

# INSPECTION REPORT

**WINDLESTONE HALL SCHOOL**

Ferryhill

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114347

Head teacher: Mr P M Jonson

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker  
1424

Dates of inspection: 11 – 14 June 2001

Inspection number: 183632

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Boys
School address:	Rushyford Ferryhill County Durham
Postcode:	DL17 OLX
Telephone number:	01388 720337
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor G Porter
Date of previous inspection:	May 1996

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

OIN	Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1424	M H Whitaker	Registered inspector	Information and communication technology	What sort of school is it?
			Physical education	How high are standards?
			English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
9511	A Longfield	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
22466	D Pearson	Team inspector	English	
			Modern foreign language	
			Religious education	
7615	P Hall	Team inspector	Science	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Art and design	
			Design and technology	
			Equal opportunities	
10760	P Clark	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Geography	
			History	
			Music	
			Special educational needs	

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33 Kingsway  
London  
WC2B 6SE.

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Windlestone Hall is a special school for boys aged 11-16 years. There are currently 62 boys on the roll. They all have statements of special educational needs identifying emotional and behavioural difficulties as their primary need although a number also have additional learning difficulties. The attainment of boys when they enter the school is below that of pupils of the same age nationally. This is either because of their learning difficulties or because of the disrupted pattern of education they have received as a result of their behavioural problems. All pupils are of white ethnic origin and many are from deprived social circumstances. All boys are eligible for free school meals. The character of the school has changed significantly since its last inspection in 1996; at that time the school provided for boys and girls, over 90 pupils were on the roll and it provided residential facilities. At the present time residence is not available although many boys receive an extended school day from 8.30 in the morning to 7.30 in the evening.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

After a period of considerable difficulty the school is now effective again. The head teacher, staff and governors recognise the need for further development and extensive plans are in place to achieve this. The standards achieved by the pupils are at least satisfactory and often good, particularly in Years 10 and 11 in the subjects of the curriculum and for all boys in relation to their individual objectives. This is the result of the overall good leadership and management, the very effective work of the head teacher and the good teaching. Although costs are relatively high the school provides satisfactory value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Enables pupils in Years 10 and 11 to achieve good standards and make good or very good progress, particularly in English and mathematics.
- Identifies the right areas for development and has very good plans for improvement. The head teacher provides very good leadership and management.
- Has very good procedures for Child Protection and ensuring pupils' welfare.
- Has good procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance and behaviour and supporting pupils' personal development. Relationships are good.
- Teamwork between teachers and learning and student support assistants is a strength.

#### **What could be improved**

- The level of challenge and the pace of teaching in some lessons to maintain the interest and behaviour of pupils.
- The use of information about pupils' learning to plan the curriculum.
- The role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the standards achieved and in evaluating the impact of teaching on the standards achieved.

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION**

The school made good progress in relation to the areas identified for improvement in the last inspection report in 1996. The curriculum was developed to more closely meet the needs of the pupils, attendance was improved and a more coherent approach to personal, social and health education was established. Steps were taken to improve pupils' spiritual awareness and improvements were made to the physical education curriculum. The schools' further development was severely affected by the suspension of a number of key staff, including the head teacher and other members of the senior management team, in 1998. During the two years of their absence the character of the school changed significantly. On their return, substantially in September 2000, they faced new and serious issues in relation to the development of the school, for example, the need to ensure a climate of calm with expectations of good behaviour and hard work. Good progress has already been made in tackling these issues and there is a strong and shared commitment to develop further.

## STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English and very good progress in mathematics in Key Stage 4. Progress in English and mathematics is good in Key Stage 3. Progress in personal, social and health education is good throughout the school.

