

INSPECTION REPORT

NEWMAN SCHOOL

Rotherham

LEA area: Rotherham

Unique reference number: 106966

Headteacher: Mrs S Garland Grimes

Lead inspector: Mr A Lemon

Dates of inspection: 13th – 16th September 2004

Inspection number: 268604

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
Age range of pupils:	2 – 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	63
School address:	East Bawtry Road Whiston Rotherham
Postcode:	S60 3LX
Telephone number:	01709 828262
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr L Hayhurst
Date of previous inspection:	23 November 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Newman School is a special school for pupils with physical disabilities and medical conditions. The number of pupils on roll is falling as more are placed in mainstream schools and other special schools. New pupils have similar special educational needs but these are more complex in nature. In particular, there has been a significant rise in the number of non-verbal pupils, necessitating much development in the use of alternative and augmentative communication aids. As a result, attainment on entry to the school is now well below that expected nationally. Pupils come from the entire Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham, some areas of which are socially and economically deprived. Very few pupils join the school or leave other than at the usual time. Nearly all the pupils come from white British backgrounds and the six minority ethnic pupils have Pakistani backgrounds. English is not the first language of one pupil.

The school was awarded the Basic Skills Quality Mark in 2004. It supports a small number of its pupils in attending mainstream schools for some of their lessons. The school is the accredited regional centre for assessing and providing for children needing communication aids. It also offers a borough-wide service supporting schools on the use of communication technology with physically disabled pupils.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
20165	Alan Lemon	Lead inspector	Art and design Religious education
9348	Mary Le Mage	Lay inspector	
22466	Diane Pearson	Team inspector	English Personal, social and health education including citizenship Music English as an additional language
17681	Roger Sharples	Team inspector	Science Design and technology Physical education Work-related learning Special educational needs
19368	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Foundation Stage Mathematics French
23696	Johnny Morris	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Geography History

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Newman School is a good school and it provides good value for money. The school has some very good features and it is effective in ensuring pupils achieve well. Teaching and learning are good. Leadership and management are good.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The headteacher's very clear vision, direction and determination are contributing significantly to the school's good improvement.
- The very good provision for, and the use of, assisted and augmentative communication aids ensure the increasing number of pupils unable to speak are included effectively and achieve well.
- The provision in English is very good as a result of very effective leadership for the subject.
- The very good provision for information and communication technology (ICT) leads to very good achievement, overall, in the subject.
- Pupils are valued greatly; their views are carefully sought and considered. This builds pupils' confidence and self-esteem and leads to their very positive attitudes and behaviour.
- Pupils' physical and medical needs are met comprehensively by highly effective multi-disciplinary teamwork.
- The provision for religious education is unsatisfactory.

There has been a good improvement in nearly every area of the school's work since the last inspection and previous key issues have been dealt with effectively.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Overall, achievement is good throughout the school.

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 2	good	good
Year 6	good	good
Year 9	good	good
Year 11	good	good
Year 14	good	good

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

There are no significant differences in achievement between different groups of pupils, whether they are boys or girls, minority ethnic pupils, those of less and more ability or the pupil for whom English is an additional language. Children in the Foundation Stage are achieving at least well in all the areas of learning. Their achievement is very good in personal, social and emotional development because of the strong emphasis upon encouraging independence and personal development. In Years 1 to 11, achievement is good in English, mathematics and science, as a result of consistently good teaching. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 achieve very well in ICT because they are taught very effectively as a result of the high degree of technological expertise teachers possess. Pupils relying on electronic communication aids make remarkable strides in learning to operate them effectively, which is attributable to the school's considerable expertise in this field of technology. Students in the further education department make good progress, overall. In Years 1 to 11, achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory as a result of inadequate planning of what is taught, leading to pupils not being challenged sufficiently.

Pupils' attitudes to school are very good and attendance is satisfactory. They behave very well and their personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good. Pupils are proud of what they achieve, and work with a strong sense of purpose. They get along very well with each other and the staff.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is good. Teaching and learning is good. By sharing the planning of the great majority of lessons well with their classroom assistants, teachers create effective teams that pursue clear learning objectives for each pupil. Teachers use their subject knowledge and their detailed knowledge of pupils' needs to produce good planning. A close check is kept on pupils' progress and this is fed back into future planning. There are very good classroom resources available, which are chosen carefully to support learning and to make pupils' work enjoyable and interesting. Relationships are very supportive, and pupils engage in work eagerly and with self-confidence. The few faults found in teaching are easily remedied, such as the weak planning in religious education, the occasional inefficient management of time and insufficient monitoring of the effect on pupils' learning of taking them out of lessons for therapy.

There is good breadth to curricular opportunities, which are complemented well by a variety of extra activities including sports and the arts. The many opportunities for pupils to gain a suitable range of accreditation lead to comprehensively good results. The provision for the care of pupils, most particularly in relation to their physical and medical needs, is very good. Pupils throughout the school, and students in the further education department, are given good support and guidance in relation to their education and personal development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher is very effective in setting high expectations and a clear direction. The senior management team has been together for a relatively short time, but their leadership and that of other staff holding key responsibilities are good. Overall, management is good. Most aspects of running and developing the school are handled effectively, including the good support for pupils with physical disabilities in other schools. However, some areas are overlooked because their importance is not fully appreciated or management responsibilities are unclear. The governance of the school is good. Governors are closely involved, well informed and they play a positive part in the school's direction and development. Governors comply with all of their statutory duties.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents value greatly the work done by the school for their children. Pupils have an equally positive view, which they have expressed frequently through discussions and questionnaires.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Improve the provision for religious education in Years 1 to 11.
- Ensure, that in managing the school, responsibilities are clear and that the impact of changes to routines and new initiatives are quickly followed up.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards, compared to age-related expectations, vary across the school depending on the severity of pupils' learning difficulties. Of the younger, recently admitted pupils, most attain low standards due to the greater complexity of their needs, particularly in relation to communication difficulties. Many of the older pupils are less needy and higher attaining. The standards they reach are below average because of the impediments to learning of their physical disabilities but in some subjects and courses a few attain the standards expected for their age. However, in relation to their capabilities, most pupils throughout the school achieve well, overall, but very well in some areas of learning, subjects and courses. Students in the further education department achieve well, overall. There is no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls, pupils of different abilities, the pupil for whom English is an additional language or those from minority ethnic backgrounds.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve very well in a number of areas because these are given greater emphasis or are a priority in meeting the needs of pupils.
- Very good provision in a broad range of ICT leads to pupils achieving very well in this subject.
- There is very little achievement that is less than expected, but it is unsatisfactory in religious education.

