

# **INSPECTION REPORT**

**OLD HALL COMMUNITY SCHOOL**

**Bentley Lane, Walsall**

**LEA area: Walsall**

**Unique reference number: 104274**

**Headteacher: Phil Nickless**

**Lead inspector: Adrian Simm**

**Dates of inspection: 17<sup>th</sup> – 19<sup>th</sup> May 2004**

**Inspection number: 258963**

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2½ to 14 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	89
School address:	Bentley Lane Walsall West Midlands
Postcode:	WS2 7LU
Telephone number:	01902 368045
Fax number:	01902 634144
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr M Marshall
Date of previous inspection:	4 <sup>th</sup> May 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Old Hall Community School educates 56 boys and 33 girls aged 3 to 14 years who have severe and profound learning difficulties. Around nine per cent of pupils have autistic spectrum disorders (ASD). The number of pupils with complex learning needs has grown since the last inspection. Pupils come from the west and centre of Walsall and mostly travel by local authority transport. Thirty-eight per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is high. Pupils' attainment on entry is very low in comparison to their chronological age. Thirty-six per cent of pupils come from family backgrounds other than white British. Just over nine per cent of pupils have English as an additional language. For these pupils, the principal languages are Panjabi and Urdu. They are at the very early stages of communication and language development and are at the same level of language learning as other pupils. Nearly all pupils have statements of special educational needs. A small minority of pupils is placed at the school for assessment of their needs. It is less than two years since the current headteacher was appointed and the deputy headteacher has been in post for 18 months. The school is involved in a range of initiatives that include:

- An effective early years programme.
- Inclusion work with local mainstream schools.

The school has achieved the following awards:

- Investors in people in 2000
- Active Award in 2001

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
21138	Adrian Simm	Lead inspector	Foundation Stage Religious education Physical education
13746	David Russell	Lay inspector	
10782	Henry Moreton	Team inspector	Science Music
27409	Sue Hunt	Team inspector	English Geography History English as an additional language
30559	Jennifer Taylor	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Personal, social and health education Special educational needs
10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Modern foreign language (French)

**The inspection contractor was:**

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## **REPORT CONTENTS**

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>11</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE</b>	
<b>SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 and 3.</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>26</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

Old Hall is a **good** school with some very good features. Overall all pupils achieve well in the subjects that were the focus of the inspection. They achieve well because of the good teaching that they receive and the good pace of learning. The headteacher, who is a very effective leader, has ensured that the school has improved well since the last inspection. The school is very successful at promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. As a result, pupils achieve very well in their personal and social development. The school's funding is reasonable and governors of the school use their budget to good effect. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- Staff have very good relationships with pupils. This leads to very good attitudes and behaviour. As a result, the pupils' personal and social development is very good.
- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well. Pupils throughout the school achieve very well in English.
- In comparison with the strengths in other subjects, pupils' achievement in religious education, whilst satisfactory, could be stronger.
- The headteacher is highly committed to moving the school forward and raising achievement for all pupils including those with more complex learning difficulties and those with English as an additional language.
- The strategies for improving pupils' overall attendance could be even more effective.
- Very good links with parents, other schools and colleges and the community enrich pupils' learning.
- Whilst school accommodation is satisfactory overall, there is no specialist accommodation for pupils in Years 7 to 9 in science, design and technology and art and design. Changing facilities for those pupils who need high levels of hygiene support are in need of improvement.

The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Overall effectiveness, achievement and the quality of teaching and learning have improved. This is most obvious in the Foundation Stage and in mathematics. High achievement in English has been maintained. Achievement in religious education remains satisfactory. Most development issues have been successfully addressed although pupils' changing facilities for physical education remain basic.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 6	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>Good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

Pupils' achievement is **good**. Children achieve very well in the Foundation Stage, as do pupils in Years 1 to 9 in reading and communication. All pupils achieve very well in personal and social development, which permeates the whole of school life. They achieve well in writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. In religious education, pupils' achievement is satisfactory. It is not stronger, partly because of the shortage of time available for this subject. Achievement in other subjects was not the focus of the inspection. Boys and girls, those with English as an additional language and pupils with differing special educational needs achieve equally well. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Their attitudes to school and their behaviour are very good. Attendance is satisfactory overall. It is affected understandably by the absence of a small number of pupils with severe medical conditions.

It is also affected detrimentally by the absence of a small but significant number of pupils whose parents take them out of school for extended periods.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

The quality of education is **good**. Overall, teaching is **good**. This results in pupils learning **well**. Teaching and learning are very good in the Foundation Stage. Throughout the school, teachers and support staff work very closely together. Staff use different but effective ways to ensure that pupils learn. For those with more complex difficulties, the very good knowledge which staff have of how pupils are likely to react to situations means that difficulties are often pre-empted. This is part of the very good relationships staff have with pupils, which results in pupils working very hard for the full length of lessons. Teachers frequently check on what pupils know and understand by very careful and effective communication strategies throughout lessons. The way in which staff plan for pupils' learning in the Foundation Stage is outstanding. It enables learning to build systematically.

The curriculum offers very good opportunities for enriching pupils' learning. Support for personal and social development is very good. Pupils take part in a very good range of trips off site in which they learn practical life-skills. Links with other schools and pre-school provision are very strong and ensure that pupils' learning opportunities are much broader than would otherwise be the case. Links with parents provide very effective opportunities for them to support their children's education. The school has very strong systems of care, which make very good use of the expertise of health professionals based at the school. School accommodation is satisfactory overall. Its strengths are in the exciting outdoor provision and the Foundation Stage. Specialist areas for teaching and learning in science, design and technology and art and design are not available. Changing facilities for pupils in need of high levels of hygiene support are in need of improvement.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Overall, leadership and management are **good**. The school is led very well by the headteacher who is very clear about the school's strengths and what else needs to be improved. A cohesive staff team is in place whose efforts are paying off in terms of raising standards. As a consequence, pupils' achievement is improving well. Management is good, with regular and effective checks on the school's performance, which is still strengthening. Governance is good. Governors ensure that all statutory requirements are met. They are committed to the school and provide active support.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

Parents are highly satisfied with the school, especially with the quality of leadership, the good quality of teaching and how easily their children settle into the school when they start. Pupils are highly satisfied with what the school provides for them.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- Improve pupils' achievement in religious education.
- Monitor and target improvement in the attendance of some individual pupils even more effectively.
- Improve specialist subject accommodation in science, design and technology and art and design for pupils in Years 7 to 9. Also improve changing facilities for pupils who need high levels of hygiene support.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

#### **Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses**

Pupils' achievement is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Children in the Foundation Stage achieve very well.
- Pupils achieve very well in personal and social development and in speaking and listening and reading.
- Pupils with English as an additional language and those with more complex learning difficulties achieve equally as well as other pupils.
- Achievement in religious education is satisfactory. This relative weakness is partly due to insufficient time being made available for teaching the subject.