In the other subjects of the curriculum pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve high standards in relation to their prior attainment in music, information and communication technology and physical education; pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 in art and design, and design and technology and very good progress in Key Stage 4 in art and design, and food technology. Satisfactory progress is made in history, geography and French in Key Stage 3 and in religious education throughout the school. Progress in relation to individual targets, particularly behavioural is good for the vast majority of pupils.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils enjoy coming to school. Their interest and involvement in lessons varies and is unsatisfactory where lessons lack pace or challenge.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Satisfactory. Behaviour is generally satisfactory around the school and in lessons but it is not always managed effectively because expectations vary.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils take responsibility and show initiative when given the opportunity. Relationships are good.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is higher than that in similar schools nationally.

The majority of pupils enjoy coming to school. Many arrive early for the breakfast club and remain in school until 19.30 to benefit from the extended day. Attendance is good and absenteeism has been significantly reduced. Relationships between pupils and staff are good and contribute to effective learning.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

<b>Teaching of pupils:</b>	<b>aged 11-16</b>
Lessons seen overall	Good

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

The quality of teaching is good. In the lessons observed it was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons with 4 per cent being unsatisfactory. It was very good in 26 per cent, good in 45 per cent, satisfactory in 24 per cent, and excellent in 1 per cent. The main strengths in the teaching are the subject knowledge of teachers together with their understanding of the needs of the pupils, the overall management of pupils, the range of



teaching methods used and the important role played by learning and student support assistants. Areas of weakness are the lack of pace and challenge evident in some lessons and, occasionally, inadequate preparation and planning. When inappropriate behaviour occurs it is sometimes not consistently managed. Literacy and numeracy skills are effectively taught and are beginning to raise standards.

### **OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. All statutory areas of the curriculum are taught. It is enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities during the extended school day.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory. Provision for social and moral development is good. It is satisfactory for spiritual and cultural development. However, pupils are not fully prepared for life in a multi-cultural society, through planned opportunities in the curriculum.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school cares well for its pupils. Child Protection procedures are very good. The use of assessment information to plan the curriculum is unsatisfactory, because practices are inconsistent.

Parents think very highly of the school. They are kept well-informed and feel that they are partners in the education of their children. Child Protection procedures have been extensively reviewed and are now very good.

### **HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good leadership and management. He is well supported by the senior management team. They are successfully managing the changing nature of the school following a difficult period.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities although they rely on a small group of active members. They have been fully involved in dealing with the changing nature of the school but they are not yet fully involved in monitoring the standards being achieved.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The senior management team monitor and evaluate the work of the school appropriately, but this is insufficiently delegated to other members of staff.
The strategic use of resources	Good use is made of the specific grants available to the school. Care is taken to use the expertise of both teaching and non-teaching staff effectively.

Staffing levels are satisfactory overall and the school has a relatively high number of support staff. This is necessary because of the nature of the building and because of the extended school day. Resources are good overall and excellent for music. The accommodation is satisfactory for the curriculum but the age of the building and its rambling nature make it difficult to supervise. Specialist rooms are generally very good although some of them are damp. Routine administration and financial control and procedures are good.

The school applies the principles of best value well and provides satisfactory value for money.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The quality of teaching</li><li>• The leadership and management of the school</li><li>• High expectations</li><li>• The approachability of the school</li><li>• The school develops greater maturity in pupils</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Finance</li><li>• Re-introduction of residential facilities</li><li>• The amount of homework</li><li>• Better progress</li></ul>

The inspection team agree with the largely positive views expressed by parents. They understood the wishes of parents to see the finances of the school resolved. Residential facilities are planned to be re-introduced. The school provides an adequate amount of homework. Inspectors found progress to be good overall.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1 The vast majority of boys enter the school attaining standards below those expected nationally for pupils of their ages. This is either because of their additional learning difficulties or because they have missed significant amounts of school before they joined Windlestone School as a result of their behavioural problems. It is therefore not appropriate to compare their attainment with national standards at the end of each key stage. Pupils of all ages generally achieve well and make good progress in relation to their earlier learning. This is the result of good teaching and effective leadership and management.