Commentary

1. The school collects and analyses pupils' performance using P Levels and National Curriculum Levels as measures, which comprehensively cover the range of attainment found in the school. Assessment is accurate and measurements over time now confirm the good progress and achievement of pupils. This accuracy also means the school sets appropriately challenging targets for pupils in their individual education plans. The data collected on the progress towards targets confirms an overall picture of good achievement. However, it is still too early in the use of this programme to gain an in-depth view such as any trends in pupils' performance. Pupils' achieve well in the good range of GCSE and Entry Level Certificate courses as well as other accredited courses. Results accurately reflect the range of pupils' attainments and they compare very favourably to the results of pupils in similar schools. The extent of unevenness in the make-up and capabilities of examination groups, year on year, makes it unsuitable to attempt to discern any trend in examination results.
2. While children in the Foundation Stage will not reach the early learning goals because of their special educational needs, they achieve very well in personal, social and emotional development. This is because opportunities for personal, social and emotional development permeate so much of the children's work, and staff make it their absolute priority that children learn to be as independent as possible. Children make good progress in all the other required areas of development. Their achievement is due to activities being planned well, which results in children receiving varied and enjoyable experiences each day. The combination of the staff's expertise, the therapeutic support and the close relationship with children makes the children able, enthusiastic and active learners. A close check is maintained on each child's progress and their activities are adapted well to ensure they are always being appropriately challenged. The children attending a mainstream nursery for part of the time and, supported by staff from the school, are often successful in making a permanent transfer.
3. In English, pupils achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. Literacy skills are well promoted throughout the curriculum and pupils' use of ICT makes an important contribution to writing. In their communication, pupils are very well supported by their teachers'

thorough assessments. This contributes to accurate targets towards which pupils earnestly strive. Some also get great encouragement from using augmentative communication aids and through speech and language therapy. A good amount of time is provided for reading and, with much positive coaching, pupils discover their interest and enjoyment of books. Achievement in mathematics has improved and is now good. However, pupils achieve particularly well in acquiring and using basic number skills because this has priority in the teaching of mathematics. Extra lesson time is devoted to teaching number and all of the teachers involved are consistent in their methods of teaching number. While the opportunities for pupils to apply their numeracy skills across the curriculum are satisfactory, they are sufficiently competent to deal with the demands in other subjects and courses.

4. Very good achievement in ICT is a good improvement and is the result of a very positive and purposeful emphasis on its use for supporting learning throughout the school. In particular, there is an exceptional level of provision and expertise in assisted and augmentative communication aids. Pupils who require them are given an appropriate type of aid based on careful assessment of their needs. With expert tuition, they rapidly achieve the skills to write as well as operate a voice synthesis facility. Thus, not only do they have the means to communicate effectively, but also, they have access to much wider opportunities for learning and achievement. More generally, pupils have open access to a very good range of modern technology, which in terms of usage, is very effectively supported by teachers' expertise in its applications. The most physically disabled pupils, using head movements, operate electronic switches, which allow them to work independently at computers and to move within classrooms and around school in wheelchairs. Overall, the very good achievement in ICT is a significant contribution to pupils' self-esteem, confidence and independence.
5. Pupils throughout the school achieve well in French and Spanish, science, personal, social and health education, including citizenship, and music. Achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory overall as a result of the inadequate planning of what is taught in Years 1 to 6 and a lack of challenge in what is demanded of higher attaining pupils in Years 7 to 11. While pupils acquire a good factual knowledge of major faiths in discussions they have less opportunity to consolidate this and extend their understanding of religion, as many are capable of doing, through their own research and writing.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. Attendance at the school is satisfactory and punctuality is good. Pupils' personal qualities, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school promotes successfully positive attitudes to learning and fosters an ability and willingness to take responsibility.
- The pupils' very good behaviour is a major contributory factor in the good atmosphere for learning in lessons and harmony around the school.
- The school has developed good initiatives to improve attendance.
- Pupils' moral and social development is very good.

Commentary

6. Pupils have very positive attitudes to school. They are happy and confident at school, and enjoy lessons and other activities. They are keen to learn and often show enthusiasm and good humour in lessons. Pupils are friendly and polite, and keen to communicate with visitors. Those pupils with the most severe physical disabilities are particularly keen to engage in conversation with visitors using their electronic aids. There are good arrangements for pupils throughout the school to express their opinions and views, particularly through membership of the school

council. Pupils from Years 7, 9 and 10 who have all been involved in the school council were articulate when explaining to an inspector how they were elected and how their meetings are conducted. They report that the school council has been instrumental in improvements to the playground surfacing, boys' toilets and water fountains, and in a recycling initiative.

7. Behaviour is very good in lessons and at other times. Lunch and playtimes are orderly and harmonious and there is no evidence of any significant bullying, harassment or conflict between pupils. Relations between pupils and adults and amongst pupils are very positive. Pupils contribute well to whole-class discussions and work well together in paired or small group tasks. The small number who present challenging behaviours are managed well by the staff and make good progress in improving their performance, such as during a Year 7 history lesson. Very few pupils were excluded in the year prior to this inspection.
8. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual development. Pupils develop a good awareness of themselves and their own lives. They are encouraged to think about the lives of other people and their beliefs and experiences. This might be about people around them, or more distantly, such as when they studied the story of Anne Frank, or figures from past times. Lessons such as English, music and religious education provide a good variety of fascinating activities, such as storytellers, visits to the church, and theatre and musical productions in school.
9. The provision for pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils develop a very good sense of right and wrong in many different situations around them, and in the wider world. Teachers and classroom assistants might, for example, discuss sharing and being friends when an argument develops among children. In citizenship and personal, social and health education lessons, teachers plan discussions and projects about wider issues such as recycling, government and councils, and helping less fortunate people. Pupils give good support to several different charities through good fund-raising efforts each year.
10. There is very good provision for pupils' social development. Staff make great efforts to encourage pupils to work and play together in lessons, on visits, at lunchtime and in the playgrounds. Pupils become very involved in the school council, in Christmas productions, lunchtime clubs, sporting occasions and activities with other schools. Often, they have individual targets that are aimed at their social and behavioural development, and staff are good at reminding pupils about these targets during lessons. Pupils gain a very good idea of being part of a community – both within the school, and beyond it.
11. In their cultural development, pupils develop a good awareness of the richness of their local culture, and of the diversity of other cultures. They take part in well-organised celebrations such as Christmas, Easter, harvest, Eid and Chinese New Year. Pupils experience foods from Asia, costumes from Victorian times, and music from Africa, for example. Lessons in French and Spanish include good learning about the culture and traditions of each country. Art, music and religious education lessons, as well as history and geography lessons, go a long way to giving pupils good experiences of the world beyond their own lives. These experiences are supplemented by visits to places of interest near and far.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	8.75	School data	1.90

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

12. Levels of attendance vary year by year due mainly to the medical profile of the pupils, but attendance has improved significantly since the last inspection. The school monitors

attendance very closely and is rigorous in its classification of unauthorised absence. There is a range of initiatives in place to encourage good attendance, which is achieved with the majority of pupils. High quality support is given to pupils who find regular attendance difficult to sustain, which affects only one or two pupils.

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	42	2	1
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	14	0	0

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. The breadth, balance and relevance of the curriculum for all pupils and students are good. Teaching and learning are good throughout the school. Care for pupils, and attention to their welfare, health and safety, are very good. Pupils and students have good support, advice and guidance.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. The assessment of pupils' progress is good and the information gathered by the school about pupils' progress is used effectively in planning lessons and in supporting pupils' achievements.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is much effective teaching across the school.
- Because lessons are planned well, there is good teamwork in classrooms and good choices and use of resources to promote learning.
- Teachers and their assistants possess good expertise, and the use of a variety of electronic aids to support learning is outstanding.
- Occasionally, the loss of time in lessons and slack planning take away from the quality of teaching and learning.
- Assessment procedures are good and the information they generate is well used to support pupils' learning.

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 74 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	14 (19%)	49 (66%)	10 (14%)	1 (1%)	0	0

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.