#### **Commentary**

1. Pupils' attainment is very low when they join the school. Those children who start in the Foundation Stage generally have profound and complex learning needs or autistic tendencies. Because of excellent lesson planning, which ensures that all pupils' needs are met, pupils achieve very well against the goals expected of them. In all subjects inspected, except religious education, pupils in Years 1 to 9 achieve well. This includes good achievement in writing, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and music. This is in line with the good quality of teaching and shows good improvement in achievement since the last inspection, particularly in mathematics and music. Pupils achieve very well in communication, speaking and listening and reading. The school has maintained the high standards in English reported at the last inspection. All pupils do very well in their personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE), partly because of the very good relationships staff develop with pupils and also because pupil-choice is integral in most activities at a level that staff know is right for each pupil. There is an improving trend in pupils' achievement in the school regardless of differences in ethnic background or complexities of learning needs.
2. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory in learning through religion as well as about religion. The subject is taught in the Autumn term of each year and rotates on the school timetable with geography and history. Despite other areas such as PSHCE, festivals and focussed assemblies contributing well to pupils' achievement, time for the subject over a school year is short in comparison with other similar schools. The school's records and pupils' work show that, whilst they are not underachieving, pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory rather than higher. The school is already in the process of ensuring more time is devoted to religious education each week throughout the year.
3. The school sets statutory targets for pupils in Year 6 and Year 9. As staff become more experienced in this, the quality of the process is strengthening. For a very small minority of pupils, targets use national curriculum levels in mathematics, and for others for whom this is not appropriate, the school uses nationally recognised 'P' scales. Regardless of their levels, pupils achieve well against the targets set.
4. The achievement of pupils with more complex and challenging needs is good, because they are known well to staff who do their best to ensure that their needs are met. This is one example of where the headteacher is setting out to improve staff expertise further through additional training, in order to raise pupils' achievement even higher. In all year groups, girls and boys achieve equally well. Staff are very careful to plan activities that appeal to all pupils

and to vary the teaching and learning approaches that they employ, so that different types of learners achieve well.

5. Pupils with English as an additional language are in the early stages of language acquisition. They benefit as well as all other pupils from the very well thought out teaching methods to improve pupils' standards in communication, including speaking and listening. Pupils and teachers make good use of alternative methods of communication, such as signing and picture clues, which give all pupils in need of this approach effective ways of communicating.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes towards learning and behaviour are **very good**. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is **very good**. Pupils' attendance and punctuality in arriving at school and lessons are **satisfactory**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils know the difference between right and wrong. They respect each other's feelings and beliefs. There is a very strong ethos in the school.
- Positive and trusting relationships between pupils and adults support the pupils' attitudes towards learning and their behaviour in and around the school, which are very good.
- Unauthorised absence has increased over the last four years. A small minority of parents is failing to inform the school of the reasons for pupils' absence.

### **Commentary**

6. The school's motto of 'Creating Opportunities and Sharing Experiences' influences everything that occurs in this happy and vibrant school. Pupils state that they enjoy coming to school or clearly display delight in arriving each morning. The ethos within the school is very conducive to learning. Pupils progress very well in their personal development. Staff provide pupils with ample opportunities to understand and apply simple principles that distinguish right from wrong. They respond extremely well to these challenges.
7. The development of pupils' communication skills is paramount and features strongly in all subject areas. This forms part of the personal and social development of pupils and is indicative of the high standard of care they receive. Pupils show very positive attitudes towards their work and learning both in the classroom and on the playground. Relationships between staff and pupils are very positive. This leads to an environment where everyone is treated equally and with respect and pupils are successful in achieving their individual goals. A key feature of the school is the very good way staff include all pupils in its work. Those with more complex difficulties or autistic tendencies receive very good support so that they are aware of the high standards of behaviour expected of them. They usually respond well.
8. The school has not sustained the good levels of attendance reported in the last inspection. This is partly because of the increase in the number of pupils with severe medical problems who have time off school. Even so, attendance levels are below the national average for similar schools. Unauthorised absence levels show an upward trend over the last four years and are now well above the national average. The school strives hard to promote the need for pupils to attend school regularly. They constantly reinforce this message with parents via newsletters and when parents submit extended holiday requests, some of which are because of exceptional circumstances. However, the school does not monitor and target improvement in individual pupils' attendance as effectively as it might. Nearly one tenth of all authorised absences can be attributed to extended holidays. Absence figures for the school year 2002 – 2003 are shown below.

## Attendance

### Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence	
School data:	11.9
National data:	10.8

Unauthorised absence	
School data :	2.0
National data:	0.6

*The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.*

9. Promotion of spiritual development is good and is well supported by a good contribution from well-organised school assemblies where pupils quietly reflect on the day's events and share their achievements with others. All assemblies end with a short prayer. Pupils willingly take on responsibilities, which contribute very well towards their social and moral development. For example, they return class registers to the office where they meet office staff and exchange points of view using various means of communication. Play outside is very much a social event. Pupils make choices and respond very well to the very good range of playground activities. Behaviour is very good. They follow instructions given to them closely. School uses individual behaviour plans with pupils who exhibit inappropriate behaviour. Pupils respect each other's feelings and beliefs and tolerate each other at work and play. Provision for cultural development is very good. The school places significant emphasis on broadening pupils' awareness of other cultures through the use of very good resources, displays and community links. Staff are available in school who speak Panjabi and Urdu. This contributes very well to the school's approach that all pupils matter and helps to celebrate the range of cultural differences in the school. This is very strong with Foundation Stage children.
10. Exclusion of pupils is very rare. There have been none during the current year. One exclusion last year shown in the table below happened after all other approaches had been exhausted.