2 By the age of 16 pupils make good progress in English compared to the poor skills and lack of confidence that most have on entering the school. As pupils enter the school at any time with a history of missed and disrupted education, appropriate assessment and monitoring is in place to support spelling and reading. Targets are set in annual reviews and referred to in lesson planning. The formal and informal approaches to reading encourage learning across the curriculum. The reading club has proved very successful in order to raise reading ages and promote interest in books. This in turn raises self-esteem and enables the pupils to engage in all subjects more readily. Progress in writing is also good and drama promotes good listening skills.

3 Pupils' achievements in mathematics vary across the school. During the very difficult two year period up to September 2000 pupils had a number of temporary teachers and a curriculum which was not well adapted to their particular needs. As a result the majority were disinterested, made little progress and underachieved. Over the last nine months pupils in Key Stage 3 are re-establishing more appropriate work patterns because each class now has a regular teacher and pupils are expected to attend, listen and take part. As a result progress in Key Stage 3 is improving and achievements are again satisfactory reflecting the last inspection. For pupils in Key Stage 4 progress has been very good since September 2000 because of the introduction of a relevant curriculum, consistently good teaching and the added incentive of external accreditation which is providing students with a sense of purpose. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 4 are now good which is an improvement on the last inspection.

4 Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils complete General Certificate of Secondary Education courses at the lower levels. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have increased their practical and observational skills. They have learnt to name the parts of flowers, to dissect large flowers and match plant parts to diagrams with some success, and are able to describe the process of seed fertilisation and plant reproduction. They have some understanding of the conditions required for growth, and have experimented with the effects on seeds' germination of soil, moisture, warmth and light. Pupils have looked at the behaviour of the planets in our solar system, learning their names and relative positions from the sun. In Rural science pupils are able to describe a good number of the characteristics that distinguish cockerels from hens, which they can then relate to the real birds on the farm when they collect eggs. They begin to discuss how they might calculate the relative productivity of their free range birds, against their deep litter birds, but don't have the understanding of the mathematical concepts.

5 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have completed a number of units of study covering topics such as birds of prey, the erection of green houses, a comparative study of poultry housing and the symbols that represent the elements of the periodic table. They have learnt to draw and label diagrams showing the structure of the atom and, show some understanding of the human physical processes of reproduction. Investigations into chemical reactions have been carefully recorded using tables and graphs, however the use of computers to support such aspects is not yet in place. Older pupils demonstrate some very good vocational skills as a result of their work on the farm.

6 In the other subjects of the curriculum pupils of all ages make good progress and achieve high

standards in relation to their prior attainment in music, information and communication technology and physical education; pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 in art and design, and design and technology and very good progress in Key Stage 4 in art and design, and food technology. Satisfactory progress is made in history, geography and French in Key Stage 3 and in religious education throughout the school. Progress in relation to individual targets, particularly behavioural is good for the vast majority of pupils.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

7 Pupils' attitudes to the school are satisfactory. Though not all pupils are keen to attend regularly, most do, and they are well supported by staff and encouraged to take responsibilities for their own actions. Pupils appreciate the care and concern shown by the staff and use them as role models. This has a positive impact in the learning and their personal development throughout their stay in the school. Many grow in confidence and self respect. They clearly respect the environment they work in, because displays are undamaged and there is no evidence of graffiti. Pupils respond particularly well to the expectations of the school. They show mutual trust and respect, co-operate well and share appropriately, many show good personal controls, participating well in formal discussion. They treat visitors with a degree of confidence and well-mannered respect. Where lessons lack pace or challenge pupils' attitudes become less positive and inappropriate behaviour can result, but this is usually well-managed.