13. In the great majority of lessons teaching is good and this results in all pupils, whatever their background or special educational needs, learning effectively and achieving well. Figures in the table above present, more or less, the same picture as that found during the previous inspection. While there has been no significant improvement in the quality of teaching, good teaching and learning have, nevertheless, been maintained. In the 74 lessons seen, all teachers taught some good lessons; most taught consistently well and occasionally produced very good lessons. Close monitoring of the quality of teaching takes place and this has been effective in giving the school a clear picture of its effectiveness. Monitoring has not been in place for sufficient time for senior staff to develop fully their strategies to raise standards even higher, although there is a clear view on the direction they need to take.
14. Teachers are given guidelines, which they usually follow, on how they should plan what they are going to teach. This results in well-organised lessons that set out to achieve specific learning outcomes for pupils. Teachers and their classroom assistants start out confidently and collectively so that lessons typically get off to a brisk and good start. Pupils' interest is quickly captured and it is sustained by the good practice of dividing time into a variety of related activities. These are used well to stimulate pupils' efforts and hard work. The work pupils are given to do is imaginatively thought out and, in particular, teachers introduce a range of attractive resources that have a direct link to supporting what pupils need to learn. Expectations are high and pupils are positively challenged to overcome, as much as possible, the limitations imposed by physical disability. What distinguishes very good teaching is the greater extent to which teachers engage pupils with their enthusiasm and grasp of the material informing their lesson. This results in a much higher level of response from pupils and, consequently, very good learning.
15. In the majority of subjects and areas in which learning takes place, teachers are expert. In general, they and their classroom assistants know their pupils well. Classroom assistants are well briefed on lesson activities and use much imagination and skill in supporting purposeful learning. Their good relationships with pupils are used effectively to give pupils positive encouragement. What is outstanding, in terms of expertise, is the development and use by pupils of electronic aids for communication and for controlling their wheelchairs. Enormous success has been achieved by many pupils learning to use voice synthesisers, and word and symbol processors. This has meant they have access to a rate of progress matching their intellectual abilities that their physical disabilities would otherwise prevent. The few pupils with severe disabilities have learnt to operate electronic switches with movements of the head. This has meant they can use communication aids and computers and drive their wheelchairs independently.
16. Teaching and learning suffer from very few faults. The shortcomings seen were often slight and had the effect sometimes of turning an otherwise very good lesson into a good one. The fact that observations took place at the beginning of a school year, when teachers were often faced with new groups, occasionally determined the quality of learning. Equally, the length of lessons has changed and teachers have not adjusted fully to this and quite often time was not managed effectively. As a result, some shorter lessons moved too quickly for pupils to absorb what they needed. There was not the time, for example, to elicit from pupils whether they had learnt what was intended. Some long lessons failed to fill the time purposefully and sustain the challenge for pupils. In one religious education lesson, the plan was not closely adhered to, with the result that what pupils should have learnt was not taught. In another lesson in religious education two factors combined to make learning unsatisfactory; the lesson was not planned to match and challenge the range of pupils' abilities, and during the lesson three of the five pupils involved were taken out to receive speech and language therapy.
17. Assessment is good, overall, and there is a good range of assessment procedures in place which means teachers are well aware of the levels of each pupil and the targets to be achieved.

The assistant headteacher collates the data collected by staff on pupils' performance and generates figures and graphs which currently provide a view of pupils' progress over two years. Increasingly, teachers are realising the significance of the data in evaluating their teaching, learning and pupils' achievements. They make good use of assessments in planning the next steps. A successful multi-professional approach to assessment ensures comprehensive and relevant targeting of what pupils can be expected to achieve. In the annual reviews of pupils' special educational needs, parents and pupils are able to agree the targets. A new departure is that baseline assessment takes place when new pupils are first admitted to school, which comprises of an assessment for English, mathematics, science and personal, social and health education. Teachers are well aware of the levels of each pupil and the targets to be achieved.

18. Class teachers are responsible for assessing each pupil in each subject they teach. All subject co-ordinators incorporate assessment into planning and most pupils are involved in a review of their work. Most work is marked with relevant comments to encourage and inform pupils, and homework is regularly set. Classroom assistants work alongside teachers to record responses during lessons. This information is used to check targets and inform planning of lessons. The range and level of accreditation have improved since the last inspection to better meet the diverse needs of all pupils and students.

The curriculum

The curriculum provides a good range of well-planned learning opportunities that meet the diverse needs presented by the pupil population. The opportunities that pupils have to enrich their experiences and learning are good. The resources the school has to meet the needs of its pupils are good. The quality of the accommodation is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Overall, there are good opportunities created to promote pupils' and students' learning.
- Opportunities for sports and the arts in the local community are used effectively to enrich pupils' learning.
- The resources for pupils with communication difficulties are very good and this enables them to be fully involved in learning.
- The number, experience and the expertise of all staff to meet the wide range needs of pupils are good. The availability of specialist teaching areas in the secondary area broadens the range of curriculum experiences.

Commentary

19. The curriculum is broad and well balanced, and meets well the needs of the pupils. It meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and those for religious education. Provision for personal, social and health education is very well planned across the school thanks to the effective efforts of the two co-ordinators. They have set out imaginative teaching approaches that succeed in gaining pupils' interest and their full involvement in important personal and wider social issues. There is good provision made for the development of the pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. A good range of accredited courses is used effectively to recognise the pupils' and students' achievements and these provide a stimulus for their learning. The school has also recently introduced additional courses in response to the changing needs of pupils.
20. The curriculum is enriched well. There is a good choice of drama, sports and musical activities as well as a range of other out-of-school activities. There are also visitors to the school; for example, a local councillor talks to the pupils about citizenship. Pupils participate in a two-day residential national sports event in Blackpool and enrich their English studies with a visit to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-upon-Avon.

21. A very good development is the provision to address the needs of pupils with specific communication difficulties. A team of staff, including teachers and therapists, has developed very effective methods and equipment to ensure that all these pupils, including those with the most complex needs, are fully engaged in the range of learning experiences that are very relevant to their all-round development. A student in the further education department, for example, who has communication and physical difficulties, confidently participates in group discussions by using a head switch to activate a wheelchair-mounted communicator.
22. The recently appointed co-ordinator for further education has successfully introduced the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) Certificate in Life Skills, which is specifically designed to develop the students' independence skills. This course has been adapted well to match the needs of students. Teachers and classroom assistants work very well together in teaching the course effectively and, because of this, students achieve well. Also, a classroom assistant takes effective charge of teaching students to manage independent travel.
23. Overall, the use made of the local community, businesses and colleges is satisfactory and the partnership with Connexions and other careers guidance agencies is adequate. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 attend the local further education college for part of their education. Only a small number of students in the school's further education department are actively involved because the available opportunities are not matched closely with their needs and abilities. The school is striving to develop more opportunities for the larger number of students to extend their learning in these situations. The same applies to work experience activities in the local community. A small number of students are involved in work shadowing activities in school, for instance with the school caretaker, but only one student is able to be placed in work outside school. Students interview people who work in a retail clothes shop to gain an insight into what it is like to work.
24. There are sufficient teachers for the size of the school; they are well qualified to provide all pupils with good learning opportunities. Teachers are well supported by their classroom assistants who make a significant contribution to pupils' learning. Both teachers and classroom assistants possess a good knowledge of pupils and use this most effectively in looking after their welfare, health and safety.
25. In Years 7 to 11, good use is made of specialist areas to teach science, design and technology, and food technology. Effective use is made of a bungalow in the school grounds to teach life and home management skills to students in the further education department. However, the space in the bungalow is limited and the classroom that the students use is some distance away and not ideally placed alongside the junior department.

Care, guidance and support

The school meets a very high standard in the care, welfare, health and safety of its pupils. It provides good support, advice and guidance for its pupils and students, based on the monitoring of their achievements and personal development. The extent to which pupils' views are taken into account is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The high quality of a very good range of care and welfare initiatives in the school maximises the learning opportunities for pupils.
- Assessment of risk for some activities out of school is too general.
- The very good relationships contribute well to the high quality of pastoral care and the very good involvement of pupils.