## Exclusions

### Ethnic background of pupils

### Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	57	1	1
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1		
Mixed – White and Asian	2		
Mixed – any other mixed background	1		
Asian or Asian British – Indian	6		
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	14		
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	3		
Black or Black British – Caribbean	3		
Black or Black British – any other Black background	1		
Chinese	1		

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

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good**. Partnership with parents, the community and the impact of links with other schools are **very good**. The standard of care and the support and guidance which pupils receive are **very good**. Curricular opportunities are **good**.

### Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are **good**. The arrangements to assess pupils' work are **good** and the information is used well to plan for pupils to make further progress.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers plan very well to ensure lessons provide equal opportunities for all pupils to learn.
- Teachers and assistants work very well together to promote pupils' learning.
- Lessons are interesting and pupils benefit from innovative teaching strategies.
- Assessment procedures are good, and the information obtained is used well in planning.
- The development of varied means of communication is carefully planned into lessons.

### Commentary

#### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 39 lessons*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1(3%)	20(51%)	13(33%)	5(13%)			

*The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.*

11. The quality of teaching and learning is good with some very good features. This is good improvement since the last inspection. The amount of very good teaching has strengthened significantly. This is testimony to the very effective way in which the headteacher and leadership group has worked to improve the quality of teaching. Parents' views are that their children are well taught. Teachers have improved the way in which they plan lessons since the last inspection. They successfully employ an agreed approach to ensuring that pupils know what they will learn and this is checked at the end of the lesson to determine how successful they have been. Work in developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening, and broader communication strategies such as signing and use of symbols, is highly effective. This means that all pupils apply themselves in lessons and work hard to succeed. They learn well at a speed and level that matches their understanding.
12. Teachers plan interesting lessons. A strength of many lessons is the use of ICT to involve pupils and enhance their progress. Lower attaining pupils are encouraged to use switches and 'Powerpoint' presentations to access subjects. Through the use of switches, pupils in Years 8 and 9 with profound learning needs actively joined in a story by activating a prepared program. Every 15 seconds the pupils had to press the switch again to continue the story. This was even more effective because of the good range of sensory resources used by the teacher to add to the atmosphere. For example, when the pupils got to the part of the story where the boy searched under a 'towel' for his Wembley tickets, the teacher produced a towel from a swimming bag, which was hiding some keys. The towel smelt pleasantly of talc. This brought a wonderful facial expression and giggles from the pupil. Lessons usually have a good balance of explanation and discussion, opportunities for individual and group work and consolidation of learning at the end of the lesson.
13. A strength of the teaching is planning to ensure that pupils receive equal opportunities to achieve. Because of the strong commitment to inclusion, teachers consider pupils' wide

variation of needs when planning lessons. They plan very effectively for teaching assistants to work with pupils to direct support to them according to need. During lessons teachers and support staff use signs and symbols effectively and are vigilant to check if pupils know what they are learning. This is evident in the way that they repeat and modify questions and explanations to ensure that all pupils understand. Targets in individual education plans (IEPs) are detailed and specific and are taken into account well in lesson planning so that work is consistently well-matched to the range of pupils' needs. Very good examples of teachers and support assistants working well together were seen in most lessons. An example of such teamwork was seen in the hydrotherapy pool. The teacher was in the pool with the pupils and the support staff made a strong contribution to pupils' learning by bringing prepared resources to the poolside to allow the pupils to press switches, ring bells and use sensory resources.

14. The system to assess pupils' progress is good. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement in assessment procedures. The school uses a range of approaches including systems for measuring small steps in learning (P Levels). There is a good emphasis on the important subjects of English and mathematics and on personal, social and health education (PSHE) which permeates the whole school. Almost every lesson enhances pupils' PSHE development in some way. Lesson planning in all subjects makes effective use of information gained to identify targets for pupils' IEPs. The school makes good use of assessment information to set whole school targets. Because of the very good relationships in school, pupils receive good advice on how to improve. Teachers use praise, encouragement and humour very well. The school is currently working towards extending systems to measure pupils' achievements and progress in even greater detail in more subjects.

## The curriculum

The curriculum is **good**. Staffing and opportunities for enrichment are **very good**. The accommodation is **satisfactory** and resources are **good**

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- All pupils benefit from a curriculum that is well matched to their individual needs.
- There is a very good range of activities, which enrich the pupils' learning experiences.
- There is a lack of specialist facilities in science, art and design and design and technology for pupils in Years 7 to 9.
- There are inadequate changing facilities for pupils with hygiene needs.
- Accreditation in the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) has been introduced well for pupils in Years 7 to 9, which further enhances their preparation for the next stage in their education.

## Commentary

15. The curriculum has improved well since the last inspection. Schemes of work are now in place and a good range of learning activities is provided for all pupils. The role of the subject leaders is developing well. Checking on how well planning for lessons works in practice is carried out in the majority of subjects. It is not fully effective in religious education although there are plans in place for this to be strengthened in the near future. The school has successfully implemented the national Key Stage 3 strategy. Provision for ICT has improved considerably and it is now taught through all subjects. Information and communication technology is particularly well planned for and used in English for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties and other pupils with communication needs. One example of this is how effectively 'Big Mack' switches and carousel books are linked to computer programs.
16. The National Literacy strategy is implemented well in Years 1 to 9 and elements from the National Numeracy strategy are used effectively. History, geography and religious education are presently taught on a rolling programme with one subject taught each school term. This has reduced the level of pupils' achievement in religious education in particular. The school has

plans in place to increase the time religious education is taught each week and overall time for history and geography. In addition, French is currently taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 for only two weeks per year. This approach is also being revised with plans for weekly teaching. The curriculum for pupils in Years 7 to 9 has been greatly enhanced by the introduction of ASDAN. Pupils study units in health, social and cultural education, performing arts and the service industries. It is anticipated that Year 9 pupils will gain certification in these modules later this term. Such success will further assist them in their transition to their Key Stage 4 provision in September.

