

INSPECTION REPORT

FRANK WISE SCHOOL

BANBURY

Oxfordshire

Unique reference number: 123332

Headteacher: Mr Kevin Griffiths

Reporting inspector: Graham Pirt
14563

Dates of inspection: 25 – 28 June 2001

Inspection number: 197281

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

© Crown copyright 2001

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Hornbeam Close Banbury Oxfordshire
Postcode:	OX16 9RL
Telephone number:	01295 263520
Fax number:	01295 273141
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Doug Seymour
Date of previous inspection:	21 May 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Graham Pirt 14563	Registered inspector	Art and Design, Music Foundation Stage	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led & managed? What should the school do to improve further?
Elaine Parrish 9577	Lay inspector		How well does the school work in partnership with the parents?
Sue Yarnall 14787	Team inspector	English Modern Foreign Language Religious Education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
Mike Holohan 1769	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Special Educational Needs	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Alan Tattersall 20466	Team Inspector	Mathematics Physical Education Personal, Social and Health Education	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
Philip Johnson 27734	Team Inspector	History Geography Information and Communication Technology Equal Opportunities	

The inspection contractor was:

QICS

“Ibsley”
4 West Cliff Road
Dawlish
Devon
EX7 9EB

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	7
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	17
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	18
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	19
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	21
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Frank Wise is a maintained community special school situated close to the centre of the town of Banbury. The school occupies the ground floor of a large Victorian house as well as two major extensions. The school has increased in size since the last inspection to its current roll of 81 pupils, aged between 2 and 16, who have a range of severe or profound and complex learning difficulties. Approximately 12% of pupils have additional special needs including autism, communication difficulties and behavioural difficulties. 9% of pupils come from homes where English is not the first language, mainly of Pakistani and Indian background. The school is representative of the social and cultural background of the area where the pupils live. Many of the pupils start their schooling in the integrated nursery in a local primary school and then transfer either into the Frank Wise School, mainstream school or other specialist provision. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in the inclusion programme into local mainstream schools. Pupils' attainment is low when they enter the school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school. The leadership is highly effective and the relevant curriculum ensures that pupils are provided with a wide range of learning opportunities. High quality teaching and assessment procedures ensure that pupils make very good progress in nearly all subjects. The headteacher and governors use available resources very efficiently to the benefit of all pupils. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The excellent leadership and management are strengths of the school and effectively support the work of staff, pupils and parents.
- The high quality of the teaching, leading to excellent concentration and independence skills, results in very good achievements.
- The excellent links with schools and colleges, leading to very good integration opportunities.
- The excellent procedures that promote pupils' personal and social developments.
- The promotion of the excellent respect for feelings, values and beliefs held by the children is a strength of the school.

What could be improved

- Determine the achievement of pupils in a way that allows for national comparison with similar schools and provide accreditation opportunities by the age of 16.
- Increase opportunities for the teaching of a modern foreign language between the ages of 11 and 14.
- Improve accommodation for indoor PE, changing rooms, specialist rooms and library, including appropriate storage.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in April 1997. Since then there has been very good improvement in a number of key areas. The proportion of good and very good teaching is now much higher and consistent throughout the school. This has brought about a similar improvement in the overall progress that pupils make. Long term planning for the work to be covered is now fully in place, with the exception of a modern foreign language. The role of the subject co-ordinator is firmly established and this has improved how the curriculum is managed.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age 16	Key	
speaking and listening	A	very good	A
reading	A	good	B
writing	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	A	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	A	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A		

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

Pupils' achievements are very good. The high quality of teaching and the very good attitude that pupils have to their learning have a positive impact on the standards that all pupils achieve in the school. The school's very thorough assessment procedures ensure that all staff have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do and set relevant and challenging targets for them to achieve. As a result, good and very good progress is made in subjects and against pupils' individual education plan targets. Pupils' progress is very good in literacy, numeracy, personal and social education, science and in information communication technology (ICT). Pupils' very good progress in literacy and numeracy is helped by the way the school has adapted aspects of the National Strategies and from the way staff provide opportunities to practise these skills across the curriculum in other subjects. The school sets relevant targets for pupils. Pupils under the age of 5 make very good progress overall. The very relevant curriculum that they follow ensures that account is taken of early learning goals and that there is a very good emphasis on developing the personal skills and competencies needed for school after the age of 5.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy lessons and activities. They show enthusiasm for their work.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well in school. Behaviour is excellent when they visit other schools to share in lessons.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent. Pupils have an extremely high regard for each other and show concern for each other's welfare. This enables them to co-operate well with each other, teachers and other adults. The excellent relationships are a strength of the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall. For the majority of pupils it is very good. Recent attendance figures have been adversely affected by the long-term medical absences of a small number of pupils.

Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour, together with the excellent relationships between pupils and adults, contribute significantly to the school's positive atmosphere and the very good learning that takes place. Pupils respond very well to the range of activities provided for them both in and out of classrooms. Pupils are developing excellent social and personal skills in the school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very Good	Very Good	Very Good

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

Overall teaching and learning are very good. During the inspection teaching and learning in nine out of ten lessons were at least good and in almost half of all lessons were very good or excellent. The quality of teaching and learning in English and mathematics were consistently good with half of the lessons seen in English and just over half of those seen in mathematics being very good or excellent. This is a very good improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and use aspects of these initiatives well. The teaching of personal and social education is very good because teachers take advantage of every opportunity, both in and out of class, to develop skills aimed at increasing pupils' independence. Very good teaching takes place in mathematics, English, physical education and personal, social and health education. As a consequence of the high quality teaching available, pupils are motivated to learn and remain enthusiastic and interested and so make good and often very good progress. The very good teamwork evident between teachers, support staff and other professionals ensures that the needs of all pupils are well met. Pupils benefit very much from the opportunities to work in the mainstream schools. Teaching for the very youngest pupils and those children under five is good. For these children planning focuses clearly on what the teacher wants pupils to achieve in a lesson. As a consequence of this opportunities are provided allowing pupils to learn in an environment which helps develop their emerging language skills.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Very good. There are excellent opportunities for extra-curricular activities. The curriculum places appropriate emphasis on literacy and numeracy skills. There are very effective links other schools and colleges. Not all pupils between 11 and 14 have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Very good support for pupils whose first language is not English. Families are supported very well through the close liaison with the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Social development of pupils is excellent. Moral and cultural development is very good and spiritual development is good.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. There are very good systems for assessing, monitoring and recording pupils' personal and academic progress.

The curriculum is very good. It provides a wide range of learning opportunities and there is an appropriate emphasis given to literacy and numeracy. The school has excellent links with the community and this, together with the equally effective relationships with partner institutions extends the learning opportunities available to pupils. The very good links with parents contributes to the successful learning of pupils. Provision for careers guidance and sex education is very good and for extra-curricular activities it is excellent. The curriculum meets the needs of pupils with additional special needs, such as autism, very well. The lack of opportunity for all pupils to study a modern foreign language, although improved from the last inspection, is still not satisfactory. There are very effective systems in place for judging and recording pupils' progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The leadership and management by the headteacher and key staff is a strength of the school. The commitment of all staff to improve is helped by the excellent training provision and view of the educational direction of the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Very good. The governing body shares the headteacher's desire to ensure that the school achieves very high standards in everything it does. The governing body has a very clear understanding of how the school is performing. Some minor statutory responsibilities are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. Teaching and learning, and the curriculum, are very well evaluated by subject co-ordinators and senior staff. The school's development plan is very well reviewed.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. The school utilises resources, accommodation and support staff very well. Specific grants are used very effectively, particularly in supporting work with mainstream schools and the Beacon School status.

The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is supported very well in the management of the school by senior colleagues and the governors. All of those responsible for the management of the school are committed to its success. There are very good systems to help the school plan ahead and there is rigorous monitoring of how the school performs. The number of teachers is average for a school of this type. Their expertise in the teaching of pupils with complex and additional needs is significantly enhanced by the training opportunities made available to them. Support staff make a very positive contribution to the overall learning and progress of pupils. Accommodation is satisfactory overall although there are some excellent features such as the new extension, with its imaginative music room. The swimming pool is also of a very high standard. However, a number of small classrooms, indoor physical education facilities, a lack of changing facilities for physical education, inadequate specialist accommodation and the poor library space as well as shortage of storage are not satisfactory. Overall, resources are good. The school is committed to ensuring that it receives best value for money whenever the opportunity arises.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is well led and managed. • The teaching is good. • Children like school. • Children make progress. • The school is approachable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A small number of parents would like to receive more information about work done with the mainstream schools. • A few parents would like to see more work provided to be done at home.

The inspectors agreed with the parents' very positive views about the school and felt that the school could consider and meet the parents' views on what could be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Pupils' achievements are consistently good and often very good. In many areas of the curriculum this has resulted in a significant improvement in progress since the previous inspection. The high quality of teaching and the very good attitudes that pupils have to their learning has had a positive impact on the standards that all pupils reach in the school. In addition, the very thorough assessment procedures ensure that all of the staff have a clear picture of what pupils know and can do. This knowledge is very well used to plan the next steps in learning and consequently ensures that good and very good progress is made in subjects and against targets in pupils' individual education plans. Pupils' achievements in personal and social education are very good and reflect the importance that the school places upon this aspect of the curriculum. Lunchtime is used very effectively and pupils respond exceptionally well to the opportunities to take responsibility, increasing their independence skills. They become involved in the excellent extra-curricular activities. The opportunities for working alongside mainstream pupils significantly enhance this. The school sets relevant and challenging targets for pupils in their individual education plans.