Commentary

26. The school has an extensive range of initiatives to maximise the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered by ensuring that their care and welfare are given a very high priority. Several therapists visit the school on a regular basis, giving speech and language, and occupational therapy support. These therapists work directly with pupils and also train staff in the school to support the therapy programmes they have set up. Other medical professionals hold clinics in the school. In addition, the school has a physiotherapist based in the school for four days each week and a nurse permanently based in the school. This ensures that a health professional is always available to administer medication and advise teachers on pupils' health matters or comfort. It also ensures that parents are informed at the earliest opportunity of any additional health needs their child may be presenting. Because the health needs of pupils are overseen so rigorously, minor ailments are spotted early and pupils' comfort is given high priority. This ensures that pupils are enabled to attend school as much as possible and, because they are as physically comfortable as possible, they focus better on their learning. The assisted and augmentative communication group is a very well established initiative which provides very good resources for pupils to communicate and this initiative improves greatly their opportunities to benefit fully from the curriculum.
27. The school ensures that all statutory checks are undertaken and is rigorous in its assessment of risk within the school building. However, risk assessments prepared for some visits out of school are too general, and do not reflect the particular risks represented by the venue being visited or the difficulties of the particular pupils involved. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all adults working in the school are aware of them. All incidents and accidents are recorded thoroughly and parents are fully informed. By ensuring that the care and welfare of pupils are given a very high priority, the school maximises the benefit pupils can gain from the educational opportunities offered.
28. All through the school there are clear indications of very good relationships between pupils and adults. Adults are patient, kind and very supportive, which means pupils feel very secure and willing to contribute ideas in lessons. This has a very positive effect on pupils' feelings of self-worth, their attitudes to their learning, and school life in general. The school works hard to seek and take account of the views of its pupils. All adults in the school listen to pupils, valuing and supporting their ideas wherever possible. There is a vibrant, well-established school council. They meet very regularly and discuss all aspects of the life of their school. Over time, the council has had significant influence on the development of the school, including the development of the playground, the installation of water fountains and the redecoration of the boys' toilets. Pupils are surveyed regularly for their views, serve on the school Health and Safety committee, decide which charities the school will support and have made a video to introduce the school to new pupils.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has established good links with parents. Links with the community and with other schools and colleges are satisfactory. The effectiveness of extended school services is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school values the views of parents and responds positively to them
- The school supports parents well.
- The school's expertise in assisted and augmentative communication benefits pupils within and beyond the school.
- Some parents feel unable to fully support their children's learning at home.

Commentary

29. The school values the views of parents and actively works to discover them. Parents are surveyed on an annual basis to obtain their views and ideas. These are analysed and where possible incorporated into the school improvement plan. To date, parental views have

influenced the school to reconsider the homework policy, audit the therapy situation in school, hold a 'Parents Day' for younger pupils each half-term, and investigate the setting-up of a Parent Teacher Association. All these outcomes are reported back to the parents. All parents who expressed a view during the inspection process are very supportive of the school. They find staff very open and approachable and they feel valued. These views are endorsed by the inspection.

30. The school works hard to support parents when their children first come to the school. They visit them in their homes to form a relationship before children attend the school, welcome them into school with , or without, their child to familiarise them with the building and introduce them to the transport personnel who will be accompanying their child each day. If their child has particular communication difficulties which means they use assisted and augmentative communication the school organises training for parents, so the benefit of these aids can be built on at home as well as at school. The physiotherapist that works with pupils in school visits parents to discuss any concerns they may have and give any advice and support necessary to aid the child. In addition, the school is very responsive to any concern a parent may raise at any time. Parents will always be seen and their concerns listened to.
31. A multi-disciplinary group, involving school staff, speech and language therapists and medical engineering staff from Barnsley Hospital, pool their extensive expertise in identifying and obtaining assisted and augmentative communication resources for pupils who have a need in school's across the region. This group meets each half-term, when the progress and needs of pupils are reviewed. The group endeavours, within finite funding, and the very rapid rate of technological development, to provide pupils with equipment which is up to date with the latest technology.
32. Some parents feel unable to fully engage with their children's learning at home. This is in part due to the fact that home/school diaries do not continue when pupils leave the junior department at the end of Year 6 and move into the secondary department of the school. Whilst the school's rationale for this is understandable in that they want to mirror life in mainstream school as closely as possible for their pupils, this does present difficulties for some parents, especially if their children have some difficulty with communication. There are no curriculum newsletters produced by the school and so some parents do not know what their children are being taught or what topics they are covering. As a result, they feel less able to engage their children in conversation about what they are doing at school or to help with learning.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher gives very good leadership to the school and this is supported by the good leadership of senior and other key staff. Overall, the school is managed well. Governance is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There has been a good improvement in leadership.
- While the key areas of school management have improved and are effective, some roles and responsibilities are not yet fully resolved.
- Governors are making a positive contribution to school improvement.

Commentary

33. The headteacher, who has been in post two years, has achieved a smooth and successful transition, which has raised expectations across the school. The headteacher has developed a clear picture of the school, which is informing where it needs to go. Changes envisaged are in train and on course for successful completion. The headteacher carefully compares the school's results with those of similar schools and consults all the people involved in and affected by the school. This has, in particular, achieved a positive and constructive relationship

with staff, governors and parents, who, as a result, understand and share her aims. Leadership has been determined and direct in ensuring the school community participates and contributes to improvement. The two assistant headteachers, who were appointed after the headteacher, have not, as yet, spent long in their new roles. Energetic and enthusiastic, they subscribe fully to the headteacher's vision and ensure that this vision, and their own high expectations are spread positively throughout the school.

34. The senior management team is well focused on school aims and priorities and their work ensures the school maintains its course and the pace of change. Their involvement in school improvement planning has increased and is now effectively shared by all staff reviewing and evaluating the quality of what pupils are provided with and the standards they achieve. Good improvement planning is well supported by careful financial planning and the efficient flow of accurate financial information. The level of attention paid by senior staff to the quality of teaching and the curriculum has been raised significantly and subject co-ordinators are, increasingly, playing a constructive part in school evaluation. This has had a positive effect on improving the quality of education as well as the professional development of staff and, in particular, the revaluing of support staff roles in promoting pupils' achievement. The success of remodelling people's responsibilities has freed teachers to focus more on improving the curriculum. The school's performance management policy works effectively and in harmony with school improvement planning. This helps focus the attention and efforts of all staff on the key priorities for development.
35. The accountability, within the senior management team, for provision for students in the further education department is unclear. Teachers and classroom assistants are not as aware as they need to be of the timetables for therapists and personal carers to take pupils out of lessons. The impact on learning of taking pupils out of lessons is not yet fully appreciated and in one instance contributed to unsatisfactory learning.
36. Governors have a high level of commitment to their school community and support it with their considerable experience and expertise. They have increased their direct involvement by making regular visits to see for themselves, and evaluate, the school's work. They also play a more significant part than they did at the time of the last inspection in the formulation and review of the school improvement plan. The school values the contribution governors make to its improvement and in doing so ensures they are kept well informed through, for example, the headteacher's reports, pupils' progress reports and quality of teaching reports. In all, governors are in a strong position to know the school's strengths and weaknesses and they use their position effectively to encourage and challenge staff.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	967536
Total expenditure	915542
Expenditure per pupil	12372

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	33940
Balance carried forward to the next	85933

37. The large balance carried forward into the current financial year arose from the school tightening expenditure during 2003/2004 on the assumption the local authority would be reducing the budget in that year by £70,000. In fact, the budget was reduced by £30,000 with the result that the actions to balance the budget gave rise to the surplus. The school is to be financed above the number of pupils actually on roll in order that it can begin, this year, to develop its outreach role with other schools. This is currently the subject of a proposal to the local authority by the school.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

Work-related learning

The provision in work related learning is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum contributes satisfactorily to work-related learning and meets statutory requirements.