8 Behaviour is generally satisfactory in lessons and around the school. However, during the absence of senior staff for two years, exclusion was used extensively to manage behaviour and, as a result, a high number of boys were temporarily excluded. Some pupils have continuing difficulties with behaviour but this is usually handled well and managed skilfully by the staff and the number of exclusions is now very low again. Occasionally expectations vary and behaviour can deteriorate. Where there is oppressive behaviour it is dealt with positively and quickly by the staff. Pupils understand the sanctions that are in place and most try to abide by them. Teachers make effective use of the reward procedures and the students value these, especially those that can be 'bought' by 'Smilies'.

9 Pupils' personal development is good. They learn to react positively when asked to do something difficult. Students are helped by their involvement in the reviews of their behavioural targets and their individual education plans. There are many instances of very mature and responsible behaviour for example when playing host to a visiting school football team. They show awareness of others and assist or co-operate appropriately in lessons and activities. The Year 11 students volunteered to come into school during their study leave to talk to the inspection team and to cook lunch for them. A good programme of personal, social and health education helps their learning experience and their personal and social development.

10 Relationships are good, both between the pupils themselves and with teachers and other adults in school. Pupils respond well to the high expectation of teachers and gain in confidence. In a Year 10 mathematics lesson the good relationships and high expectations of their teacher helped them to gain confidence when investigating consecutive numbers. Pupils co-operate well with one another in lessons. They relate well to teachers and other adults in a consistently positive manner. In lessons and around the school this helped provide a positive learning atmosphere in which all students can make progress.

11 Attendance is good and has improved since the last inspection. At 81.4 per cent it is above that of similar special schools. It represents very good progress by many of the pupils. This improvement reflects the effort made by staff to encourage parents to understand the importance of regular attendance. Registration takes place promptly at the beginning of the day and lessons start and finish on time. Nevertheless a few pupils do not attend regularly and this affects the attainment of these individuals.

### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

12 The quality of teaching is good and is a significant factor in the standards achieved and the progress made by pupils of all ages. During the inspection 70 lessons were observed; teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons; in 1 per cent it was excellent, in 26 per cent it was very good, it was good in

45 per cent and satisfactory in 24 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in 4 per cent. Although teaching was judged to be good at the last inspection this represents an improvement with a much lower incidence of unsatisfactory teaching.

13 The quality of teaching in English is consistently good. The co-ordinator has excellent knowledge of the subject, which is used very effectively to plan lessons and to provide opportunities for staff development. These have led to the introduction of writing frames, key vocabulary and small steps worksheets which has ensured a structure to lessons which has enabled pupils to cope and make progress. Literacy skills are effectively taught and this is beginning to raise standards. Excellent teamwork between teachers and learning and student support assistants is also a strong feature of the teaching in English as elsewhere in the curriculum. For example, in both physical education and information and communication technology learning and student support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils' learning. During a lesson on using search engines the learning and student support assistant used his knowledge of both the internet and the needs of the pupils very effectively to ensure that they remained interested and were able to succeed. Similarly in physical education the learning and student support assistant intervened well to encourage and support pupils in shot putting.

14 In mathematics teaching is generally good although occasionally lessons lack pace and challenge, particularly for higher attainers and in these lessons motivation and interest drops and inappropriate behaviour can result. Skilled intervention by learning and student support assistants minimises the effect of this on the learning of the majority. The management of pupils is a consistently good feature of teaching throughout the school with many examples of potentially difficult situations being defused by the timely intervention of staff. Where teaching is good or very good in mathematics the teacher has good subject knowledge and tasks are well matched to pupils' own experiences. For example, a lesson on probability considered the relative likelihood of watching television or winning the Lottery. Numeracy skills are now effectively taught. Good subject knowledge is an important factor elsewhere in the teaching, for example in food technology, physical education and ICT.

15 Teaching in science is satisfactory overall, however it is dependent on thoroughly planned, well thought out lessons where resource requirements have been clearly identified. This is not always the case and in these circumstances both teaching and learning are unsatisfactory. On the farm teaching is good and occasionally very good. Where it is good in both the laboratory and on the farm the objectives of the lesson are stated with the pupils and if things go wrong teachers adapt the lesson to meet the needs of the pupils.