- 2 Overall, pupils of all ages achieve well and make good, and often very good, progress in English. This is because the teaching is consistently good and because teachers plan pupils' learning to take good account of literacy targets and their individual education plans. This ensures that there is a very good emphasis on developing pupils' language and communication in all lessons. Pupils with English as an additional language make progress equal to other pupils in the school. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties are making very good progress in their listening and communication skills because teachers plan activities that motivate pupils and use stimulating resources. Pupils with profound learning difficulties are developing their ability to communicate by looking and responding. For a small number of pupils, with autistic spectrum and communication disorders, the ability to co-operate is often difficult. However, teachers have secure understanding of their needs and the strategies they use enable them to participate and make very good progress. Teachers effectively use of parts of the National Literacy Strategy to help pupils to achieve well and make very good progress in speaking and listening and reading. The use of the Frank Wise School reading scheme contributes well to this progress. Pupils make good progress in writing. They benefit from the good opportunities provided to use their developing skills in other subjects and this helps them to appreciate the importance of writing.

- 3 The standards of achievement and progress made in mathematics are very good. The National Numeracy Strategy has been incorporated well and is having a particular effect in improving mental arithmetic and providing pupils with an appropriate balance between whole class, group and individual work. Pupils' progress is further enhanced by the opportunities that teachers take to develop mathematical skills in subjects such as science.

- 4 The standards that pupils achieve in physical education, music and science are very good. This is a direct result of teachers' good subject knowledge and the motivating strategies that they use to encourage pupils' learning. In art, design and technology, history and information and communication technology pupils make good progress. Pupils make satisfactory progress in religious education. Not all pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language and, therefore, progress is not satisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 5 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good. Relationships are excellent. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection. Pupils' have very positive attitudes to school and to the work that teachers provide for them. Parents comment that their children like school. This is evident in lessons, where pupils join in with activities willingly and often enthusiastically. During the early morning session pupils are keen to suggest lessons that they think they will have. They are delighted, for instance, when they find that they will be cooking as they had hoped. Pupils arrive at school in the morning happy to be there and greet staff and fellow pupils cordially and settle quickly to their tasks. This means that they often enter their lessons ready to start and needing little intervention from staff to begin working immediately. During the inspection week pupils persevered to complete a significant amount of work in spite of the very hot weather. Pupils are absorbed in their work in lessons. In a science lesson for the youngest pupils for instance, they were totally committed to finding a way to plug a hole in a bucket, making judgements and working with independence to select materials themselves to solve the problem. They enjoy the arrangements at local schools where they adapt to the new arrangements, working happily and sensibly alongside their mainstream friends. For instance, pupils aged eleven worked enthusiastically with their friends at a local school to create a sensory garden. They persevered very well because they enjoyed the tasks and were keen to see the result.
- 6 Pupils behave very well in lessons, around the school and when visiting local places such as the supermarket. Because pupils are so sensible in listening and trying to follow advice they follow the teacher's directions very well, for instance, when learning to cross the road. Pupils behave very well around the school, such as in the dining room, where they wait patiently to collect their meals and show good manners. Pupils use their time constructively after lunch. Younger pupils play imaginatively together whilst older pupils take good advantage of the grounds to play cricket together, sit in a quiet area to study or talk to their friends. Since pupils usually behave very well this means that teachers can give them more responsibility. For instance, pupils aged eight were trusted to handle equipment in the food preparation room because they followed the teacher's directions well, showing understanding of the need to act sensibly and make good progress. Occasionally, a small number of pupils have difficulty behaving well but staff have plans to follow to improve their behaviour, so that they soon behave well again. This was evident when a pupil would not move correctly from one table to the next for a change of activity in a mathematics lesson. With support the pupil began to co-operate and behave well again.
- 7 Pupils' personal development is very good. Staff consistently promote independence in pupils and encourage them to help others. Pupils respond with enthusiasm to the many opportunities staff provide for them to take responsibility. For instance, pupils take turns to call the register and return it to the school office. Most pupils select their own lunch and offer to help others who cannot collect their

own. They relish opportunities to help to prepare and hand out drinks, taking turns to collect orders, using words or symbols to record and ensuring that each receives what they order. The oldest pupils participate very well in lessons to prepare them for life beyond the school. They co-operate very well to share tasks to make their own lunch. During lessons to provide an insight into the world of work, they demonstrate that they are increasingly aware of the way they have to communicate, such as answering customers' questions in a shop. Pupils respond very well to the opportunities to spend time in local schools, working and playing with other pupils. They adapt very well to their 'new' schools, so effectively that it is difficult to spot them as all the pupils mingle and play together, requiring little support and supervision.

- 8 Relationships are excellent throughout the school. This is evident because pupils understand each other's special needs. For instance, a pupil taking responsibility to call the register changed the approach to help a lower attaining pupil. He called the pupil's name but watched his eyes for recognition, delighted to see the return of his friend's welcome. Pupils throughout the school show great concern to ensure that each receives a turn in activities. They are pleased with each other's success and encourage each other to do well, such as calling out encouragement for each other to succeed in their relay race. The exceptional quality of relationships between pupils is a strength of the school. It is a significant factor in the very good progress that pupils make in lessons and in their personal development.
- 9 Attendance is satisfactory overall. For the majority of pupils attendance is very good. However, recent attendance figures have been adversely affected by the long term medical absences of a small number of pupils. Pupils are keen to come to school and parents say that pupils are genuinely upset if they miss a day. Registration is carried out very effectively with a real sense of joy about being in school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 10 There has been a good improvement in the quality of teaching since the previous inspection. Teaching and learning is now very good. During the inspection there was no unsatisfactory teaching. In almost half of all lessons the quality of teaching and learning was judged to be very good or excellent for pupils of all ages. Lessons are characterised by the very good subject knowledge, the high quality of planning, the use of effective methods of teaching, that demonstrate high expectations that pupils will succeed, and the high quality use of assessment.
- 11 The proportion of teaching and learning judged to be good or better has increased by nearly threefold from 30% to 90% when compared with the previous inspection. The same level of improvement has also been seen in lessons where teaching is very good, which have tripled in number. During the inspection the quality of teaching and learning was good or better in ninety per cent of lessons. The improvement in the quality of teaching has been brought about by several factors. Monitoring of teaching is rigorous and the process provides teachers with clear written feedback, which evaluates strengths and areas for further development.

The procedures for the training of both new and more established staff are excellent and ensure that teaching strategies are effective for all pupils.

- 12 The school has clearly worked hard at ensuring that pupils have access to effective teaching. As a consequence there is consistent practice across the school. This is very evident in the high quality planning that is seen in nearly all classes. A common feature is the care that teachers take to ensure that very clear individual pupil targets are linked to the overall aim of the lesson. A very good science lesson for 16 year old pupils, looking at the effect of the environment on plant growth, had an imaginative range of activities planned for individuals. These related very well to the topic and contributed very well to their understanding of the subject and the progress they were making against their individual targets. For pupils of all ages planning is very good and very effectively contributes to pupils' social development, ensuring very good progress in developing independence and confidence to speak in front of others.
- 13 A mathematics lesson for pupils aged 8 reflected the teacher's very high expectations. The challenge being provided for pupils led to them making very good progress in estimating numbers of objects that they had been shown briefly. The high expectations and the good planning meant that pupils were given the opportunity to recognise that they could change their estimates over time. Teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve are very high. This judgement supports the views of parents expressed at the meeting prior to the inspection. Some difficult concepts are taught to pupils using imaginative approaches that involved good use of resources. For example, in a mathematics lesson for 14 year old pupils the teacher provided a wide range of musical resources that were very relevant and helped pupils match pairs using instruments, photographs and recorded sounds. The high, but appropriate expectations, ensured that some more able pupils progress to sorting and classifying acute, obtuse and right angles. Pupils make very good progress in developing subject appropriate language.
- 14 The excellent training provided for staff has had a very positive impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers manage behaviour very well and follow the clear behaviour programmes that are in place. Staff recognise indications of pupils becoming distressed and agreed behaviour strategies are implemented consistently. As a result, disruption for other students is kept to a minimum and they are able to learn and make progress in a calm environment. Throughout the school explanations by staff as to why particular actions are inappropriate are clear, routines are understood and expectations of good behaviour are high.
- 15 The quality of teaching and learning throughout the school owes much to the very good support provided by classroom support officers. Governors and senior staff regard these staff as an integral part of the teaching and learning for pupils and, consequently, very good opportunities are available to them, in terms of training, to develop their skills. As a result the teaching staff have considerable confidence in them and pupils benefit from the effective team approach adopted in classes. The methods and organisation used by teachers mean that assistants are often responsible for working with small groups or individuals in many subjects. They do this well and, although following teachers' planning, the majority also show considerable initiative when working with pupils. The quality of teaching and learning is also enhanced by the support provided by visiting teachers and the planning for those working at the mainstream schools. Their subject expertise and

use of high quality resources make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning and the progress that they make in personal and social development and in individual subjects.