Commentary

38. Provision ensures pupils in Years 10 and 11 and students in the further education department have the opportunity to gain an initial insight into the world of work. The opportunities to apply these skills beyond school are limited by the nature of many pupils' physical and medical needs as well as by the availability of suitable placements. Last year, one student was able to take up a work experience placement and this is unlikely to increase significantly this year. However, the school continues to build contacts with Life Time Careers, a Rotherham agency, and seek whatever opportunities there are to extend pupils' and students' experiences of the world of work. For example, visits to a production plant and to a careers conference are planned. The Connexions advisor is involved in teaching some lessons for Year 10 and 11 pupils, conducts interviews and attends pupils' transitional review meetings. Pupils take part in a small, school-based, enterprise activity producing badges and business cards. Pupils also attend the local college for a half-day each week where they take part in an ICT course.
39. The ASDAN course 'Towards Independence' provides the basis of work-related learning in the further education department. It includes studies structured to prepare students for the working environment such as preparing for an interview. With staff assistance, a number of students are managing a breakfast bar at school. In doing so, they help to purchase items, prepare basic food and drinks and act as sales assistants. Students have interviewed people who work in a local retail outlet to gain an insight into their routines. A number of students participate in work shadowing activities with staff employed in the school, for instance the school caretaker.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

Provision in the Foundation Stage is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Children's learning is good or better in all the areas of learning.
- Good teaching is based on clear planning, and activities that children enjoy and find challenging.
- Provision in the Foundation Stage is led effectively and organised well.

Commentary

40. Since the previous inspection, the provision for nursery children has closed. Currently, there are very few reception children and these share a class with a few pupils who are in Years 1 and 2. While provision is good, no direct comparison can be made with provision as it was at the time of the last inspection and a judgement on improvement since then is not possible.
41. When reception children are admitted, their skills, because of their special educational needs, are generally poor in all areas of development. However, the teaching focuses well on the most important areas, and children make very good progress in their personal, social and emotional development. Whether their main difficulties are physical or sensory, all children make good progress in the other areas of development. This is because they are helped very well to take part in all the activities on offer, whether by the teacher, the classroom assistants, or the therapy staff. The curriculum is good, with all areas of learning well covered, including religious education which forms part of children's knowledge of the world. They are not, of course, expected to reach the early learning goals that mainstream children are aiming for.
42. Lessons are well planned. They have a good structure, with clear aims for each activity. Whatever the central aim of a lesson, there are also targets for other areas of development. So, for instance, physical activities in the hall may be centred on enjoyment, exercise, moving in time to music, balance and co-ordination. However, staff will also be aiming to improve children's understanding of instructions, their listening skills, counting how many times they can roll a ball, co-operating with a classmate or thinking of new ways of moving across the mats. The teacher and support staff work very well together as a team. Although the children have only recently started school, staff already know them well because of the good previous links with their nursery. Relationships in the class among staff and children are already very warm. Children have very positive and varied learning experiences each day, encouraging them to want to learn.
43. The good leadership and organisation come from the very capable and well-qualified teacher who has developed a good long-term plan of what is to be taught. This is flexible and it changes according to how well staff think the children are progressing in each aspect of what is taught. Staff's assessment of progress is frequent and well carried out. Several children go to a mainstream nursery for sessions each week, supported by staff from Newman School. This is preparation for leaving permanently, and there has been considerable success in doing this in the recent past.
44. The accommodation is satisfactory, and children also use other areas of the school such as the hall, swimming pool and the old nursery unit. Staff have a good range of resources to enliven activities, and they use them well in many lessons.
45. Children have a very good introduction to the class, with frequent contact with staff in the former nursery, and visits between the rooms. Parents come into school, and staff visit homes,

so everyone knows each other well from the start. When children are ready to leave they have a very good preparation for their entry into the main school. They have been attending full time for about a year, spending the reception year in the same class with pupils in the next age group up. Other children may move to mainstream schools.

46. Children achieve very well in their **personal, social and emotional development** because staff are very consistent in planning all lessons to encourage learning in this area. They see these skills as vital to all other learning, and so they have very high expectations that children will learn to sit together, will share things with each other, and will become as independent as possible in their daily lives – such as washing their hands; eating and drinking properly; taking registers and messages to the office; knowing where to put their coats and bags; where to get paints, crayons and toys; where to put things back; and doing little jobs in class. Children have many activities in which they work alongside each other, have lunch and snacks together, and play together.
47. Another major area of development is in children's **communication, language and literacy** skills. Children's progress is good because staff create many opportunities for children to listen and respond. Staff use signing well when necessary to make themselves more easily understood by children. Staff also give good encouragement for children to respond with speech or signs, such as during music sessions, snack times or counting activities. The higher attaining children speak in short sentences and say what they want, or what they have been doing, but other children may not speak at all. The higher attaining children enjoy looking at books, and handle them properly. They talk about things they have done, or what they want, and they 'write' and 'draw' on paper, or in the sand tray. Lower attaining children sit and pay attention for short periods, and need a lot of adult help to concentrate.
48. Children achieve well in their **physical development**. This is a high priority with classroom staff and therapy staff because it is so important to their progress that children learn to sit up to pay attention, stand up, move to the next activity and be in a comfortable sitting position. Very often, children have poor physical skills, but staff plan for children to do exercises, to play actively indoors and outside, or to hold brushes and crayons. Care is taken getting children to stand up or to change their position when using computers, or working at the painting easel, for instance. In the swimming pool, children gain very good confidence and may relax their muscles better than at other times. In games, gymnastics and dance lessons, children improve their movements, balance and awareness of each other as partners in physical activities.
49. In **mathematical development**, children make good progress because number skills are reinforced in many lessons besides those that are primarily aimed at mathematics. The separate lessons are well taught, and the higher attaining children can count to 20, and perhaps beyond. The lower attaining children have little real idea about numbers and counting, but may learn the numbers to five as part of songs that they like. The activities have clear aims, and staff use a range of good equipment to help children's counting and other mathematics skills. Children are well taught to recognise different colours and shapes, and to understand ideas such as 'big' and 'small', 'inside' and 'behind', or 'near' and 'far away'. Many lessons include opportunities to practise counting, perhaps by singing number rhymes and songs such as 'Five currant buns' or 'Five little speckled frogs', or counting how many steps it takes to get across a mat; in the sand tray they learn about things being 'full' and 'empty'.
50. Children's achievements are also good in their **creative development**, and in gaining **knowledge and understanding of the world**. Teachers plan a good variety of activities imaginatively. Children paint with their fingers and with brushes; they stick paper, glitter, stars, beans and lentils onto paper to make pictures such as a beach scene or 'the emperor's new clothes', or to make underwater scenes. Children attempt to sing, and to play percussion instruments such as tambourines, rattles and hand bells. They are developing real enjoyment, and have several favourite songs that they request when it comes to choosing the next song. In each activity they are learning about the materials, gaining skills in handling things, improving their understanding, and learning to get along together. Often, they go out on trips. Examples

include the pet shop, a fast-food restaurant, a garden centre, a butterfly farm, the local church and a sea life centre. On these trips, they not only learn about the actual place, but they also see the wonder of the stained-glass windows, experience the weather, meet other people doing different jobs, and wear different clothes according to the weather and the activity. The higher attaining children learn that things used to be different many years ago, and they begin to understand that things are always changing, including changes in themselves as they grow up. They listen to stories about Jesus, and know that some books and objects are very special.

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 1 TO 5

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

ENGLISH

The provision for English is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- As a result of the very effective co-ordination of English across the school, the curriculum and its assessment are very good.
- The use of ICT, especially the use of assisted and augmentative communication aids, is very good.
- Teaching and learning are good.