16 The overall strengths of the teaching are the knowledge of the subjects and the needs of the pupils, the management of pupils, the range of approaches used to motivate pupils and the role of learning and student support assistants. Less successful aspects are insufficient demand to motivate pupils and lack of rigour in planning. Occasionally there is an over-reliance on learning and student support assistants to deal with issues which could have been avoided if the teaching had been more effective.

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

17 The school curriculum is broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. Following a period of significant disruption a substantial review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum to rationalise the existing opportunities for accreditation, and to increase the opportunities for vocational experience including enterprise education is planned. The Key Stage 3 curriculum is developing well and offers strengths in terms of design and technology, music and rural science.

18 In the Key Stage 4 curriculum General Certificates of Secondary Education and certificate of achievement is provided in a number of subjects, but not all. The curriculum offers both Science and rural science and has a classroom base to support a smallholding with livestock, gardens and greenhouses delivering a good range of working science, vocational experience and opportunities to develop responsibilities. It also offers both design and food technology, run as parallel provision. Both of these offer

considerable and relevant value in their own right but would benefit from closer alignment to avoid unplanned duplication and increase the chances of completed accreditation. The information and communication technology curriculum is developing fast and planned extension to the computer network is designed to increase access and use across the curriculum. A modified literacy strategy is to be introduced to enhance provision in English and being supported by planned staff development, with numeracy development to follow. GNVQ music, mathematics and Key Skills introduction are also under discussion. Special needs strategies ensure individual education plans are in place and regularly reviewed at half termly and termly intervals. There has been improvement in the personal, social and health education programme, with health and sex education delivered as positive strands. A sound physical education programme is in place but relies heavily on expensive access to outside leisure facilities.

19 At present the school does not provide residential experience, but offers an extended day. The mornings are particularly well managed with staff meeting pupils informally in social areas, or over the breakfast table. This is particularly important as the journeys from home may have taken up to an hour. Issues from home or from the day before at school may benefit from discussion, and the overall process provides a warm welcome and a calm and focussed start to the day. The day extends until seven thirty with a good range of well managed programmes and club activities. The extent to which the programme is enriched with visits and visitors is currently limited, but is gradually being extended as the school settles and behaviour becomes more reliable. There are sporting links with similar schools. Senior pupils make good use of college links to completed a recognised computer course.

20 There are satisfactory links with the local community, for example the school uses the local leisure facilities and the local fire brigade uses the school premises for training. The Year 10 students are helped to complete their application forms for places in the local further education colleges. The comprehensive programme of vocational and careers education including work experience has suffered as a result of staff suspensions but is to be re-introduced in September 2001 as part of the review of the Key Stage 4 curriculum.

21 Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education comes through the curriculum but is not formally planned for, nor is there a co-ordinator. There has been good improvement since the last inspection, although more through good intent and ethos than a formal approach. Provision is satisfactory but it is difficult for the school to track and monitor opportunities and there is a need for a more systematic approach to planning to ensure that provision is secure.

22 Spiritual elements are evident in geography where Year 8 pupils looking at the consequences of landslides could identify with the people who would be angry and upset. In English lessons pupils show concern for Romeo and Juliet and their plight. In art and design Year 9 pupils are impressed with the air brushing and exploration of variation within colour blends. During music Year 9 pupils are encouraged to express their creativity and imagination when writing words to a Blues song. The teacher discusses the feelings of others to develop an understanding of the emotional content of Blues songs. The meetings of upper and lower school provide opportunities for reflection of both staff and pupils on work achieved and good progress made in self-esteem and confidence to achieve targets. The very good team work within classes and support for behaviour and emotional upset further generates an ethos of care and self worth.