- 16 A strength of teaching and learning across the school is the way teachers use assessment to judge the impact of their teaching on the progress that pupils make. For all pupils questioning is used very effectively to test knowledge and obtain opinion and choices. Pupils respond positively to this approach and the impact that it has in terms of their personal development and involvement in their own learning is very clear. One group of pupils responded very positively to the opportunity to assess their own progress in mathematics and were very keen to indicate the knowledge they had about what coins could buy.

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

- 17 The quality and range of the learning opportunities provided for pupils are very good overall. This represents a good improvement since the last inspection when the school was not providing pupils with their full National Curriculum entitlement. Since the last inspection the school has introduced religious education into the curriculum and all pupils now follow a satisfactory programme which is linked to the weekly assembly theme. However, pupils between the ages of 11 and 14 still do not have the opportunity to study a modern foreign language until the term prior to their European residential visit.
- 18 The strategies the school has implemented for teaching literacy and numeracy are very good. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing the communication skills of all pupils and teachers plan within the framework of the National Literacy Strategy, providing a range activities matched to the widely varying needs within each class. Similarly, the National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully incorporated into planning for mathematics.
- 19 The school has a very good curriculum in place backed up by a database of curriculum activities based on National Curriculum content. This gives teachers very clear guidance and enables them to plan activities at levels appropriate to the pupils. The curriculum is taught through a well-balanced mix of whole class, small group and individual work that takes account of targets in pupils' individual education plans. However, the limited provision for the teaching of a modern foreign language in years 7, 8 and 9 is not satisfactory.
- 20 The school is very good at making sure that pupils with more profound difficulties are able to participate in all areas of the curriculum and are given the same opportunities as their peers to join in the wide range of learning experiences. For instance, teachers plan carefully setting appropriate individual learning objectives and providing suitable resources. When classes are involved in activities with mainstream schools all pupils are involved.
- 21 The school makes excellent provision for extra-curricular activities. All pupils from eight years of age onwards have the opportunity to participate in residential trips linked to curriculum areas and organised with mainstream schools. These have included a visit to Norwich with an emphasis on history, Harlech to study geography and art and to Lyme Regis to study biology. In addition, pupils between fourteen and sixteen have the opportunity to visit a European country and this year have visited Florence. Previous visits have included Rome, Barcelona and Brussels. These visits all have clear educational

aims, are accessible to all pupils and make an excellent contribution to personal development and independence skills. In addition to residential visits the school provides a wide and varied range of experiences for pupils such as visits to museums, galleries and other places of interest. As part of World Book Day pupils had the opportunity to work with a poet and they have also benefited from the support of an artist in residence, producing work of a high standard for the school gallery. During the summer holiday pupils have the chance to take part in sports activities, and throughout the year there are very good opportunities to experience multi-cultural activities, such as a visit from an Asian dance group and the development of links with a Swedish special school.

- 22 The school makes very good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education, which includes access to a programme of sex education and information on drug misuse. Lessons are carefully planned using age appropriate material but taking into account individual pupils' developmental level.
- 23 Careers education and guidance and vocational education are very good. All students in their final year spend one day a week on work related issues including visits to places of work, health and safety at work and independence skills. They have also run a successful mini enterprise scheme producing calendars with a local High School. There are good links with the special needs careers adviser who assists the school. In setting up work experience placements for pupils who have the necessary independence skills to enable them to complete an unsupported day or week placement. The oldest higher attaining pupils attend the local college of further education for one day a week in preparation for full time attendance when they leave school. Pupils not attending the college continue to follow an appropriate curriculum at school working towards alternative post school provision. The school makes very good provision for the small number of pupils with English as an additional language. The EMAG assistant supports pupils on one day a week working within classes alongside teachers and classroom support officers. Staff value the advice she gives them on cultural issues and also the high level of support she gives to parents. The effective liaison and support work with families leads to improved home/school links which in turn enables the school to work more effectively with the children.
- 24 There is an extremely strong commitment to providing opportunities for pupils to be included in the life of other schools. The provision for all classes to spend part of their week in a suitable local school is very good. One in ten pupils spends further time in other schools for additional lessons. For instance two of the pupils, in the class that joined the primary school for the morning, remained at the school in the afternoon when the others left. Pupils share tasks well, developing very good understanding of each other and learning to communicate more effectively. The pupils develop excellent relationships, playing with other members of school at break time. The provision for the joint working of the nursery children is excellent. The level of co-operation between the schools is exceptionally high to provide support to help the children to integrate. This was evident as pupils shared activities with their mainstream friends and received additional support to achieve their own targets for learning. The success of this inclusion is evident in the very high proportion leaving the nursery to join local schools.
- 25 The school's provision for spiritual development is good. The assembly theme for the week is followed within classes and provides a consistent framework across the

school. Pupils experience a sense of wonder during lessons. For example, when the realisation and joy of resolving the problem of fixing a hole in a bucket becomes apparent, or the experience of seeing both the fire of the burners and the size of the balloon canopy during the inflation and deflation of a hot air balloon. These experiences add significantly to the pupils' appreciation of the wonders of science, nature and the world around them. However, there are limited opportunities available to participate in prayer, meditation and contemplation.

- 26 The moral development of pupils is very good. Pupils are shown by example the value that everyone in the school places on each other and the high quality of relationships that are maintained between all staff and pupils. The supportive and caring ethos is reflected in the behaviour and actions of both staff and pupils on a day to day basis. Pupils are expected to maintain a high level of respect for others, good manners, courtesy and friendliness. The sense of worth and value that is engendered in such an ethos ensures that pupils are aware of what is right and wrong and conduct themselves accordingly.
- 27 Provision for pupils' social development is excellent. The wide range of off-site visits and residential trips, both within the UK and abroad, provide pupils with the opportunity to meet and socialise with a range of different people and cultures. Pupils are encouraged to show initiative and take on responsibility whenever possible. During a problem solving activity pupils engaged with their peers to assist a blindfolded pupil across an obstacle course. Good use is also made of registration time to allow pupils to call the register and wait for the appropriate response from their classmates. Pupils accept their roles with ease and self assurance.
- 28 Pupils' cultural development is very good. There is a wide range of opportunities to explore and experience different cultures, traditions and ways of life. The excellent range of residential opportunities exposes pupils to different lifestyles and people. Pupils also prepare food from different national traditions as part of their personal and social development.
- 29 The energy and enthusiasm of the Headteacher and his staff have helped to establish excellent links with the local community. These have a direct impact upon the progress pupils make through the provision of some outstanding resources and facilities. They also play a key role in raising the profile of the school, thereby heightening public awareness and helping to change attitudes towards children with learning disabilities. Over the last six years a locally based public relations company has helped the school reach out to the community and raise funds which have provided a hydrotherapy pool, a resource centre, new classrooms, a music room and a refurbished junior playground. All the pupils in the school benefit greatly from these excellent facilities. Many voluntary helpers assist in the school and help to ensure that pupils access all the opportunities provided not only by this school but also by local mainstream schools in their programmes of integration.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 30 The care of pupils is very good. The monitoring of pupils' personal development is excellent. This is a consequence of the excellent knowledge of the pupils. Wide ranging discussions take place between staff and parents at annual review meetings and regular assessments of pupils' needs are discussed at staff meetings. Record keeping is also very good with detailed assessments of pupils' progress making it possible to set targets that are both challenging and relevant. An outcome of the effectiveness of this system is that the previous inspection report's criticism of an insufficient focus on pupils' independence has been addressed. A very good programme of personal, social and health education is well matched to the personal targets in the pupils' individual education programmes.
- 31 The school has very good behaviour management programmes with targets designed to ensure that pupils' benefit from positive and supportive approaches. However, the systems for recording pupils' behaviour to ensure that the senior management team and governors are aware of behavioural trends in the school are not fully developed. Similarly, the present system of recording the physical control of pupils needs more rigour to ensure uniformity of practice.
- 32 Assessment procedures are very good and the school makes good use of the information gained to ensure that the curriculum is delivered in a way understandable to all pupils. The school has made very considerable progress since the previous inspection. The assessment of pupils' achievements is now closely linked to the work done in class and provides a clear picture of pupils' progress in all subjects. Scrutiny of pupils' records shows that the progress recorded closely matches the progress observed in lessons. Although the internal assessment procedures are very good the school has not yet developed systems which will enable it to compare pupils' performance against that in similar schools. A data base has already been established for results in English and mathematics but the use of this data to make comparisons is still in its early stages. The participation of higher attaining pupils in the national assessment tests would give staff guidance on their achievements compared with those in other schools. The lack of accreditation means that pupils' achievements are not recognised on leaving school.
- 33 All pupils have an individual education plan. They are of very good quality and clearly reflect the learning targets established at the annual review meetings. The targets in the individual education plans are well written and give a clear picture of what pupils should achieve. Pupils' plans are formally reviewed on a regular basis and new targets are set when necessary.
- 34 The school successfully implements risk assessments. Detailed procedures are available to guide staff in lifting and handling procedures. School trips and visits abroad are well planned and great care is taken to ensure pupils' physical and medical safety.
- 35 There are excellent procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance. Registers are exceptionally well maintained so that any problems of irregular attendance are immediately highlighted. Each pupil's attendance is monitored and recorded in personal records.
- 36 Child protection procedures are very good. All staff receive training as part of their induction process and this ensures that staff handle issues in a sensitive manner. The health and safety policy is well documented and procedures are closely monitored by the Headteacher, site manager and the governing body. A few minor