Commentary

51. Pupils throughout the school are achieving well. The co-ordination of English is very good. Relevant schemes of work for all areas of the subject have been produced, which includes a range of accreditation that reflects pupils' different levels of attainment. Every effort has been made to promote learning and every pupil's achievement in speaking and listening, reading, spelling and writing. Regularly set homework and the involvement of parents in workshops serve to support pupils' learning well. All pupils take books home to read as homework and many have acquired a sufficient interest in reading to borrow novels. The speech and language therapist is very involved with parents, teachers and pupils in making assessments and setting targets. Assessment is thorough, and provides a sound base from which pupils' communication and literacy skills are maximised. Individual education plan targets build well on one another and are used comprehensively in planning for individual work. Full access to learning is the priority of the school for all pupils, which is encouraged successfully through media studies, drama and the use of ICT. Students from other schools are involved, for example, in the production of the school's annual pantomime. In the last inspection, provision for English was judged to be good; recent innovative practice has ensured that the improvement in the subject since then has been very good.
52. Teachers and classroom assistants have good subject knowledge and know the pupils well. This ensures planning and assessment are relevant to meet individual needs. For example, interesting activities and good use of questions are beginning to help Year 2 pupils to recount simple events. The achievement of Year 4 pupils is very good. Their teacher was very skilled at involving all the pupils in an interactive game which illustrated how much they had understood. The very good use made of resources and the comprehensive use of assisted and augmentative communication aids as well as simple electronic switches ensure that pupils are enabled to take part in sequencing a story successfully. In this, pupils had great fun taking the part of characters, and their acting was very confident and expressive. A pupil made excellent progress in operating a switch using head movements, thus achieving the ability to use an electronic aid to communicate fully in lessons. The good use of role-play with Year 6 pupils led to them remembering clearly the sequence of a story and they progressed well onto word-processing sentences about the story.

53. The grouping of older pupils by ability for their English lessons has proved effective in promoting learning. The good rapport between the teacher and pupils, and good use of the interactive whiteboard, ensures pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 learn the correct terms and ways to make a video. A suggestion by a pupil resulted in the video being produced to introduce prospective pupils and parents to the school. Pupils were delighted to see themselves on video and to hear their discussion of what they like about their school. The teacher is skilled in encouraging pupils to take responsibility for equipment in a mature manner. What made one lesson so vibrant was the result of the teacher's enthusiasm and very good subject knowledge. This heightened pupils' concentration and enjoyment of the novel being read and they went on energetically to write their own plot for a story. The author of the novel and the pupils are in regular contact through e-mail, which allows them to have a direct discussion about the story and its construction.
54. Lessons are planned well in a way that encourages pupils to interact with each other and aid the analysis of a novel. In Year 10, pupils' thinking skills are developed effectively by the teacher recording their responses on the board, which aids the focus of their discussion and helps them maintain consistent arguments. Media studies are used effectively with Year 11 pupils to explore the themes and characters of *Great Expectations*, leading to a good understanding from their in-depth analysis of the novel.
55. Teachers in the further education department liaise well and ensure a good match in their approach to teaching English and literacy. This ensures students gain the confidence to undertake their course. Good use is made of check-lists to evaluate students' responses and understanding. There is a wide range of attainment, meaning some students need much support to formulate their questions, and some speak fluently and in context. Teaching is planned well and involves all students effectively at their different levels. While carrying out shopping skills, students are shadowed to shop and pay for goods independently or supported to make choices and find their way around a supermarket. A student has made remarkable progress using a communication aid and a powered wheelchair and hopes to transfer to a residential college.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

56. The co-ordinator for literacy has successfully introduced morning reading groups to improve and gauge the impact of literacy for individual learning difficulties, which in turn supports communication in all subjects. The skills of spelling, reading and writing and library skills are formally taught throughout school. Classroom assistants support very effectively pupils who rely on communication aids. Speaking, listening and reading are features of all lessons, while subject writing frames provide a secure format in which pupils can complete written text. The use of ICT ensures all pupils and students have the opportunity to word process their writing.

Modern foreign languages

Provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good teaching leads to pupils and students developing an interest in foreign languages and speaking French and Spanish with confidence.

Commentary

57. French is taught well to pupils in Years 7 to 11 and they achieve well. The good standards seen at the time of the last inspection have been maintained as a result of the continued sound co-ordination of modern foreign languages. French teaching is lively and challenging for the pupils,

whether they are listening to spoken French, speaking it themselves, or reading and writing. The capable and well-qualified teacher uses resources well, including cassette tapes, computers, work-sheets and course books. Pupils work towards nationally recognised qualifications, including GCSE and Entry Level Certificate. Pupils make good progress and gain confidence well, especially in their speaking and listening skills.

58. The introduction of Spanish teaching since the last inspection is a good improvement to the breadth of opportunities pupils have. Spanish is taught to a group of pupils in Year 11, as part of a transition programme before they go into the further education department. Their achievement is good. Lessons are short, brisk and well targeted at developing a broad basic vocabulary. Pupils learn well, and are beginning to enjoy this new venture.
59. The teaching of Spanish in the further education department meets the requirements of an Entry Level Certificate course, although it has not been running long enough for any students yet to have been entered for the examination. Work so far has included greetings and introductions in Spanish; numbers, days and months; and shopping and general conversational topics. Students' achievement is good. The teaching is bright and varied, using good question-and-answer sessions, games and role-play situations to motivate students. The co-ordinator has recently altered the programme of what is to be learned in response to her assessment of students' learning over the past year.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils throughout the school achieve well.
- Teaching and learning are good.
- The leadership, management and curriculum are good.
- Mathematical skills are soundly reinforced in other subjects of the curriculum.

Commentary

60. Pupils achieve particularly well in their basic number skills. This is because numeracy is the main priority in this subject throughout the school. Pupils have several extra lessons each week aimed at improving their numeracy skills, especially mental mathematics. Teachers have agreed on a common set of methods for how pupils will work out their sums. They keep to the agreed ways, so pupils do not get confused from one class to the next. Pupils learn how to count, and how to add and subtract, multiply and divide numbers. Higher attaining pupils become good at solving problems, and they understand simple fractions, decimals and percentages. They learn how to use numbers in investigations and real-life practical situations such as in the shops, a café, or the post office. In learning about shapes and measuring, pupils make satisfactory progress, although the investigations they carry out are practical and good.
61. Teachers plan their lessons well, generally with good mental warm-ups to start them off, and activities that are well aimed at each individual pupil. The lesson aims are based clearly on assessments of how well the pupils are progressing in their earlier work. In the main, teachers are lively and knowledgeable; they enjoy good and warm relationships with the pupils. They are able to motivate pupils into wanting to learn, and to concentrate well on their work. Having pupils in classes according to their ability helps teachers to plan appropriate work between Years 7 to 11. Higher attaining pupils work towards GCSE qualifications, whilst other pupils learn practical and basic skills that lead to the Entry Level Certificate. Results in both courses are good. Classroom assistants know their pupils well, and give good support when needed. Teachers use a good range of resources to help pupils' learning, including computers and other high-technology equipment such as electronic whiteboards and personal communicators for some pupils. Sometimes, teachers get the pace and timing of lessons wrong; over-long lessons

become slow-paced, and sometimes the explanations and 'warm-ups' take too long, and pupils become restless.

62. Two primary and secondary department mathematics co-ordinators lead and manage this subject well. They are keen and very capable and they work together very well. This has resulted in a good improvement since the last inspection, particularly in teaching and learning, curriculum and assessment. Pupils' progress is assessed and charted very well; teachers use the results well in changing their plans of what they will teach next and how they will teach it. The resources have been developed well, and all pupils now have access to a wider range of courses that lead to nationally recognised qualifications. The representative from the governing body has visited lessons and reported to the governors.
63. Mathematics is not taught separately in the further education department. Instead, pupils use and reinforce practical mathematics skills as part of their Life Skills and Independence courses. For example, they go shopping, look for the best value buys, and analyse the receipts. Each week, meals are planned, and pupils work out the food preparation, reinforcing their knowledge of weighing and measuring, cooking times, and temperatures. The only lesson that was seen during the inspection was a satisfactory shopping expedition and follow-up, so it is not possible to judge the quality of the overall provision in mathematics for students.