23 The good support generates a moral code within the school. The staffing ratio enables pupils to be supported when they are very troubled because of their emotional difficulties. They are able to talk through problems and reach an agreement to return to class or complete work in the library where they are well supported. Within personal and social education pupils discuss moral issues with each class having two lessons each week. The personal and social education scheme of work requires a review and should be looked at in the context of religious education and spiritual, social, moral and cultural education as areas are similar and overlap. Pupils in Year 8 with maximum support write descriptions of themselves. They discuss being positive. A good use of adjectives link the work in English. Good discussion is generated by the staff about friendships. It was interesting that most pupils name the teacher as their friend. Their descriptions show that they hold her in high regard. Year 9 pupils have a lively discussion as to what contributes to a

legal and illegal substance. The teacher guided them into thinking about useful and harmful drugs. In music Year 9 boys appreciate that the Wednesday band club is only open to those who make a commitment as they are all needed to keep the band together. Year 10 pupils imagine they are shipwrecked and suggest shelter, fishing and making a boat as their first priority, they had difficulty in relating as to how they would work together.

24 Pupils relate well to the very good support offered by the staff. Provision for social development is good. During the extended activities from 3.30 each day the boys enjoy a variety of sporting and educational activities which link well to the every day school work. The pupils say they enjoy the activities and wish the school was residential. With staff they play pool and table tennis, garden, climb trees and play five a side football, they also enjoy a cooking club, surfing the net and playing music together. They behave well and are sensible. During meal times breakfast, lunch and supper there is playful banter and a good social atmosphere where pupils and staff relax together. The lunch prepared by the Year 11 pupils was a credit to them and their teachers where they presented as mature, and confident young people who had finished their General Certificates of Secondary Education and were planning college placements and careers for themselves. They were able to discuss openly their experiences, failures and successes during their time in school.

25 Provision for cultural development is satisfactory. However, cultural education and in particular multicultural elements are not systematically planned for or identified within the curriculum. As a result they are not sufficiently secure. There is rich evidence of cultural diversity through the wide range of literature in English. News items in geography foster interest in world affairs such as the recent eruption of Mount Etna in Sicily. In French pupils seek out information on French school sites. In religious education pupils study events in various religions. The range of books offers a good opportunity for pupils to experience different cultures and events. Pupils are not fully prepared for life in a multicultural society.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

26 Overall the school has very good procedures for child protection and for ensuring the welfare of the pupils. There is a designated member of staff for child protection and all the staff have had appropriate training and have a good understanding of the indications of child abuse and know how to report it. There are good links with the Social Services department. The provision for first aid is good. There is a satisfactory health and safety policy in place and risk assessments takes place termly. There are regular fire drills and fire notices are displayed around the school.

27 The monitoring of the pupils' personal development is well managed. The staff observe the students in lessons and record positive attitudes, good work and any inappropriate behaviour. All the staff have a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. Their personal social and health education programme make a significant contribution to raising the confidence of students by improving their awareness of themselves and helping them to relate to others in the classroom and in the outside world.

28 The procedures for promoting discipline and good behaviour are good. The policy is extensive and details the various rewards and sanctions, The pupils appreciate the certificates that are awarded for good behaviour and effort.

29 There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Parents are contacted in all cases of unauthorised absence. They are informed termly of their sons' attendance record. Certificates are presented for full attendance. These strategies are successful in promoting good levels of attendance compared to similar schools.

30 The procedures for supporting the pupils' personal development are good. There are half termly meetings to help the students to take responsibility for their own learning and behaviour. The weekly school meeting celebrates their successes and achievements. At the 'One Stop' shop the students are able to ask for help and information about drugs and associated problems.

31 The support systems for pupils' overall development are good. Learning and student support assistants work closely with teaching staff to establish a good environment for learning, to support learning in lessons, and to improve attendance and punctuality. They know pupils very well and use these relationships to promote progress and achievement. Pupils trust the staff and speak highly of their help and tenacity ("they don't just help, they help *hundreds*" year 11 pupil). Procedures to monitor their academic and personal development are sound but there are some good features particularly in relation to their attitudes to learning and their behaviour. Staff are recording what students learn and achieve in a variety of ways and good portfolios of samples of work are in place in most subjects, however these systems remain varied and therefore are not yet sufficient to regularly inform curriculum planning.

