriculum, is monitored by the Walnuts School.

150 There is no integration development plan to ensure that all pupils who would benefit from an integration placement can do so as early as possible. There is no development planning to assist the integration support teacher in extending the number of mainstream school involved or in identifying the levels of staffing required. The previous inspection report on integration identified no weaknesses.

146 **Special Educational Needs**

151 The school is making good provision to meet the special educational needs of its pupils including those

pupils with autism. The speech therapy which pupils receive is of high quality, both in individual withdrawal sessions with the speech therapist, and also in class in sessions supported by the speech therapist.

- 152 Some very good use is being made of symbols to aid pupils' understanding and learning and there is also some more limited use of symbol supported text. This is not being fully utilised, for example, in making and providing reading books for pupils who would benefit. Where pupils have particular medical conditions, for example epilepsy, relevant staff have received training to ensure that they are able to respond appropriately in the event of a seizure.
- 153 Pupils are encouraged to be as independent as possible and to take responsibility for themselves. The more able pupils have access to learning at a mainstream school, but a few higher attaining pupils have to wait for an integration placement to become available when they are already ready for this challenge.
- 154 The school has a special educational needs policy and a named governor with responsibility for special educational needs. All pupils have a statement of special educational needs and annual review are held and records kept up to date. A good range of reports are provided by the professionals working with the pupils to inform parents of the progress which their children are making. Most parents attend the annual review meeting. Subject reports do not always identify what pupils know, understand and can do and some of the targets set are too vague, for example, to develop simple mental mathematics strategies. There is very good transition planning in preparation for when pupils leave the school. The previous inspection report did not have a section on special educational needs.

146 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

146 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

155 The school was inspected by a team of five inspectors for a total of 15 ½ inspector days. Over a period of 3 ½ days, 36 lessons or part lessons and a range of pupils' activities were observed and pupils' work was scrutinised, for a total of 40 hours.

156 Discussions and interviews with school staff, groups of Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils and representatives of other agencies totalled a further 30 hours of inspector time. Registration sessions and an assembly were attended, and meetings were held with members of the governing body.

157 Statements of special educational need, annual review reports and individual education plans were scrutinised. Parents' views were sought at a meeting attended by 3 parents/carers, and the response from 22 questionnaires (53.7% of the total of 41) were analysed. The school provided a full range of documents and records for analysis, both before and during the inspection.

146 **DATA AND INDICATORS**

146 **Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y7	40	40	40	5

146 **Teachers and classes**

146 **Qualified teachers (YR – Y7)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	6.71
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	5.96

146 **Education support staff (YR – Y7)**

Total number of education support staff:	12
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	360.02

146 **Financial data**

Financial year:	1998
	£
Total Income	585,821
Total Expenditure	580,347
Expenditure per pupil	13,496.44
Balance brought forward from previous year	91,938
Balance carried forward to next year	97,412

Number of questionnaires sent out: 41

Number of questionnaires returned: 22

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	50	45	5	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	73	27	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	32	41	18	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	27	55	9	9	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	45	50	5	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	41	50	9	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	36	36	23	5	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	14	41	27	18	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	59	36	5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	23	59	14	5	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	64	27	5	0	5