Mathematics across the curriculum

64. Teachers make satisfactory efforts to reinforce and broaden mathematics skills in lessons in other subjects. This might include, for example, measuring in design and technology and science; position, directions and scales in geography; practical weight, time, temperature and number skills in food technology; graphs and databases in computing; and counting and positional awareness in physical education.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers provide imaginative ways for pupils to undertake investigations in science, which are particularly well planned in Years 7 to 11.
- Because of the good teaching, all pupils achieve well and make good progress in their learning.
- Resources in science are used very well and the specialist room provides a stimulating learning environment.

Commentary

65. The planning for science is detailed and enables teachers to deliver activities which significantly challenge the pupils, develop their interest and increase their knowledge. This is the result of good teaching throughout the school. Pupils learn well and their progress is assessed effectively, which enables teachers to plan what to teach pupils in future lessons. Pupils' attainment is measured accurately, which has meant those entered for the GCSE course are prepared well to meet its demands. GCSE results have been consistently good over several years. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 have individual learning targets, which are reviewed on a regular basis. The majority of lessons are very interesting and demand that pupils think and observe scientifically. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson, the pupils were transfixed by the magnified images of pollen grains transferred from the microscope to a television screen.
66. Teaching methods in the secondary department are well developed, and there is good continuity because the knowledgeable co-ordinator teaches all the science to the pupils. All the pupils are challenged by the content of the lessons. Across the school, classroom assistants provide good support and this ensures that all the pupils' needs are met. The setting up and

management of investigations are very good, and these are very carefully thought out and planned with pupils' individual needs in mind. Because of the well-prepared activities in a very good Year 3 and 4 lesson, pupils with a wide range of manipulative and communication difficulties are fully involved in discovering the texture of different materials. Questioning is carefully judged and measured in relation to the individual pupils' ability. Scientific vocabulary is very well promoted in lessons. More able pupils confidently use appropriate words in their answers. Teachers ensure that pupils have a good understanding of the ideas that relate to these words. In the secondary department, pupils are encouraged to use reference books and dictionaries to further extend their understanding.

67. The specialist well-resourced science room is a very good asset to assist in the good teaching of the subject. There is good use of ICT to support learning in science. The teacher's use of multi-media presentations strongly motivates and inspires pupils' interest in science.
68. The recently appointed co-ordinator has a clear idea about the future development of science. The good standards reported at the time of the last inspection and the good teaching and learning then have been maintained and, therefore, improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching and learning of ICT skills and pupils' achievements are very good, particularly in Years 7 to 11.
- Resources are very good and they are used very well.
- The use of a wide range of modern technology very successfully promotes and supports pupils' communication skills and learning in other subjects.

Commentary

69. Pupils achieve very well overall. They achieve well in Years 1 to 6, where pupils use the keyboards and menus on their communication aids very well. They use a mouse and keyboard well to complete cause and effect and number activities, to enter simple text and to create pictures. Pupils achieve very well in Years 7 to 11. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 use a wide variety of ICT skills and applications including word-processors, graphics and multi-media presentation programs, as well as control and modelling activities. Pupils in Years 10 to 11 have good opportunities to achieve a recognised accreditation by following a course at a local college; this includes word processing, database work and computer knowledge to a good standard in relation to their needs. Standards in the further education department are well below average. However, students achieve well in developing skills to use computers and other devices and appliances in the home, at college and in the workplace.
70. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of a wide variety of modern technology and a very good understanding of how it can be used to promote the pupils' learning. Lessons are planned well. Activities are challenging and stimulating and carefully matched to the different needs and abilities of different pupils. The school has very good resources and teachers make very good use of these in specific ICT lessons and many other subjects. There are good arrangements to assess what pupils know, understand and can do, and to plan what they need to learn next. In Years 7 to 9, there are some good examples of pupils evaluating their own work.
71. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator makes a substantial contribution to the school's provision from Year 1 to Year 11. He has successfully led substantial developments in planning and manages the collection and evaluation of pupils' work very well. He carries out significant additional roles as chair of the AAC group and in the school's ICT

outreach service to other schools. Although the co-ordinator offers technical support, advice and training, he is not involved in the planning of work in the post-16 department. The school could usefully review this aspect of his role. There have been good improvements in standards, teaching and learning and leadership since the last inspection.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

72. The use of electronic communication aids, computers and other devices to promote learning across the curriculum is very good. The use of a wide range of communication aids, word processing, video recorders and the Internet enables pupils to express their ideas and develop their language skills very well. Last year, pupils in Years 8, 9 and 10 successfully completed a major project to produce a very high quality DVD about the school. The school's website includes exciting work done on a novel with a children's author, and reviews of the novel by pupils. Pupils in Years 7 to 11 complete substantial pieces of word-processed writing, particularly in English. For example, pupils have written at length using sophisticated language and ideas, when studying Dickens' *Great Expectations*, reviewing plays, writing holiday diaries or writing letters of complaint. These pupils have also used ICT effectively in recording and analysing the outcomes of a wide range of scientific enquiries. ICT programs are used to compose music, and CD-ROMs and the Internet are used to carry out research in, for example, science, music, geography and history. In design and technology, pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 have designed and made paper clips as part of a visit to the local Magna centre. In art and design pupils have created striking banners and posters using graphics programs.

HUMANITIES

73. It is not possible to make reliable judgements about provision and outcomes in **geography** and **history**. These subjects were sampled by observing a small number of lessons and looking at a small amount of pupils' work. The evidence indicates that there have been good improvements since the last inspection when provision and outcomes were judged to be satisfactory. In history, one good lesson was seen and in geography two good lessons and one very good lesson were seen. The lessons were planned well and whole-class and individual activities and tasks were pitched at the right level to both capture the pupils' interest and challenge them in their learning. There are satisfactory arrangements for pupils in Years 10 and 11 to work towards recognised accreditation.
74. In a Years 5 and 6 geography lesson, very good use of electronic aids significantly promoted the pupils' communication skills and enabled them to show what they had learnt from looking at a variety of information about Rotherham. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils made good gains in their knowledge and understanding of the different kinds of jobs that people do. Pupils of different abilities successfully completed different tasks that enabled them all to develop their understanding of the differences between primary, secondary and tertiary jobs. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 showed good skills when looking for leisure facilities in the Rotherham district using Ordnance Survey maps. They all understood the various tasks they were set during the lesson and worked diligently in pairs and on their own, although one or two included items such as hospitals and telephone boxes in their list of leisure facilities. The work seen showed that ICT, including electronic communication aids, is used well in geography and that pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 complete a good amount and range of work, including records of a field study trip to the Peak District and trips to an abbey and a church. At the start of a Year 7 history lesson, pupils demonstrated very good recall of previous work. By the end of the lesson the pupils had completed several tasks and learnt well and enthusiastically about the build-up to the Battle of Hastings.

Religious education

The provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils are not achieving as much as they do in their other subjects.
- The planning of what pupils in Years 1 to 6 are taught and the organisation of their lessons are unsatisfactory.
- The work that pupils in Years 7 to 11 are given lacks sufficient challenge.
- While the management of religious education is ineffective, very good resources are used to stimulate pupils' interest.