17. A great deal of importance is placed on promoting PSHCE. The subject is taught effectively in all lessons and during planned activities at registration time, break and lunchtimes. Sex education with personal relationships and drug misuse is skilfully included in the programme.
18. Additional activities outside of lessons are many and varied for all pupils. There are very good opportunities for outdoor education such as sailing and riding each week. When pupils go sailing they have the opportunity of navigating and sailing boats independently. Pupils also have the opportunity of going on a residential trip each year. This has very positive impact on pupils' personal development. In addition, there are many visitors into school such as one who brings a broad range of animals for the pupils to see and hold. Also, poets, storytellers and theatre groups visit at regular intervals. Linking into this term's focus on World War II, a visitor is bringing old motor bikes and artefacts from the period to help enhance the topic in history. All of these activities help to build pupils' interest and self-confidence.
19. Pupils are rightly proud of their school grounds, which are extremely attractive and well kept, providing a variety of stimulating play areas for all ages. The accommodation is satisfactory overall. It has some good features such as the hydrotherapy pool, which provides good opportunities for pupils to have regular sessions promoting their physical development. There are also well-equipped dark and white sensory rooms for the pupils with more complex needs. However, there is no specialist subject accommodation for art and design, design technology and science for Key Stage 3 pupils. In addition the changing facilities and toilet areas for pupils with hygiene needs are inadequate. Staffing is very good with high numbers of support staff who are making a very significant contribution to pupils' achievement throughout the school. Resources are good particularly for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and more complex learning difficulties. There is a wide range of communication equipment to enhance curriculum opportunities for these pupils.

### Care, guidance and support

The school's approach towards pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Teachers and teaching assistants provide **very good** support, advice and guidance to all pupils and monitor personal development **very well**. The school's processes for seeking pupils' views and involving them in its work and development are **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- This is a very caring and understanding school. Pupils are able to learn in a safe and secure environment.
- Teachers know their pupils very well. They offer very good support and guidance to all pupils.
- Communication with pupils in all aspects of their learning and development is very good.
- Teachers strive to give pupils choices in their learning.
- Additional training is required in the manual handling of pupils who are not mobile.

## Commentary

20. All members of staff give high priority to the welfare and wellbeing of every pupil. Careful consideration is given to safety around the school and in the playground. Play areas are impressively designed and well thought out. They fully meet the range of pupils' specific physical difficulties and offer pupils their full play entitlement. The school is fully committed towards inclusion of pupils in work and play. Regular risk assessments and safety audits are conducted. A dedicated and efficient caretaker diligently eliminates identified hazards. The wide range of playground equipment enables pupils to make choices and to develop their self-esteem and confidence in a relaxed environment.
21. Teachers and classroom support assistants keep a watchful eye on pupils at all times. Staff communicate very well with pupils. This is a notable strength of the school. All staff have received training in child protection procedures. There is an effective full-time nurse who liaises with external agencies and a consultant paediatrician who visits regularly. An important area of training for all staff is in manual handling when lifting those pupils who are not mobile.
22. Teachers are very knowledgeable about pupils' specific needs and keep very detailed profiles including the medical conditions of each pupil that they teach. Staff know their pupils very well and provide a challenging and stimulating environment to aid learning in all areas of the curriculum. Pupils have very good and trusting relationships with adults in the school. Extensive monitoring of pupils' achievements and personal development is a well-established practice throughout the school. Classroom support assistants are very well deployed during lessons and give invaluable assessment feedback to teachers after each lesson. Photographic evidence of pupils' achievements is meticulously assembled in the pupils' 'Records of Achievement'. This serves as valuable evidence for discussions with parents each year and enables good preparation for later stages of education.
23. Progress in pupils' learning is measured against the targets set in pupils' IEPs. Targets are precise and challenging and include the next important areas for development in literacy, numeracy, science and personal development. Individual education plans are of high quality and are reviewed each term. Parents are invited to participate in this review. As part of pupils' personal development, they are encouraged consistently to make choices. For example, in a music lesson, Year 4 pupils were given a box of musical instruments and invited to select an instrument to play. Wherever possible, teachers seek, value and act on all pupils' views.
24. The support provided for pupils for whom English is an additional language is very good. Two staff speak a number of Asian languages. They translate reports and take telephone calls if parents need them to. Teachers ensure that pupils understand and respond to the words and instructions in the classroom. The majority of pupils have communication difficulties. Signing is used very effectively with them. This is a significant factor in ensuring that pupils with English as an additional language achieve in line with all other pupils.

## Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

There are **very good** links with parents. The use of the community to enrich pupils' learning is a **very good** feature of the school. The school has **very good**, effective links with other schools and colleges.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- To consolidate the very strong home-school partnership, the school provides very good information to parents about all aspects of school life.
- The community is used very well to enrich pupils' learning.
- The school makes very effective use of the strong links it has with other schools and colleges.

## Commentary

25. A wide range of topics is covered in newsletters sent to parents. These give parents the opportunity to gain a good insight into school events. Because the vast majority of parents live some distance from the school and do not have day-to-day contact with staff, the school is planning for a series of sharing sessions for parents covering important topics such as numeracy, literacy, behaviour management and a range of other areas of interest.
26. The school is keen to initiate parental involvement in proactive ways. Parents' views are sought twice a year via parent questionnaires. The school prospectus and the annual report from governors present parents with useful information about the school's requirements and how the school is performing. The partnership with parents greatly contributes to pupils' learning. The home/school diaries serve as a useful medium for exchanging views between school and parents. The school sets a very good standard in presenting details of pupils' progress to parents. As well as making progress statements for all curriculum subjects, the school provides parents with performance descriptions based on early learning targets and other national attainment measures. A full explanation is given to parents about the performance descriptions for every subject. This helps them to fully understand their child's progress.
27. The school uses the resources within the community very well to enrich the curriculum and pupils' cultural and spiritual development. This brings an extra dimension to pupils' learning. Several musical groups visit the school, representing a variety of cultural traditions. The pupils also interact with visiting guest speakers. Pupils have effective talks on the hazards such as not washing hands properly and the impact this has on their hygiene and wellbeing. During the inspection week a group of pupils in Years 7 to 9 went sailing using the facilities of a local sailing club. This very broad range of activities truly reflects the school's policy on ensuring inclusion for all its pupils.
28. As part of their inclusion programme the school works very effectively with a number of schools, which include nursery, primary and sports college provision. This impacts greatly on pupils' social and personal development and offers them opportunities in physical education, which the school's own provision cannot match. A number of students from secondary schools within the area have work experience placements at the school. Transfer arrangements for pupils moving on to Year 10 provision are effective. Prior to transfer, Year 9 pupils have early reviews and there is an induction programme for parents to view the receiving school and discuss arrangements for their child to settle in. Year 10 teachers regularly visit to meet the Year 9 pupils to talk with staff and review pupils' records.

## LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership, management and governance are **good**. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. The leadership of the other key staff is good. The effectiveness of management is good.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The governors, headteacher and staff have high aspirations for every pupil.
- The headteacher gives very strong leadership to the teachers.
- Governors give both support and challenge to school managers.
- The school uses its budget well to meet the needs of pupils.

## Commentary

29. Governance of the school is good. Governors are very supportive and work hard on the school's behalf. They bring a wide range of personal and professional expertise to the school, and are ably led by a very experienced and committed chairperson. Governors are directly involved in school life and challenge the leadership to improve the school. The governing body

has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. It is much more involved in setting the strategic direction of the school than it was at the time of the last inspection. This reflects the more effective working of its various committees. All statutory requirements are in place.

30. The leadership of the headteacher is very good. He brings considerable experience to bear, in a quiet but extremely effective way. Members of the senior management team support him well. The deputy headteacher is particularly effective. The school is very inclusive and has a very strong ethos, which is based on mutual respect. There is a strong sense of teamwork and shared values. All members of staff work very hard on behalf of their pupils. Pupils are very clearly the focus of the school. The new school improvement plan focuses well on their achievement. Communication is open and the headteacher is accessible. The school has a clear sense of direction and is ambitious to develop further.
31. Management is good. The school's performance is evaluated carefully. There is a wealth of internal assessment data. Performance management is well organised and successfully implemented. The procedures and policies are appropriate and in place. The outcomes are used well to determine training needs and link to both school and subject priorities. The recent emphasis on improving the quality of teaching and learning has had a positive effect on achievement in the school. The school's financial procedures are good. They allow teachers to concentrate on teaching, seek best value for money, and enable governors to be active in fulfilling their role of monitoring the budget. The close informal working arrangements in school ensure that finance is managed to achieve the priorities of the school improvement plan. The school gained a small surplus in each of the last few financial years. This money is earmarked for relevant projects, such as the current extension to the school car park, making it easier for the pupils' transport to access the school grounds more safely. The school provides good value for money. Finances for the year 2002/2003 are shown in the table below.

**Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003**

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1124790	Balance from previous year	38699
Total expenditure	1105386	Balance carried forward to the next	58103
Expenditure per pupil	12420		

32. Leadership and management in a school such as this are very demanding. Staff have multiple responsibilities along with significant teaching loads. The clear priority, to which all staff contribute well and which stems from the headteacher, is the importance of the pupils' interests. Ensuring that the pupils have the best opportunities is the main driving force behind the curriculum and the other developments taking place. Good progress has been made in leadership and management since the last inspection, with significant enhancements made in subject planning, and in the arrangements for the assessment of pupils. In comparison with the school's strengths, weaker areas remain in provision for religious education, in areas of the accommodation and in the monitoring and improvement of attendance.

## PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING AND SUBJECTS

*Throughout the following commentary, overall judgements about provision relate to the effectiveness of teaching and learning, curriculum leadership and any other significant aspects that reflect the standards achieved by pupils.*

Seven lessons were seen in the Foundation Stage. A variety of other activities were also observed and contributed to the judgements made.

### AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision for children in the Foundation Stage is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children achieve very well.
- Lessons are excellently planned to meet the individual needs of the children.
- Behaviour is very well managed. Children are beginning to understand the difference between appropriate and inappropriate behaviour.
- Very good teamwork between all members of staff, who know the children very well, results in staff anticipating children's needs.
- Staff evaluate their work exceptionally well so that they are crystal clear about what is working well and what else needs to be improved.

#### Commentary

33. There are too few children in the Foundation Stage to report separate judgements in each area of learning. The children have complex needs and enter the school with well below average attainment. Staff make children's school experience one where they learn with enjoyment. Provision is very effective and children achieve very well as shown in the examples later in this section. This is very good improvement since the last inspection when children's progress was judged as good. Improvement is also very good because the lead teacher has developed excellent planning methods that link very closely the yearly plans, fortnightly plans, working objectives and children's individual education plans (IEPs). All of this planning is evaluated with the help of the staff team. This excellent basis for teaching and learning means that all staff are clear about what is expected of them and of the children.

In **personal, social and emotional development**, children settle in to learning very quickly and easily each morning because they know the routines expected of them and respond very well. A broad range of relevant activities is available such as a big book for independent reading, a sensory box, computer programs and indoor seesaw. Those with more complex or profound needs are encouraged to become more aware of and greet each other. All children are successfully encouraged to make choices and become more independent within a very caring and supervised environment. Children enjoy the welcoming session. They sit in their own place and respond very well to the personal welcome by the teacher. Those who respond by pressing their Big Mack switch indicate 'I'm here'. Higher attaining pupils respond verbally. This requires patience and turn taking, which children do very well. One child dealt very well with the disappointment of not taking the attendance register to the school office. He recognised that it was not his turn.

In **communication, language and literacy**, children use and understand simple signs, symbols and pictures. They are learning very well to associate pictures with objects and activities. These aids to language are used very well. Those children who are able to speak try very hard to make themselves understood. Children who have English as an additional language are at times spoken to in their own language to consolidate learning. Children

respond very well to simple rhymes such as 'round and round the garden' and to stories such as the 'Dark, dark tale'. They respond excitedly to the atmosphere created by darkening the room. Each activity ensures children achieve very well in communication, tactile and hearing opportunities. Signs to extend children's understanding of daily routines are used very well. Those who are independent of movement are quick to recognise signs and respond to requests. Those able to use computer programs independently by switching from one task to another, track shapes and sounds across the screen with great concentration.

In **mathematical development**, children are introduced to number activities well, through number rhymes and the sequencing and counting of numbers at, for example, registration time. Every activity is very well supported with language to enhance children's growing awareness of number. Higher attaining children recognise and count numbers from one to three and try hard to build a tower with the correct number of bricks. There is good use of ICT programs that the children enjoy and are confident in using. Those needing close support are well monitored and helped to achieve their tasks.