health and safety concerns were noted during the inspection and were drawn to the attention of the Headteacher.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 37 In the questionnaires and at the pre-inspection meeting parents registered their very strong support for the school. All parents believe that the school is well led and managed and works closely with them. Inspection evidence supports parents' high levels of satisfaction with the way in which the school acts in partnership with them.
- 38 The school continues to put a great deal of thought into how it works with parents. For example it invites parents to contribute to the school development plan and listens carefully to any comments and suggestions made. The quality of information it provides for parents is very good. The home/school diaries promote very good communications and are used very effectively by staff to tell parents about what aspects of the day have gone well and if any difficulties have arisen. All letters and newsletters are written in a clear and accessible style and they keep parents up to date with school activities. However, there is less information about the school's curriculum and the topics that pupils will cover.
- 39 The prospectus and a very helpful induction programme in the Nursery give useful information about school routines, and invite parents to share any problems with teachers and support staff. There are consultation evenings each term where parents discuss the progress their child has made. Parents are given a very comprehensive annual report of their child's progress and there is a very good level of parental involvement in children's annual reviews. The vast majority of parents who replied to the questionnaire believe that the school gives them a clear understanding of what is taught and consider that they are well informed about their child's progress. All parents said they felt comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems.
- 40 A small number of parents would like more information about their children's progress on their integration programmes with mainstream schools and the school is actively considering ways of making this information more readily available. A few parents would also like to see more homework. The school is very sensitive to the differing needs of pupils and their parents, recognising that not all parents would welcome this.
- 41 Parents have a good impact on the work of the school. They are encouraged to become involved in the life of the school and the staff provide a warm welcome for them. Several make a regular commitment to help in school, for example by helping in classrooms or with swimming and they told inspectors that they felt appreciated and valued by staff.
- 42 There is an exceptionally active Friends' Association which not only helps to raise large sums of money but also cements very good relationships between parents and staff at social events. Pupils benefit not only from the generous funds raised on their behalf, but also by the quality of relationships formed between home and the school. Parents are very appreciative of the support given by all staff to the

Association's events and see this as very good evidence of the strength of the school's commitment to them as parents.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 43 Overall the leadership and management of the school is, as at the time of the previous inspection, very good. This fully supports the views of many parents, expressed at the meeting prior to the inspection. The leadership and management of the headteacher is excellent and the school benefits from his inspirational leadership and clear direction. He is supported very well by senior colleagues and the governors. His very strong commitment to the school is shared by the deputy headteacher and together they set appropriately high standards for themselves, staff and pupils. The educational direction of the school, particularly in relation to their work with mainstream schools, and the desire for excellence is shared by all and these aims are reflected in the quality of work being undertaken. The school's membership in a partnership of local schools reflects the outgoing vision of the school.
- 44 The monitoring of teaching and learning by the senior management, and those with responsibility for subject co-ordination, is rigorous and effective in having a very positive impact on the progress made by pupils. The staff have had training in how to observe teaching from both external trainers and from members of the local education authority. All staff benefit from the school's desire to be the best and they are provided with excellent opportunities to undertake training enabling them to meet the high expectations set by governors and the headteacher. This is reflected in the way they conduct themselves around the school and the very effective contribution that all staff make to the teaching and learning process.
- 45 The school has very good systems in place to plan ahead. These appropriately identify clear targets that are relevant and there is an excellent link to the school budgeting process. The annual plan is based on a review of the previous year's plan and embraces current national, as well as local initiatives. A strength of the process is the part that staff, governors and parents play in deciding upon school priorities. For example, both parents and governors receive a questionnaire and subject co-ordinators have the opportunity to contribute through their own subject development plans. The teaching staff participate in significant meetings to help finalise priorities. Although the review of planning at the end of the year is detailed and rigorous it does not fully assess the effects that developments and targets have on pupils' learning.
- 46 The governing body shares the headteacher's commitment to school improvement. It is not only very supportive of the headteacher but is also dynamic in its own work in the school. The governors are fully involved in, and knowledgeable about, the curriculum, the staffing and accommodation and the financial aspects of the school. They have been fully involved in the building programme and very successfully bring the views of business into the running of the school. Throughout all of this they maintain a clear vision of raising standards for the benefit of the pupils. The governors have great confidence in the headteacher and the decisions that he makes. However, they also measure the effectiveness of the school through their own monitoring systems, including inviting staff to meetings to deliver presentations. They consider themselves to be part of a team, with the staff, and this is clearly seen during discussions. The way in which they carry out their role has improved since the previous inspection. The governors do not report on Key Stage tests and assessments and there is no homework policy.
- 47 The school has successfully implemented the Performance Management process. Teaching and learning is regarded as a major focus in the school. Teachers are observed

teaching and are provided with feedback to agree targeted areas for development. Subsequent monitoring visits provide the opportunity to monitor the effectiveness of the implementation of the targets previously set. This contributes to the successful teaching seen in the school and is a significant improvement from the previous inspection.

- 48 The school makes very effective use of specific grants to support school planning and its Beacon School status. Day-to-day financial management is very good. The procedures for ordering equipment and resources are well known to staff and are managed effectively and efficiently. The school is also committed to the principles of 'best value' whenever the opportunity arises. There is appropriate delegation of financial controls to the headteacher,
- 49 The school has an appropriate number and range of qualified staff to ensure the curriculum is covered effectively. Teaching is largely class based and there is a good level of support from classroom support officers (CSOs) which ensures pupils of all abilities have access to the curriculum. Teamwork is strong within classrooms with both teachers and support staff working towards improving pupils' learning. The steady increase in pupil numbers has been matched by the training offered to staff including supporting staff on the Graduate Teaching Programme, one member of staff having successfully achieved qualified teacher status through this route, whilst another will begin training in September. All staff have access to and benefit from, the school's commitment to training.
- 50 There is a comprehensive induction programme for all new teaching and support staff covering the school's approaches to the curriculum and all matters related to pupil welfare. The programme is supported by the use of a mentoring system to ensure all training and support needs are met. Great emphasis is placed on teamwork and training and this is reflected in the commitment and enthusiasm of all staff to the shared values and aims of the school. The quality, commitment and enthusiasm of the CSOs has a very positive impact on the standards and overall development achieved by pupils. Progress since the last report has included the development of the role of the subject co-ordinator whose remit now includes a clear brief for monitoring and evaluating the delivery of their respective curricular areas across the school. Where CSOs are now involved directly in the teaching process they are clearly guided and supervised by teaching staff. The school continues to express its commitment to training with the recognition of the school's achievement in the nationally recognised Training Credit award for "Employer Commitment to Training".
- 51 The considerable growth of the school in recent years has led to the continued development of the school site with new subject specific facilities and class bases. The most recent addition to the accommodation has provided some excellent new classrooms and a resource base for music and facilitated the development of a drama studio / sensory room. The school's hydrotherapy pool provides a very good facility and is well used. Full use is also made of the grounds of the school which include well resourced play areas and a Zen garden for quiet reflection. There are other areas of the school site which are less suited for their intended purpose. There is insufficient storage space for dining room tables and chairs in the school hall and the facility for indoor physical education is therefore significantly restricted. There are no changing facilities for physical education. There are two libraries within the school, but these are small as is the subject

specialist room for design technology and art and, overall, this accommodation is unsatisfactory. However, the school has recognised these deficiencies and aims to address the issue with the next phase of development of the site. They use the available facilities well and have continued to refurbish and upgrade school premises whenever possible with the toilet facilities having recently been redecorated and upgraded. The site is very well maintained and kept in very good order. The very committed site manager and staff are supported well in their role by the headteacher and governors.

- 52 Resources within the school vary from excellent to unsatisfactory but overall are very good. The purpose built music room provides an excellent opportunity for pupils to be engaged in musical activity, whilst the resources in information and communication technology, science, maths and personal and social education are very good. The resources within English, art and design technology are good. The resources for history and geography are satisfactory but there is a lack of artefacts to enrich and enliven the delivery of the subjects. Good use is made of residential and off site trips to support these areas of the curriculum. The resources for religious education and a modern foreign language are unsatisfactory, with limited classroom materials and few artefacts to support the delivery of these aspects of the curriculum. The annual foreign residential trip provides an opportunity for pupils who have been studying a foreign language to set their learning in context.
- 53 Since the last inspection the school has established a good staff resource base which holds a wide range of materials to support the delivery of Science, English, Maths and Personal and Social Education. The facility also provides a staff work base to produce teaching materials and has ready access to the internet.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

Determine the achievement of pupils in a way that allows for national comparison with similar schools by:

- undertaking statutory assessments at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3, and (Paragraph 20, 32)
- providing opportunities for accreditation at 16 (Paragraphs 32, 68, 73, 79)

Fulfil statutory curriculum requirements by:

- increasing the opportunities for all pupils to undertake a modern foreign language at Key Stage 3 (Paragraphs 20,112)

Improve accommodation for indoor physical education, changing rooms, specialist rooms, library and associated storage. (Paragraphs 51, 66, 65, 85, 88,128)

The governors should also consider including the following minor issues in the action plan:

- providing a homework policy and
- reporting on pupils' results in the Governors' Annual Report to Parents .