Commentary

75. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory with the result that pupils underachieve. In Years 1 and 6, judging from curriculum documents and the work in pupils' books, the planning for religious education is weak. What is set out on paper as the intentions for what pupils should learn is not effectively adapted to the wide range in pupils' abilities, which is detrimental to the success of lessons. Not all pupils are being taught according to their needs and higher attaining pupils in particular are not challenged sufficiently. As a result, in the lesson seen, involving pupils in Years 5 and 6, the responses expected from the highest attaining pupils were several levels below what they were capable of. Learning was more effective for most in the class of reception and Years 1 and 2 pupils because of the sharp and appropriate focus on early learning goals. However, the two higher attaining Years 1 and 2 pupils in this class could have achieved more in relation to religious education had this been planned for specifically.
76. A major shortcoming in teaching religious education to pupils in Years 1 to 6 is that the planning of what is taught lacks clear statements on what pupils of different abilities are expected to learn. Such learning objectives are often more apparent in the statements against which pupils are assessed, although some of these are written too vaguely to achieve precision. However, it is hard to assess accurately what pupils have learnt given the difficulty of relating assessment procedures to curriculum plans that have no learning objectives. Another shortcoming affecting the quality of teaching and learning is the withdrawal of pupils from lessons for therapy. In the lesson involving Years 5 and 6, three of the five pupils were taken out halfway through for speech and language therapy. While a timetable had been agreed for their withdrawal, staff had not remembered or prepared for the removal of most of the group part-way through the lesson. The impact on the learning of the pupils affected by this arrangement has not been properly considered by the school.
77. While the planning of what is taught to pupils in Years 7 to 11 is more developed, there is too much discussion and too little writing, which means that the higher attaining pupils are not able to consolidate their literacy skills. In the Year 10 lesson seen, most pupils demonstrated a secure knowledge of the basic differences between the major faiths. In the course of the lesson they extended this successfully to facts about Sikhism. They did not, as intended, discuss contrasts with Christianity or achieve the objective of learning when and where Sikhism began, because the plan was not adhered to and time was not managed well.
78. Overall, co-ordination of provision in religious education is unsatisfactory. Co-ordination in the secondary department has suffered to an extent from the unavoidable absence of the subject leader. Improvement is unsatisfactory, overall. Collaboration between the primary and secondary departments is ineffective and there has been no improvement in this since the last inspection when it was reported as a weakness. However, there have been some good improvements in the secondary department. Very good books and artefacts have been acquired, which has contributed significantly to pupils acquiring their good factual knowledge and genuine interest in religions. This year, an Entry Level Certificate course has been launched for pupils in Years 10 and 11, although the higher attaining among them are handling more demanding GCSE courses in other subjects. Curriculum plans are broad enough to meet the basic requirements of the locally agreed syllabus, in terms of the religions to be studied. Students in the further education department have their study of religious education incorporated satisfactorily into a module of work for the ASDAN 'Towards Independence' course.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

79. A total of five part or full lessons were seen in design and technology and food technology. However, there was insufficient evidence to make a judgement on provision. The work on display in classrooms and teachers' planning indicate that there are appropriate opportunities

for all the pupils to be able to create their own designs and to use these ideas to manufacture and to evaluate products. The displays of pupils' work in the design and technology room are of a very high quality. The work illustrates a very good relationship made between design and production, for instance, a woodpecker-style door knocker that completes an electrical circuit to switch on a light. In two very good lessons seen, pupils were posed challenging problems to solve. In one lesson, the task was to create a moving model car from cardboard. In the other lesson, pupils, as part of their Entry Level Certificate course, had to evaluate the nutritional value and the taste of a range of food products. The availability of specialist design and technology and food technology rooms provides good accommodation and resources for the subject.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

80. No lessons were seen in **art and design** because the part-time teacher was absent when the inspection took place. As a result, it is not possible to make a judgement on provision in the subject.
81. The analysis of samples of pupils' work suggests that, in Years 1 to 6, pupils are, overall, achieving satisfactorily as they have sound opportunities to play and explore imaginatively with art materials. Pupils throughout the school reach their highest standards in observational drawing. Year 10 pupils have made well-proportioned sketches of a fruit bowl, incorporating line, tone and colour effectively. While the paintings of artists such as Van Gogh, Seurat and Bridget Riley are a stimulus for pupils' ideas, there is no strong indication in the work seen that these ideas are developed as far as they could be.

Music

The provision for music is **good**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Music lessons are planned well and are challenging for pupils.

Commentary

82. Music is taught to reception children and to pupils up to Year 9. There is effective co-ordination of music across the school. The school has worked hard to increase the level of opportunity for all pupils with a wider range of percussion instruments and relevant scheme of work. This is a good improvement since the last inspection and, as a result, pupils throughout the school being taught music are achieving well. A pianist plays for younger pupils and they enjoy this pleasant interactive session. Year 2 pupils are supported well when learning to shake and bang instruments as they sing. They are beginning to anticipate the next phrase; they listen well and are on cue to stop and start in time with the music. The good use of resources and planning so that Year 6 pupils learn in small incremental steps ensures achievement is very good. They learn, for example to recognise long and short sounds.
83. The correct use of musical terms is a good challenge for pupils in Years 7 to 9. They also listen well, and compose and perform their own tunes. Most pupils are achieving a good understanding of cyclic patterns and recognise the characteristics of minimalism. The teacher uses an interesting variety of recorded music to promote discussion. Pupils listen intently and make constructive comments about the mood created by a particular instrument, such as the high and low sounds produced by long and short bamboo instruments from South America. The detailed lessons and supportive teamwork ensure pupils are very involved in following written notation, and play using keyboards.

Physical education

84. Four lessons were seen in physical education across the age range, which is insufficient to reach an overall judgement on provision. However, in the lessons seen, the teaching was good and the pupils achieved well.
85. In two lessons, specifically timetabled for pupils in wheelchairs, the activities were very well organised and adapted to ensure that all the pupils had an opportunity to participate. What made teaching and learning very good in one lesson was the result of the teacher's adaptation of a wheelchair to carry a hockey stick. This enabled pupils to take part fully in the game. All the pupils displayed a very good awareness of tactics and were fully involved in the competition.
86. The written plans of what is taught across the school in physical education show that there is a good range of activities. The co-ordinator is developing more opportunities for the pupils to experience a range of adventurous activities, for instance orienteering. Pupils successfully represented the school at rational games held annually in Blackpool. They also take part in horse riding and swimming lessons.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Personal, social and health education (PSHE) including citizenship

87. Three lessons were seen, which is insufficient to judge pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching and learning. Judgements are made from discussion with the co-ordinators, scrutiny of pupils' work and observations and discussion with pupils and students in and around school. PSHE targets are agreed and set through the annual reviews of pupils' statements and in individual education plans, which are used appropriately to promote independence and personal skills throughout the school day. The comprehensive scheme of work provides a two-year programme of themes and activities to meet individual needs leading to Entry Level Certificate in Years 10 and 11 in citizenship. This is a good improvement since the last inspection. A variety of dramatic approaches such as role-play, stories and social interaction games involve all pupils with relevant learning.
88. All pupils learn about growing up and changes to their bodies and are encouraged to be aware of themselves and others. Relationships, health and sex education are formally taught to older pupils and students in science and PSHE lessons. Visitors to school who have had experience of drug misuse involve pupils in awareness discussions. Topical events, news and politics are a feature of modules. The school council involves pupils and students from each class who make constructive decisions about the school, which they discuss with the headteacher. For example, a 'buddy system' is to commence and clubs and outdoor facilities have improved. Pupils promote fund-raising events to support charities at home and abroad. Whole-school initiatives have resulted in a greater awareness of the recycling of rubbish, and the work of the school around such initiatives has gained them recognition through the Healthy Schools Award. Discussion and good use of word processing encourages students in the further education department to complete modules for a certificate in Life Skills.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	3
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	3
Pupils' achievement	3
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	2
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
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	3
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	4
The school's links with other schools and colleges	4
The leadership and management of the school	3
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 against individual targets and not national standards.