In **knowledge and understanding** of the world, children's curiosity is sparked throughout the day in the broad range of opportunities. They have to explore and investigate objects, the classroom and the well-resourced playground. They enjoy making marks with crayons, often in a vigorous way. They show interest in the computer and higher attainers know how to operate simple equipment. All children enjoy feeling the texture of different materials such as those who experienced the feel and taste of different dark food substances that included jam, treacle and sauce. This is a very good opportunity for children to show very successfully their likes and dislikes in a formal way.

In **physical development**, children use indoor and outdoor equipment very well with support. They are gradually gaining confidence in their movement although some mobile children still find controlling their speed and direction difficult. There are very good opportunities for indoor and outdoor play, with many large toys that help children to develop physical skills and confidence. In a session in the school hall, children recognised the music stimulus from previous lessons and responded immediately to the actions and rhythms expected of them. Higher attaining pupils knew the number of hoops they had to work with, made choices over the equipment to use and developed very well their control over their use of the equipment.

In **creative development**, children learn to sing and join in very well with songs and rhymes. They enjoy computer programs that spark the tracking across the screen of moving objects partly because they enjoy the accompanying sounds. They follow the tune of the 'hello song' and higher attainers know some of the words.

- 34 Teaching and learning are very good overall, because there is very good differentiation in the lessons that allows the children to achieve highly. There are very good records kept and children's progress is monitored very effectively in all areas. Very good leadership and management of the Foundation Stage are based upon accurate self-evaluation to which the whole departmental team contribute. The Effective Early Learning Programme in which the school participates has been very successful. Through analysis and observation of daily practice, staff highlighted their strengths and areas for development, which included
- encouraging more paired work between pupils
  - giving pupils more choice in activities at different times of the day
  - ensuring all pupils had more interaction with others
  - greater independent access for pupils to a 'messy and creative' indoor area.
34. Very good improvement has already been made in those areas that could be quickly addressed. The issue of better access to a messy area, which has implications for accommodation, is now included in the school development plan.

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 1, 2 and 3

### ENGLISH

Seven lessons in English were seen across all key stages, together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.

Provision in English is **very good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' very good achievement in English has been maintained since the last inspection.
- High quality visual aids, signing and communication aids are used consistently and very effectively throughout the school to develop pupils' skills in speaking, listening and reading.
- Pupils' skills in literacy are promoted very well during lessons in other subjects.
- Drama is well promoted throughout the school particularly with the PMLD pupils and with the pupils with more complex needs.
- The school has developed very good resources to help pupils improve their understanding of literature through sensory experiences.

#### Commentary

35. Pupils of all abilities and additional needs, including pupils with more complex needs, achieve very well in speaking and listening and reading. So too do those pupils who have English as an additional language. Staff have worked extremely hard to ensure overall standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The subject leader has ensured that all teachers focused on developing pupils' communication and reading skills with considerable success. Subject leadership and management are very good.
36. The teaching of different communication strategies for pupils to use is very good throughout the school. As a result, pupils join in with enthusiasm and use very well the wide range of resources and systems such as the Picture Exchange Communication Symbols (PECS) and Big Mack switches. Pupils take a full and active part in discussions and in making choices. Signing using the Makaton system is used consistently in class by all staff and pupils. In addition, the school is very well supported by speech and language therapists who work closely with staff on a regular basis. Vocal pupils and those who sign well are very keen to engage visitors in conversation. Lively and informative discussions take place within lessons. Pupils listen attentively to staff and are confident to express their views. This was evident during a Year 9 lesson when pupils discussed the position in which 'The Highwayman' found himself. One pupil pointed out that the soldiers wanted the highwayman because he had just stolen a lot of money. Another pupil 'signed' that Bess really loved the highwayman and would risk her own life for his.
37. Drama plays a large part within literacy. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop their confidence to communicate through participating in plays and performances. For example pupils took part in a performance of 'A Christmas Carol' as part of their Christmas celebrations. During a drama session Years 5 and 6 pupils imagined that they had to move an elephant. Also, they handled a toy monkey as if it was alive. Pupils with more complex difficulties have their understanding and participation in drama and other literature greatly enhanced by the very good collection of materials which teachers have assembled to promote learning through touch, taste and smell. The subject contributes very well to pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development. Excellent 'carousel books' and story sacks are used to stimulate communication for pupils with severe and complex needs. This was evident in the Extra Support Base (ESB) where pupils with complex difficulties went on a fantasy trip to 'Rainbow Land'. Staff used a multicoloured 'parachute' very energetically to produce a wind on the pupils' faces. This resulted in pupils' enjoyment and stimulation in an exciting learning environment.

38. Reading is very good throughout the school. Pupils are confident readers. Lower attaining pupils are helped very effectively with their reading by the extensive use of PECs. During a session with lower attaining pupils in Year 2, they were encouraged to feel the sensory book about 'The Little Boat'. Pupils touched the dried sand and the fabric of the sails. There is good emphasis on helping pupils develop their fine motor movements, which are required for writing. An example of this was in a lesson where Year 5 and 6 pupils were asked to glue legs, arms and eyes onto paper bodies. Younger pupils have regular opportunities to practise handwriting skills using pencils or felt pens and make good progress in learning to hold a pencil and make marks on paper. They join in with great enthusiasm. A number of high attaining pupils form letters and write simple sentences. Many pupils within the school find learning to write difficult but teachers and support staff are skilled at helping them record using other methods. For example, several pupils in Years 7 to 9 have recorded work that they have carried out as part of their ASDAN challenge award by cutting and pasting symbols to make sentences.
39. Teaching and learning are very good. Staff have all been trained to structure lessons to follow the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy. The subject leader monitors the quality of teaching and planning very well. Procedures to assess and record pupils' progress are developing well.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

40. Provision to develop pupils' language and literacy skills across the curriculum is very good. This results in pupils who progress very well in applying these skills in other subjects. This is because strategies such as PECs are used consistently throughout the school to help pupils communicate and record their work. Signing is consistent and pupils who can vocalise sign as an aid to their non-verbal peer group. During a science lesson in Year 1, pupils talked at length about how batteries helped mechanical toys to work. During an ICT session, powerpoint technology was used to tell tactile and sensory stories using the carousel books within the ESB classroom.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Six lessons in mathematics were seen across all key stages, together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.