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	52
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	47

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
6	37	45	12	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	81
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	12

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	4
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	2

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8	School data	0

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stages

Pupils are not entered for National Curriculum assessment tasks or tests.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	1
Indian	2
Pakistani	4
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	74
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.3
Average class size	8.4

Education support staff: YR – Y11

Total number of education support staff	22
Total aggregate hours worked per week	678

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000/01
	£
Total income	789379
Total expenditure	799246
Expenditure per pupil	10118
Balance brought forward from previous year	11504
Balance carried forward to next year	1637

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	81
Number of questionnaires returned	26

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	88	12			
My child is making good progress in school.	85	15			
Behaviour in the school is good.	65	35			
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	54	12	12		22
The teaching is good.	85	15			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	27	4		
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	92	8			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	81	19			
The school works closely with parents.	69	31			
The school is well led and managed.	96	4			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	27			4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	12	4		19

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

- 54 The quality of teaching for children in the Foundation Stage is very good and children make very good progress. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching in the Foundation Stage was judged to be mainly satisfactory and children made at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress. The quality of teaching and learning has therefore shown good improvement.

Personal and social education

- 55 Personal and social education is very good. Children settle well and are happy and confident in their groups. They develop an understanding of the daily routines and can choose books to look at or toys to play with. They interact well together according to their age and level of needs. One pupil takes a photograph of another pupil and helps her recognise herself from it during registration. Children respond well to the adults who work with them and show their enjoyment of the activities by smiling, gesture or voice even when undertaking challenging tasks. Staff are lively and enthusiastic and this is very effective in instilling confidence in the children. The atmosphere is relaxed but purposeful and expectations of pupils are high. Children are encouraged to be as independent as they are able to be in their personal care and in eating at lunchtimes. They are given responsibility, for instance, when they return the register to the office.

Communication, language and literacy

- 56 Children are encouraged to communicate with one another and with adults. Good use is made of home-school communication to initiate discussion about the previous evening's events. Adults create opportunities for children to respond to one another, for example by planning activities where children give out equipment to others. Good use is made of language support systems, such as pictures and symbols, and children who find communication more difficult are well supported in developing the necessary skills. Where appropriate, children are encouraged to eye point or communicate needs through gesture and staff are very sensitive in responding. There is a wide range of attainment in literacy. The more able pupils are able to identify the beginning sounds of words and a small number can copy accurately by overwriting the teacher's letters. All children enjoy stories about familiar characters and understand how to turn the pages of the book and that the print and pictures tell the story. They particularly like the books with sound effects.

Mathematical development

- 57 Children make very good progress in mathematical development. Most of their mathematics is addressed through individual learning programmes. Children show an interest in numbers and every opportunity to count is taken. Some can match numbers. Opportunities are planned for children to use language to describe position. Routines are established where adults accompany the children singing number rhymes.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 58 The provision to develop children's knowledge and understanding of the world is good. The environment is interesting and used well to provide a wide range of activities planned to attract the children's interest. The outside play area is well designed to facilitate the range of activities and help children's development. They explore this environment with confidence and increase their knowledge of direction within the school. Children listen with enjoyment to a range of sounds and respond with pleasure to familiar songs such as nursery rhymes. Most children can join the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle and fold paper such as pretend letters to fit into an envelope. According to their age and ability, children respond to questions about what they do at home and most offer information.

Physical development

- 59 The provision for children's physical development is very good. The very good quality of teaching provides children who have a range of complex needs with opportunity to develop physical skills that encourage independence. The wider curriculum is embedded in the established physical routines which one group of children works on each day. Hydrotherapy sessions and physical education are available to all children when they are encouraged to maximise their physical skills. In a very good PE lesson the staff used the outside play area very well and pupils could be seen becoming more adventurous as they explored how they could jump and balance. This was further extended as the teacher included very imaginative games that encouraged pupils to stretch. This was particularly well used to incorporate exercises for a pupil who had these exercises as individual targets in his physiotherapy programme.

Creative development

- 60 Although little opportunity was available to see pupils actively involved in creative development the scrutiny of work, including videos shows that progress in creative development is at least good. They listen to music and can respond by sign and gesture. Some children can join in by singing, clapping and playing percussion instruments. All enjoy singing familiar rhymes and songs to the accompaniment of adults. Displays in the classrooms show children's paintings and other art work.
- 61 Teaching and learning in the Foundation Stage is very good. During the inspection teaching and learning was never less than good and in a number of lessons, was very good. Lessons are well planned and teachers choose activities and resources that interest the children and give them a wide range of opportunities. Adults know the children very well and make sure that work is matched to their individual needs. All adults work very closely together and the children benefit from the effective and sensitive support. Assessment and recording systems are established and routinely used to ensure that children's progress is tracked. Teachers are well aware of the need to prepare children for the next stage in their education and plan well for them to participate in activities that will ensure a smooth transition. The department is organised very well and the curriculum is well planned and appropriately differentiated to meet both learning and physical needs. The staff have a clear view of the priorities for future development.
- 62 There is an appropriate level of well qualified staff in this area of the school. The accommodation, although small, provides a very pleasant environment in which to

deliver the curriculum and good use is being made of the room. Outside play facilities are very good. Resources are good for the number and needs of pupils.

ENGLISH

- 63 All pupils achieve well and make at least good, and often very good, progress in English. This is due to the quality of teaching and reflects the commitment the school has to developing pupils' communication skills and the way in which the National Literacy Strategy has been incorporated into lessons for pupils up to the age of fourteen. Since the last inspection there has been an improvement in the quality of teaching for pupils aged five to seven and fourteen to sixteen and this is clearly having an impact on the progress being made by these pupils.
- 64 Pupils' achievements in speaking and listening are frequently very good. They are confident and respond positively to adults and peers using speech, sign, symbol, sound or movement. More able pupils at age seven have a good grasp of language that enables them to direct others effectively. These skills are gradually developed and by the age of sixteen those pupils with higher level language skills communicate effectively using complex sentences in order to put across their point of view. To encourage the development of communication skills staff work closely with the speech and language therapist in developing individual programmes to enable pupils to learn specific and relevant skills. In addition, all pupils participate in group activities during which adults use an appropriate range of communication aids, for instance, sign, symbol and objects of reference, with the most able pupils responding to and using language. Teachers have an excellent knowledge of the pupils' individual needs. The careful planning ensures that support staff are effectively deployed so that all pupils can participate in lessons and make progress.
- 65 The school makes very good provision for pupils to develop reading skills. From the early years pupils are taught to use a range of strategies which will enable them to enjoy books, to access information and to gain understanding. Reading is taught through the school's very well structured reading programme. This starts with establishing pre-reading skills and takes pupils through seven stages to reach the level of free reading. More able pupils aged seven are starting to read and recognise words out of context. Using the pictures they identify characters and answer simple questions. Pupils with more complex needs are identifying characters in books by selecting the correct one from a choice of two. By the age of eleven a few pupils can read confidently using their knowledge of letters and sounds to identify new or unfamiliar words. Pupils gradually develop confidence in reading and by the age of fourteen those pupils who can read simple texts fluently make comments about what they are reading, demonstrating understanding. By the age of sixteen more able pupils have made excellent progress and confidently select books according to interest. When reading a play they know the function of punctuation and respond appropriately to exclamation marks and question marks. Expression is used to great effect so that the listener is left in no doubt as to which character is speaking and there is clear indication that reading is a pleasure.
- 66 All pupils have access to books in their classrooms and these reflect the wide range of reading ability and interest. However, while there is a library for senior pupils this is poorly equipped and organised. There is no encouragement or provision for pupils to work independently or to use the library to further develop their knowledge on specific topics. Although older pupils are encouraged to use a local library there are missed opportunities for all pupils to develop the skills necessary to use a library effectively to find both fiction and non-fiction material independently.

- 67 Pupils make good progress in writing following the school's developmental programme. Pupils up to the age of seven use a range of means to record their understanding of a familiar story. Words and symbols are used effectively together to support all pupils and the few pupils who are at the early stages of writing can complete simple worksheets by selecting and copying given words into text. More able pupils aged twelve are able to write a simple account of a residential visit. The majority of the pupils know what they want to write but need to copy the text. One higher achieving pupil writes independently using capital letters and full stops appropriately. Pupils also use their interest in insects to produce a class book about them, using their knowledge of the format of nonfiction books to create an index and contents page. Between the ages of 14 and 16 pupils are learning to use writing for a range of purposes in preparation for adult life. Thus all pupils are encouraged to contribute to the commentary used when producing a calendar to raise funds for the school. Although there is a developmental programme for writing there are missed opportunities within lessons for pupils to use computers or communication aids to support them in the recording and presentation of events or imaginative work.
- 68 Teachers' planning in English is comprehensive and takes into account the different learning needs within the class. The most effective lessons follow the literacy hour format and involve all pupils at an appropriate level. More able pupils work cooperatively in small groups while individual skills are developed within structured teaching programmes. The pace of lessons is brisk, the content stimulating and this results in pupils maintaining their concentration. Pupils' progress within individual learning programmes is recorded carefully as work is completed. There is no formal recording of pupils' progress within group activities on a daily or weekly basis but the school's assessment records are updated by staff every six weeks. Individual Record of Achievement sheets are also completed for pupils and are shared with parents. However, there are no opportunities for the oldest pupils to gain external accreditation in English.
- 69 The management of English is very good. The coordinator regularly observes lessons, monitors planning and reports back to teachers offering advice and support in order to raise standards in the subject. The subject coordinator trains teachers new to the school, supporting them with their planning in English. There is a good range of resources to support the teaching of English at both the individual and group level. The school has an appropriate range of big books with school made additional resources to extend pupils' learning and meet the needs of all pupils.