Provision in mathematics is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Lessons are well planned to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met.
- Learning assistants make a good contribution to the teaching team.
- Resources and teaching methods are used imaginatively to interest and challenge the pupils particularly those with more complex learning difficulties.

#### **Commentary**

41. Teaching and learning are good. As a result, pupils achieve well. Since the last inspection, the curriculum has been broadened and is now well established. Pupils now use and apply their understanding of mathematics. They identify shapes such as circles and interpret simple data in graph form. Assessment is used to plan lessons designed to meet the specific needs of all pupils and targets are clear and measurable. The recently appointed subject co-ordinator is doing a good job, currently appraising the range and suitability of resources. This will further enhance the consistency in teaching throughout the school. The subject has improved well since the last inspection.
42. In Year 2, pupils experience a wide range of activities to help them recognise and record numbers. The higher attaining pupils understand and count numbers to three although they

need help to record their work. Pupils recognise and reproduce the shape of a circle in a variety of ways including drawing in sand and with a torch in the air. Pupils in Year 6 count in 2's and 5's. Many interpret simple block graphs and answer questions as to which number is smallest or biggest. By the time pupils are in Year 9, some sequence time by, for example, knowing the days of the week.

43. Throughout lessons there is great emphasis on developing pupils' communication skills in many ways, including singing songs about numbers and using musical instruments to count beats. Pupils enjoy the wide experiences that they have when discovering numbers. They are happy to be challenged and show their pleasure when they succeed. Pupils are very well behaved and respond equally well to the praise and encouragement of teachers and all support staff. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils. All staff are sensitive to the needs of all pupils and skilfully adapt tasks so that pupils can experience success at their own pace. By using a wide range of interesting and effective teaching strategies staff ensure that all pupils are fully included in lessons. Pupils know they are succeeding because staff tell them and celebrate with them when they achieve a particular goal. Information and communication technology is used extensively. It is used for pupils who have limited movement and helps them record their work. It is also used as a tool to enable pupils to practise and develop newly acquired mathematical skills.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

44. Teachers use every available opportunity to draw pupils' attention to the purpose and function of mathematics in a wide range of situations. For example, pupils in Years 7 to 9, as part of their PSHCE lessons, cook lunch for their classes once a month. This involves, counting, weighing, measuring ingredients and timing the cooking. Mathematics is often linked to music, for example, with pupils counting the beats in a rhythm.

### **SCIENCE**

Five lessons were seen across all key stages, together with a range of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.

Provision in science is **good**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils' achievements are good because of the good quality of teaching.
- Strong emphasis on practical work and investigation motivates pupils to learn.
- Leadership of the subject is good which contributes to good quality learning.

#### **Commentary**

45. Pupils achieve well because teaching is good. Pupils are encouraged to participate in effective listening and discussions from an early age, using signing and symbols for support, where necessary. A good range of teaching styles stimulates learning and achievement. As well as learning scientific facts, pupils also develop well their investigative and enquiry skills. Pupils' interest in learning is enhanced by the attention paid to making the subject relevant. As a result provision in science is equally effective for all pupils regardless of their prior learning. This includes pupils who have English as an additional language.
46. By the end of Year 2, higher attaining pupils are aware that some toys need power from a battery to make them work. They are given opportunities to experience, observe and discover what everyday appliances use electricity. By the end of Year 6 they have extended their understanding, for example, in being aware that batteries are a source for light, sound and movement. By the end of Year 9, pupils know that electricity can be dangerous. They enjoy the

practical part of lessons where they dismantle and re-assemble equipment. Pupils listen well in all classes.

47. Teaching and learning are good. With good support from the teacher and teaching assistants, all pupils are actively involved and find the activities stimulating. Lessons are planned well to ensure pupils' learning builds systematically. The enthusiasm of teachers challenges and engages pupils of all levels of ability. Teachers use groupings by particular needs well to ensure that the work is well matched to individual pupils' needs. Opportunities are taken to use multi-sensory stimuli and to build in links with numeracy, literacy and ICT.
48. The subject is well managed by a co-ordinator who has produced a curriculum and schemes of work which address the specific needs of the pupils. This has had a significant impact on the quality of overall provision. The detailed planning removes the risk of missing out important steps, enables building on previous learning, and provides class teachers with the resources needed to ensure good individual progress. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. The lessons seen were all busy and so there were no longer any indications of waning interest and boredom, as there had been. Assessment arrangements are much improved, and the co-ordinator ensures that the information obtained from assessment informs planning. There is still no science laboratory to bring lessons alive even more.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Two lessons were seen in ICT and several lessons with all age groups where ICT was used in other subjects.

Provision in ICT is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Provision for ICT has been developed well to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Consistently good teaching is well supported by high quality planning and assessment, with clear objectives for pupils to achieve.
- Information and communication technology is used very well across the curriculum.
- There is a strong commitment to professional development by all staff.

### **Commentary**

49. The subject has been developed well since the last inspection. This has stemmed from the expert training given to all teachers and support assistants. The co-ordinator leads and manages the subject well. The co-ordinator and technician are always available for individual one-to-one sessions for staff, whom they support well. The school makes good use of the sensory rooms, both white and dark, to complement ICT across the school and to enhance the development of pupils with the most profound learning difficulties. This is good practice and indicates the strong commitment of all staff.
50. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently good. All work is carefully planned to meet the needs of individual pupils and groups of pupils. Staff know the pupils' needs well and take into account individual learning difficulties when planning lessons. Lessons are stimulating and challenging and, as a result, all pupils achieve well. For example in a class with Years 5 and 6 pupils, higher attaining pupils have learnt to use 'control language' when programming a 'roamer'. Relationships in class are very good. Because of this, pupils trust staff, behave very well and build up confidence and self-esteem.

## **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

51. The way in which ICT is used across the curriculum is a strength of the school. An example of this was seen involving pupils with profound learning difficulties in Years 8 and 9. Information and communication technology was built into a hydrotherapy lesson also designed to enhance pupils' history, music, geography, communication and movement learning. The theme for the lesson was the Second World War. As pupils moved around the pool swaying to the music, the water allowed the pupils freedom of body movement, which they cannot get out of the water. 'Big Macks' were used to activate sirens to warn them of an air raid. Switches were used to activate and dim lights and create a frightening effect. This worked very well. Pupils then took shelter in an Anderson air raid shelter, hanging above the pool, until the all-clear siren sounded. The power of ICT to develop pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development was clear to see. Pupils are given many opportunities to gain an understanding of the power of ICT in many aspects of life. Digital and video cameras are used effectively to record pupils' progress for inclusion as evidence in their Records of Achievement. Higher attaining pupils access the Internet in English to research topics. The good array of ICT is used effectively to enhance pupils' achievement in music, mathematics and science.

## HUMANITIES

No judgements were made in geography and history because they were not part of the focus of the inspection. Only one lesson was seen in religious education with pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9. Lessons in religious education were not timetabled elsewhere in school during the inspection. Judgements in religious education took account of pupils' work and other evidence of pupils' achievement.

### Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The profile of religious education and its contribution to pupils' personal development continues to strengthen well.
- Resources, artefacts and focussed events enliven the curriculum.
- The subject co-ordinator has made good use of expertise within the local education authority in developing the subject.
- There is a shortage of time for teaching the subject in Years 1 to 6.
- Checking on how well planning is turned into practice is not sufficiently in place.

### Commentary

52. Religious education is currently taught to pupils in Years 1 to 6 during the Autumn term each year. In Years 7 to 9, whilst a lesson is scheduled weekly, not all pupils join in because of taking turns going sailing or horse riding. Recognition by the school that the amount of time devoted to religious education lags behind some other subjects, particularly in Years 1 to 6, has led to the headteacher arranging increased time from September 2004. Good leadership of the subject has ensured that staff are far more aware of how to tie together the strands of pupils learning about religion, learning from religion and how these contribute to pupils' very good personal development overall. Good quality formal planning for lessons and much improved resources to enliven teaching and learning are now in place. Pupils' achievement in religious education is satisfactory and has drawn in part upon the strengths of pupils' personal development. It is not stronger because of the shortage of time. Overall, teaching and learning are satisfactory. There has been significant improvement since the last inspection when there was insufficient evidence about the subject to make a judgement on achievement. Improvement has been good but still has further to go.

53. Teaching and learning in the one lesson in Years 7 to 9 seen during the inspection were good. Pupils built effectively their understanding of caring and belonging. Choosing a 'person of the

week' around which the lesson was geared, gave the lesson much more meaning for the pupils. They concentrated on and found out about one pupils' likes and dislikes and about his or her family and friends. Good planning ensured that the 'focus pupil' had time to prepare a short series of photographs taken at home to help make the lesson interesting. The lesson had a strong communication and speaking and listening content. The systems to ensure that teaching and learning and pupils' achievement are consistently good across the school need improvement.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC, PRACTICAL AND PHYSICAL SUBJECTS**

Art and design, design and technology and physical education were not part of the inspection focus. As a result, no judgements were made about these subjects. Three lessons were seen in music

### **Music**

Provision in music is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of teaching.
- Pupils enjoy the subject and sustain their concentration.

### **Commentary**

54. Pupils achieve well. They show good listening skills and, where possible, handle and play some instruments. By the end of Year 2, pupils show interest and respond well to changes in tempo. By the end of Year 6, pupils consolidate their understanding of tempo, taking turns to play a drum. By the end of Year 9 pupils listen with real concentration. They experience acoustic and electronic instruments, listening and playing both as individuals and in a group setting.
55. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching assistants play an important role supporting pupils very well. The atmosphere in lessons is conducive to learning and this is reflected in the achievements made by pupils. Relationships are very good. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and the levels of challenge are high. Planning usually includes work matched to each pupil, and whenever possible, links are made with literacy, numeracy and ICT.
56. Co-ordination of the subject is good. Pupils are grouped according to their ability and this means that the lessons meet pupils' individual needs. Effective use is made of a local centre where specialist teachers challenge and extend the older pupils. This is part of the good improvement made since the last inspection. The use of ICT is much improved.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

Four lessons were seen across the key stages. Also, because PSHCE permeates the whole of the school day, a variety of other activities was observed and contributed to the judgements made.

Provision in personal, social, health and citizenship education is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The development of pupils' personal and social education underpins all aspects of school life.
- Very good relationships between staff and pupils ensure mutual trust and respect.
- All pupils are included equally in all aspects of provision.

### **Commentary**

57. As a subject and as part of the provision for the personal and social development of pupils, PSHCE has a high priority within the school curriculum. At the time of the previous report it was judged to be good and since then it has improved. Provision is now very good. The subject is very well led and managed. Targets to support pupils' personal development are included in individual education plans. Lesson planning ensures that there is clear progression in the development of skills. As a result, pupils achieve very well. Staff endeavour to build all pupils' confidence, self-esteem and independence. This is apparent in the daily assembly when pupils are asked, for example, to recount their achievements, talk about their birthday or discuss an interesting experience that they have had.
58. Teaching and learning are very good. This results in very good achievement. As pupils develop, they learn to communicate very well through both speech and signing. This becomes spontaneous as pupils become proficient in its use. Pupils learn to take turns and with adult help begin to have an awareness of the needs of others. In Year 2 pupils become more aware of others and quietly wait their turn. By Year 6 pupils work in groups with adult supervision, for example, in following directions for an activity devised and led by the speech therapist. They learn to take turns when they play 'Kim's Game. Snack time is also a useful teaching time for the development of social and personal skills. Pupils learn to ask for their choice of fruit and drink so that another pupil can serve them. In Year 9 pupils play co-operatively. They take turns riding a range of bicycles and in shooting for goal when practising netball skills. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 who are taking part in ASDAN, increase their understanding of other cultures.
59. As pupils progress through the school, higher attaining pupils are given responsibilities such as, taking the register to the office. At lunchtimes pupils sit in family groupings with a member of staff. A calm, orderly atmosphere pervades as pupils chat together over lunch. Once a month, as part of a healthy eating project, pupils in Year 9 plan, cook and serve lunch to the rest of their class.

## **PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS**

**Inspection judgement****Grade**

<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3

<b>Overall standards achieved* (please see below)</b>	<b>3</b>
Pupils' achievement	3

<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2

<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils' needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	3
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	2
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2

<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>3</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	2
The leadership of other key staff	3
The effectiveness of management	3

*Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).*

\* In a special school such as this, 'standards achieved' are judged in relation to students' individual targets and not in relation to national standards.