MATHEMATICS

- 70 Pupils make very good progress and achieve very well throughout the school. The quality of teaching is very good and occasionally excellent. The quality of teaching and learning is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. Pupils enjoy numeracy lessons and try hard because they achieve well and receive praise for their efforts. Teachers ensure that pupils understand the arrangements for lessons very well and this means that they are confident as they work individually with staff or work together in groups. By the age of seven, higher attaining pupils can join in mental arithmetic parts of lessons to answer questions, such as placing numbers up to twenty in order. During one lesson, they co-operated very well in pairs, throwing small cubes into a bucket. Through effective support from the teacher, they began to understand that they could count their team's score to see who won. Classroom support officers form part of the effective teaching team, supporting individuals or leading group sessions. For instance, they guide individual pupils to work towards achieving targets, such as adding one to three, and writing the answer. Lower attaining pupils, often with profound learning difficulties, make very good

progress matching objects and pictures as they select them from a bag, through consistent support and encouragement. Pupils respond very well to the high expectations for them to behave and this enables them to get on well with each other and concentrate on their work to complete a significant amount of work each lesson.

- 71 Teachers have very high expectations for pupils to learn and plan lessons very effectively. There was exceptionally good planning for a lesson for pupils aged eight. A group of pupils listened to the explanations very well so that they made excellent attempts to estimate how many small toys up to twenty that they observed briefly. Through very thoughtful help, pupils became aware that they could alter their next guess by making the estimate larger or smaller. They made excellent progress as they moved on to estimating more groups of objects with greater accuracy. Other pupils make excellent progress working on individual targets such as selecting written figures to match spoken numbers up to twenty. Pupils improve their skills in using computers very effectively as they draw geometrical shapes on the screen using the mouse to choose the size and shape. Since there is a whole school commitment to effective planning, pupils continue to make very good progress as they move through the school. Lower attaining pupils aged eleven continue to follow tasks to promote understanding of matching objects, for instance by colour. Higher attaining pupils move on to more challenging tasks such as adding together numbers up to ten.
- 72 Teachers have secure knowledge in promoting numeracy and this means that they can explain new tasks very effectively. There is a good emphasis upon providing opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills. For instance, pupils understand their performance in fitness training much better by looking at graphs of their efforts, noticing the day they did not try so hard. Throughout the school, teachers and classroom support officers provide very good opportunities in promoting number language and the practical application of skills. Lessons in science for instance exemplify the high expectations for pupils to use correct expressions such as tally charts to record their survey of insects. The planning for personal education provides further progress in the practical application of number for instance when they go shopping or when older pupils take turns to make drinks for everyone.
- 73 The co-ordinator manages the subject very well. Planning is much better than at the time of the previous inspection. The school has introduced the National Numeracy Strategy well, adapting the approach effectively to match pupils' needs. The provision of resources, particularly those made by teachers, is very good and makes a significant contribution to promoting pupils' progress. The monitoring of teaching is very good and has contributed very well to making changes to lessons and planning to enable pupils to make better progress. The arrangements for assessment are good overall and very good when monitoring pupils' individual targets for learning. There has been a good start to using national assessments to begin to see how the pupils achieve in relation to other schools. However, they have not been in place long enough to show progress over time. Although pupils achieve very well by the time they leave the school, there is an absence of external accreditation to record their achievement.

SCIENCE

- 74 The previous report judged pupils progress to be good overall with effective teaching. Strong and imaginative management which places an emphasis on developing teachers' skills has successfully improved both the quality of teaching

and the level of pupils' achievements. Both are now very good and, during the inspection, excellent teaching was observed.

- 75 An example of this improvement are the lessons given to younger pupils. Between the ages of five and seven pupils achieve very well in their development of the scientific skills of experimentation, observation and recording. In their work on different types of materials, for example, pupils were very effectively challenged when asked to select materials that stop the leak in a bucket. The organised way in which pupils approached their task, combined with their excitement when successful, is a very good illustration of the clear planning of the lesson combined with the high expectations of the teaching.
- 76 An analysis of the pupils' work shows that they make very good progress and achieve well from an initial low level of understanding. Teachers place great emphasis on pupils undertaking their own experiments and investigating for themselves. The success of this approach is well illustrated by the achievement of eleven year old pupils in answering the question, "why are objects shaped as they are?", by comparing how a soccer ball and a rugby ball are used, and when sixteen year old pupils give consideration to the effects of putting plants in a cold place. It is noteworthy that, in the latter experiment, higher attaining pupils had developed the concept of the "fair test" by recognising that plants could not be put in a refrigerator as this would also deprive them of light.
- 77 Pupils' ability to record information is also well developed. By the age of seven higher attaining pupils are making marks on paper to record judgements and pupils with more complex needs are using symbols very well to illustrate both choices and results. By the age of eleven pupils record information in tables and higher attaining pupils are using tally charts as a way of displaying data. The more able sixteen year old pupils are writing their own results and those with more complex needs are copying sentences with some accuracy. Pupils enjoyment of investigative work is particularly beneficial to pupils with more complex learning needs as it gives them opportunities to practise their communication skills and to work in groups.
- 78 The quality of teaching and learning is very good with a number of strengths that account for the pupils' very good achievements. Teaching is based on very good knowledge both of science and of the pupils. This enables teachers to ensure that all pupils are challenged by the use of probing questions and that the work set is closely matched to the ability of the individual pupil. This occurred in a lesson for year seven pupils when they were considering the results of an insect hunt carried out on a recent residential visit. Higher attaining pupils discussed their work and entered the results into tables, and the pupils with more complex learning needs were encouraged to remember by having them smell a mixture of grass and herbs. This approach also illustrates the importance that the teachers attach to the inclusion of all pupils. Classroom support officers provide those pupils with more complex learning needs with assistance of very high quality and enable them to derive full benefit from the lessons.
- 79 Pupils' work is assessed carefully and accurately tracks the development of pupils' skills. However, there is a need to provide senior pupils with opportunities to undertake an externally accredited examination so that they gain recognition of the very good progress they make.
- 80 Science is very well managed. The coordinator is largely responsible for the improvement of standards by the improvement of curriculum planning and teachers'

subject knowledge. In this she has been supported by the strong commitment of the staff. An example of this is the preparation of a "Science Signpost" symbol book by a member of the support staff to ensure the full involvement of pupils with communication difficulties. The coordinator has correctly identified the need to further develop the use of computers into the teaching of science.

ART AND DESIGN

- 81 Pupils' achievement is often very good over time. Although only a small number of lessons were seen, pupils make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is now good throughout the school and this represents a good level of improvement since the previous inspection. Teachers plan lessons well based on the database of content for the work. It ensures that small group work effectively enables pupils to create art using different materials, such as collage, printing, wax resist and three dimensional work as well as different ways of drawing and painting. As a result of their imaginative use of resources, pupils produce individual products, for instance when they produce pictures using acrylic and glass paints on acetate. There are excellent examples of three dimensional work involving the use of sound and information and communication technology.
- 82 Teachers manage to retain pupils' interest through the good pace of the lesson and the provision of opportunities for them to take part in a variety of activities. Pupils who have complex needs receive help from support assistants. They work with them effectively to ensure that they make the same progress as others in the class. In a good lesson involving observational drawing pupils make good progress. The teacher provides a very good range of resources, including photographs of sections of faces to be used as reference material. Pupils observe each other's features, such as the position of the facial features and create a pencil drawing of the other pupils in sketchbooks. This also provides very good opportunities for students to develop relationships as they have to volunteer to take turns to model themselves.
- 83 Pupils have good opportunities to create art in the style of famous artists, for instance when they produce large sculptures based on the work of Michelangelo following their visit to Florence. Other pupils decide on designs based on the work of Miro. Relationships are excellent as pupils discuss their intentions with special support assistants and the teacher. They decide, when using glass paint, about the design they want to use and make judgements about what they like.
- 84 The co-ordinator, who is responsible for the creative department, provides good leadership for the subject and has ensured that provision for pupils to learn is better than at the previous inspection. They now have better opportunities to study the work of well known artists and craftspeople. The coordinator provides advice and support for other staff, checks the planning and visits teachers to monitor the delivery of the subject. Although there is a substantial database of topics for teachers to follow, there is not an overall framework describing what should be taught and when.
- 85 Resources for the subject are good and are often acquired for specific projects. Pupils produced some very impressive work with an artist in residence. The work is very imaginative and the use of paint on canvas values the work that they

produced. The provision of an gallery where this work is displayed is excellent. There are good displays of work throughout the school often displayed in imaginative ways, and contributing to the pleasant surroundings. Although the art room is small and unsuitable, staff use accommodation imaginatively to ensure that pupils experience a good range of materials and work.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 86 Due to timetable constraints only a limited amount of teaching was observed in this subject. However, analysis of pupils' work shows that the level of pupils' achievements has improved and the need for "opportunities for extended learning" identified in the previous report have been successfully addressed.
- 87 Great emphasis is placed on having tasks that are both relevant and immediate to the pupils. Examples of this are the making of moveable Father Christmas toys by seven year old pupils, the design and construction of a Klingon battle tank by eleven year old pupils and the construction of a load bearing bridge by sixteen year old pupils.
- 88 In each year group the teaching promotes and encourages pupils to design. This is evident from the very youngest pupils who can choose materials to make pneumatically powered vehicles and older pupils between the age of seven and eleven who can use their design skills to establish what a machine needs to fly, producing a range of aeroplane designs. By sixteen pupils' design skills are sophisticated enough to investigate and experiment with the production of a water feature for the school garden. Pupils' skills when making items also demonstrate an increasing independence so that, by the age of eleven, pupils are successfully using equipment such as hand drills, hammers and screwdrivers and by sixteen they can saw wood accurately as well as using drills to establish a system of piping.
- 89 Teachers effectively encourage pupils to evaluate products. Pupils in year 10, for example, designed and made a working full size chair. In their evaluation of the model they had established that the shape of the base of the chair would have to be strong and needed to be a cylinder. Pupils in year 6 evaluated the use of a range of materials for different purposes and were able to divide them into categories, such as paper and tin, for the packaging of a range of materials. By year 11 pupils are evaluating the effectiveness of their design of a bridge by their own hand-written accounts.
- 90 Food technology is used well to extend pupils' knowledge of other cultures. A wide range of dishes, such as Mexican tortillas and Jewish food for the feast of Hanukkah, provide them with a good range of opportunities for designing and evaluating. Good teaching establishes basic principles very early as is demonstrated by the realisation of seven year old pupils that failure to follow the instructions properly, when baking a sponge cake, results in disaster!
- 91 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has been successful in developing teachers' planning to ensure a balance of theory and practical work whilst monitoring teaching to ensure the maintenance of standards. The school is well aware, through a careful system of risk assessments that both the food technology

room and the workshop are currently too small. The coordinator also recognises the need to further develop the use of computers in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

- 92 Geography is taught on an alternating termly programme with history. This is a good improvement from the previous inspection. Planning for the subject is supported by the geography curriculum database which has recently been revised and updated. Teachers use the database to monitor, support and guide their teaching.
- 93 Primary age pupils work on mapping skills and are given the opportunity to direct small groups of pupils around the school using the appropriate directional instructions. Higher attaining pupils achieve this task confidently whilst the support for the lower attaining pupils ensures they have a full and active part in the lesson. In preparation for the practical part of the lesson pupils identify specific class bases and work areas using a plan of the school and picture representations of the activities that take place there. For the older primary age pupils work focuses on preparation for residential visits to Kings Lynn and Hunstanton. The class compares their own town with the two towns to be visited using maps produced from the internet. No geography lessons were observed in the secondary part of the school during the time of the inspection. Evidence within books and from reports indicates that pupils continue to develop a range of geographical skills in considering and comparing different towns and countries. The extensive use of off site and residential visits provides pupils with first hand experience of the places they have been studying.
- 94 Teaching and learning is very good. All lessons were well planned and allowed pupils of all abilities to achieve well. In lessons where teaching is very good pupils are fully engaged in locating different parts of the school from a plan previously drafted, using the correct language and identifying and locating places within the school from pictures, having a range of activities and resources available. The focus of the lesson was to reinforce the proximity of the town they were to visit to the sea. The use of fresh fish and a variety of tinned fish enlivened the lesson and ensured that pupils were attentive and focused on the activities offered. The group using the internet used the directional terms north, south, east and west correctly when identifying the route they would take to get to the sea.
- 95 The resources for the subject rely heavily on off site visits and those produced by individual teachers. The central store of resources is unsatisfactory, there are few artefacts or subject specific materials. There is no planned development of these resources as the coordinator responds to requests made by teachers in the middle of the work they are doing. However the wide use of the local community and the good quality resources produced by individual teachers does provide a satisfactory resource base from which to teach the subject.
- 96 The recent focus on humanities as part of the whole school cycle of subject review resulted in a revision and updating of the curriculum database. However, there is still a lack of an overview from which progress through the subject can be more easily checked. The good use of verbal assessment and feedback in lessons

ensures that pupils receive immediate and appropriate feedback on their performance.

HISTORY

- 97 History is taught on a termly alternating programme with geography. During the week of the inspection there were few opportunities to observe history being taught however the evidence from pupil records, lesson observation and discussion with the subject co-ordinator indicated that pupils' experience of history is good.
- 98 The teaching and learning that was observed was very good and showed that pupils were building on previous learning and extending their knowledge of medieval times. Pupils identify differences in lifestyles and buildings and use subject and period specific language. Pupils refer to the moat around the castle, the use of bows and arrows and recall that this was called archery. Pupils' learning is consolidated through an extensive range of off site trips and residential experiences. The recent visit to Sherwood Forest and previous visits to Tintagel castle in Cornwall provided a very good point of reference for pupils to set their learning in context.
- 99 Resources for the teaching of history are satisfactory and are either based in classrooms or are produced by staff for the specific topic being taught. The central resource of artefacts and materials contains a limited amount of materials to support staff in their teaching. However, class based resources are satisfactory and include a range of books and practical materials. In the lesson observed pupils made a section of a castle wall with interlocking foam tiles whilst another group made a section of wattle and daub wall using straw and mud on a purpose built frame.
- 100 Since the last inspection the school has established a database of ideas and activities to assist staff in the teaching of the subject. The database supports the programme of topics identified in the curriculum framework for the school. The coverage of history is based mainly on primary age content. Whilst this provides staff with an appropriate level at which to focus work it does not allow coverage of the wider range of contexts available for older pupils.
- 101 Assessment of pupil performance is based on the end of term group activity sheets. The sheets indicate what pupils have covered and their performance within the topic and indicate the progress and achievements that pupils have made over time. There is no framework against which the breadth of the curriculum can be checked or guidance on what should be taught and when.
- 102 Leadership and management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator monitors the classroom delivery of history and provides support and guidance to those who request it. Resources are obtained based on staff requests and response to topics and themes being followed. Extensive use is made of the local community and off site trips in the teaching of history. Pupils are increasingly using the internet to search and find information for their studies. The use of information and communication technology in delivering the subject has a positive impact on pupils' learning.

- 103 Overall progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. The creation of the curriculum database and the recent review of the humanities curriculum as part of the ongoing cycle of curriculum review has supported the teaching of history across the school. The continued lack of an overall framework for the subject against which pupils' experience and achievement can be checked has not been addressed.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 104 The continued commitment to the development of ICT across the school has involved increasing the range and use of equipment within classes. Pupils use a variety of resources, including laptop computers, digital cameras, the internet and video, with confidence and purpose.
- 105 Pupils are taught at an early stage to be as independent as possible and to show initiative when using the computer. Higher attaining pupils up to the age of seven make very good progress in operating a mouse to select icons to open and close programs and are able to work independently on the tasks set as part of their individual programmes. The lower attaining pupils use switches to activate cassette recorders and light and sound machines to show their involvement and engagement in the activity being undertaken. Good use is made of electronic recording devices to maintain contact between home and school for the lower attaining pupils.
- 106 Between the ages of seven and eleven pupils continue to show an increasing level of skill and competence on the computer. Higher attaining pupils access the internet and search for specific information related to their work in geography. They research and acquire information to compare their own town with that of a coastal town which will be visited as part of a residential experience later in the term. Lower attaining pupils operate switches by moving their head to either side to make choices between activities.
- 107 By the time they are fourteen higher attaining pupils are able to open and close programs, use the digital camera and increase their usage of the email facility. Pupils are able to locate and select the appropriate program to access the class mailbox and send and receive email messages. The oldest higher attaining pupils are able to manipulate text pictures and video applications on the computer with confidence. A video clip was edited by a year 11 pupil which was to be sent to another pupil who was unable to attend school. Many of the skills and competencies were of an exemplary nature. During an English lesson the computer was used to replay a video clip of themselves to a small group of pupils who were working on speech marks. Pupils were involved in editing the clip, slowing the speech on the video to ensure that it was audible to the group.
- 108 The teaching and learning of information and communication technology is very good across the whole school. The high level of skill of staff has enabled a culture in which the use of information and communication technology across most of the curriculum is established. This manifests itself in the work of the pupils and of the staff. The training and expertise of the staff in using information and

communication technology has had a significant impact on the ability of the pupils to learn and acquire the skills necessary to be as computer literate as they are capable.

- 109 The curriculum for information and communication technology is based on a database of targets and ideas used to identify pupil learning and to ensure an appropriate route for progressing pupils' skills and knowledge. The identified targets for individual pupils are carefully monitored and are recorded and assessed appropriately. The assessment and recording of pupil progress is good overall. Targets are monitored regularly and indicate the progress pupils are making. More detailed ongoing assessment would give greater clarity to the nature of the task completed and the date at which the skill was acquired.
- 110 Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The coordinator has worked within a local partnership of schools to develop a plan for the continued development of information and communication technology, matching both school and partnership needs. Its use is checked through regular visits to classrooms to discuss pupil targets and to offer support for staff through providing ongoing training. The support and training provided has significantly helped staff and they show a very good level of competence and confidence in using the equipment available to them.
- 111 The commitment referred to in the previous inspection report has been maintained and is now embedded within the culture of the school. All staff value the contribution information and communication technology makes to the learning and achievements of pupils and are keen to develop their own skills and expertise. The good start previously identified has been successfully built upon and it continues to be very well used in the school.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

- 112 A modern foreign language is only taught to the pupils who are taking part in the annual European residential visit and no lessons were observed during the inspection. Pupils between the ages of fourteen and sixteen who visited Florence this year learned some Italian words and phrases as part of their preparation, but there is no scheme of work or assessment to enable progress in the target language to be clearly identified. The lack of long term planning with regards to the country which will be visited for the European residential, means that pupils do not have the chance to study the language or culture of the target country until the term prior to their visit. Thus, pupils between twelve and fourteen will not have the opportunity to study an additional language until next year. This limits their access to the programme of study for a modern foreign language and does not meet statutory requirements.

MUSIC

- 113 Pupils' achievement in music is very good. They make very good progress in lessons throughout the school. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when progress was judged to be good in an overall judgement on creative subjects. Although only two lessons were able to be seen during the

inspection, a few of the staff are competent musicians and this ensures that the quality of teaching is very good and at times excellent. There is significant video evidence of many productions in the school with all pupils participating and achieving high levels of performance in relation to their learning needs.

- 114 Pupils make very good progress up to the age of eleven. They are accustomed to singing welcome songs and these provide a good opportunity for them to relax in preparation for their lesson. They enjoy singing to accompaniment, while those who have needs that are more complex smile in recognition of familiar song.
- 115 Teachers plan lessons imaginatively and keep pupils' attention through interesting changes in activities. In one excellent lesson, for pupils between eleven and fourteen, the teacher planned an exciting and stimulating lesson that created a desire in the pupils to participate. There were detailed objectives and the work was matched to the pupils' differing abilities so that signs were used effectively to help those with communication difficulties. Those with profound difficulties were helped by classroom support officers to contribute to the percussion accompaniment. The activities were motivating to the pupils so that the warm-up exercises included the "Coca Cola Rap".
- 116 The co-ordinator manages the subject very effectively and is supported by staff who use music well throughout the day. This support is evident when pupils sing to reinforce rhymes in literacy and to accompany counting in numeracy lessons. Pupils have very good opportunities to experience a wide range of music. There are extremely effective arrangements for them to perform; for example when they play and sing in the many performances that they produce in the school. Resources are very good for the subject having been recently enhanced along with the addition of an excellent music room

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

- 117 Achievement is very good. Pupils make very good progress in personal, social and health education and in careers education and guidance by the time that they leave school at sixteen. They make very good progress towards developing independence, and higher attaining pupils demonstrate initiative. This is a result of the very effective provision and pupils' own responses to the opportunities provided throughout the life of the school. Planning is very good and ensures that pupils continue to make very good progress as they move through the school, building upon what they have already learnt. The quality of teaching is very good.
- 118 There is a very good emphasis upon promoting relevant skills. For instance, the youngest pupils learn how to cross local roads safely on their route to the shops. They showed pleasure when a pupil with more complex needs succeeded in pushing the button at the pelican crossing. All classes have regular opportunities to learn skills to prepare food from the ingredients they purchase. Although lessons for younger pupils do not always draw out the health implications of the food they are preparing this becomes a much more central part of lessons as pupils get older. Since pupils are so well prepared and behave exceptionally well, teachers give them responsibility for aspects such as measuring quantities and mixing ingredients. Staff guide older pupils effectively as they prepare lunch for

themselves, and this helps them with skills of household management and self help skills that will be useful in the future.

- 119 Lessons encourage pupils to develop particularly good cooperative skills, working together to solve problems. The excellent example set by all staff and the high quality of relationships between all pupils and staff make a very significant contribution to the success of lessons. Pupils are helped to build up their self esteem very well and to understand how they change, as they grow older. For instance, the teacher skilfully introduced games to enable pupils aged twelve to begin to look for differences between ages of people. This was effective preparation for the future, for pupils to learn about changes to the body at puberty.
- 120 In a lesson promoting sex education for the oldest pupils, the teacher provided very good resources, using manikins to illustrate changes that occur to the body during adolescence. Because the teaching was sensitive and respectful, pupils developed a mature attitude to discussion and enabled them to answer questions sensibly. The pupils receive effective guidance from the careers service and through lessons that are very suitable for their age. For instance, they learn about the world of work, role-playing jobs in the community. They gained a very good insight into how they would cope when working as a travel agent. Pupils undertook their roles seriously to understand the types of questions that people ask the staff in the shop.
- 121 The opportunities for all pupils to spend part of the week in other local schools makes a very significant contribution to promoting pupils' social skills in the wider community. The extensive range of residential trips that pupils experience provide excellent opportunities for them to practise their skills of helping others and taking more responsibility for their own care.
- 122 The co-ordinator manages the subject very well and this is evident in the consistent approach of all staff, enabling pupils to build on their learning as they move through the school. Although the school celebrates pupils' very good achievement, there is no provision for external accreditation to give pupils further recognition of their success.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 123 Pupils achieve well in lessons throughout the school. They achieve particularly well in swimming. The quality of teaching is good and very good in swimming. Overall, this represents a good improvement since the previous inspection.
- 124 The youngest pupils make good progress in gymnastics. They take turns very well as they move around a circuit of skittles to warm up. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions accurately to climb up and jump off apparatus on to mats, improving their speed of completing the tasks as they try them again. Lessons plans, for instance for pupils aged eight, clearly set out what each pupil should achieve each week so that they build up skills. There is a good emphasis upon encouraging pupils to describe their intended actions and this provides good practice in speaking and for them to listen to each other. Relationships are excellent, being evident in the way that they encouraged each other during their lesson. By the time they are eleven, pupils participate well in a good range of

activities, such as athletics, making good progress. Staff encourage lower attaining pupils to join in, praising them for their efforts, enabling them to make equally good progress towards the early stages of competition.

- 125 Pupils achieve very well in swimming. The instructor has very good expertise to encourage pupils to improve their strokes. Teachers and classroom support officers provide significant support in lessons, taking responsibility for pupils to encourage them to improve their confidence in the water and develop swimming techniques. Several higher attaining pupils achieve national standards by swimming 25 metres before the age of eleven. By the time they leave school, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of basic survival techniques, including how to rescue each other from the pool.
- 126 The oldest pupils participate in a good variety of games and sports. They join pupils aged between twelve and fourteen to learn a range of small team games such as football. The planning for recent lessons shows an improvement in the way that teachers plan to promote pupils' understanding of rules and tactics. This is a positive outcome from the coordinator's monitoring role and is leading to higher achievement. There is some very effective checking of pupils' progress in fitness training when they use exercise machines. Pupils can identify their progress easily by looking at the graphs of their performance and this facilitates discussion of how to improve further.
- 127 Pupils receive a generous allocation of time for physical education lessons and swimming to promote their progress. Older pupils enjoy the additional activities provided at lunchtimes such as parachute games and cricket. Pupils have very good opportunities to participate in a wide range of outdoor activities on the many visits to residential centres. Physiotherapists contribute effectively to promoting pupils' physical development through individual work with pupils. Although the school recognises pupils' achievements well through its own awards for swimming, pupils do not have the opportunity to achieve nationally recognised awards to celebrate their considerable achievements.
- 128 The co-ordinator manages the subject well. The monitoring of planning is effective, leading to changes to improve lessons and hence pupils' progress. The swimming pool is very good, staffed by a very good instructor. This enables pupils to receive effective instruction, contributing significantly to their very good progress. Since there is a shortage of storage, there are too many items such as tables, chairs and equipment stored in the hall. This reduces the space available significantly, to enable teachers to provide a wider range of opportunities for physical development such as running or playing games and prevents pupils making better progress. There are no changing rooms for physical education lessons. This is unsatisfactory for older pupils and makes it more difficult for teachers to fulfil planning to promote self-help skills such as dressing, especially for younger pupils.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 129 The school has made satisfactory improvements in its provision for religious education since the last inspection. Religious education is taught to all pupils through short lessons at the beginning of the day after registration. It follows the

theme of the week, which is also used in assembly and is closely linked to citizenship and personal and social education. Pupils make satisfactory progress within a limited curriculum.

- 130 During the week of the inspection the theme was 'Changes' and pupils throughout the school used photos, video clips and self-portraits to consider how they had changed over time. Pupils with well developed language skills aged seven could reflect on what skills they had developed over the year while lower attaining pupils were able to react with smiles and gesture to videos showing them swimming or working in the classroom. Older pupils in Year 9 used speech or appropriate communication aids to identify what they like to do and how they will change as they get older. Those pupils leaving school at the end of the summer term reflected on their school career and discussed what they would be doing in the future.
- 131 Teaching in religious education is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. The best lessons are characterised by good planning which takes into account the wide range of needs within the class and incorporates an appropriate range of resources to stimulate pupils and maintain their interest.
- 132 There is no clear leadership for religious education. The school follows the Oxford Agreed syllabus for religious education but is limited in its content and does not have a clear framework of what should be taught and when over a pupil's life in the school. Although the requirement to teach religious education to all pupils has been addressed, insufficient attention has been paid to how pupils with a wide range of difficulties can access this subject. Resources are limited both in scope and sufficiency and do not provide the stimulation necessary to enable all pupils to experience different religions and beliefs from their own community or the wider world.