32 Overall the use of assessment to plan the curriculum and future lessons is unsatisfactory. There are examples of good systems for both recording and assessment developing in some areas, for example design and food technology and ICT. However, there is an inconsistent approach to assessing the standards achieved and using this information in planning future activities. The school development plan identifies overall review of assessment systems as an immediate priority.

33 SEN reviews are well handled and thorough, with parents being fully involved. The reviews provide a clear analysis of the progress made by pupils and set realistic objectives for future development. Pupils are increasingly involved in target setting and review, but self-evaluation is not consistent. Pupils have to learn to accept their end of lesson marks for both behaviour and learning. With most teachers this is well done, but there remain some teachers, and some groups of pupils where this remains an area of dissension and pressure rather than calm evaluation. Systems to prevent or respond to any oppressive behaviour are good.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

34 The partnership with parents is good. Parents' views of the school are supportive and positive. The parents who completed the questionnaires think that the school helps their sons to become mature and responsible.

35 Parents are appreciative of the way the school is led and managed, the caring ethos that promotes good learning and social and moral values. They are satisfied that the school expects their sons to work hard and that they are kept well informed about their sons' progress.

36 The school has established very good links with the parents. Parents receive a copy of the prospectus and the governors annual report, which gives a clear overview of the work of the school during the previous year. There are regular opportunities for parents to meet the staff, for example at the review of their individual education plans, the annual parents meeting and awards ceremonies.

37 The impact of the parents' involvement on the work of the school is satisfactory. The parents are interested in how well their sons are progressing. The quality of information provided for them about their sons' progress is satisfactory. Some parents were concerned about the lack of homework provided although the inspection team found this to be satisfactory.

#### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

38 The leadership and management of the school are good. After a period of considerable difficulty involving the suspension of the head teacher and other senior staff for almost two years the head teacher has been very effective in re-establishing the school. He has been very well supported by senior staff and governors. Inevitably the development of the school has been affected by the disruption but the determination and hard work of staff has put it back on course. It is now well placed to develop further.

39 At the time of the last inspection the head teacher was judged to provide strong leadership and clear



direction and this has been very clearly demonstrated on his return to the school. As a result of the interruption there are areas which need to be developed and these are identified in the school development plan. The school has a clear plan for further improvement and a commitment to development shared by all staff and governors. The determination is reflected throughout the work of the school.

40 On their return to school there was a need to re-establish the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team; this has been achieved but it has meant that the delegation of responsibilities to other staff, for instance subject co-ordinators is not yet fully established. The school recognise the need for this development. However, the concentration on the role of senior staff has been very successful in ensuring a climate of calm where expectations of good behaviour and hard work is now in place.

41 The governing body fulfils its statutory responsibilities but much of its energy has been directed in managing the challenges posed by the suspensions and in managing a contracting staff as pupil numbers reduced. Governors have a clear understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school because of their close involvement. Now that the school is stabilised they recognise the need to channel their energies into the future development of the school. They have played a key role in re-establishing the school and are appropriately placed to work with staff in establishing its future direction.

42 The senior management team are involved in monitoring the standards achieved and in some areas evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. There is no structured systematic approach in place and it has not yet been extended to involve co-ordinators where appropriate. The school is aware of the need to develop this area of management.

43 The school development plan provides a clear analysis of the priorities for the future development of the school. It identifies the most appropriate areas and has clear strategies to manage change. Governors and staff have been involved in its creation although the head teacher and senior staff necessarily took the major role this year. Although the school has a carry forward budget detailed discussions are taking place with the local education authority about the longer term budgetary position of the school as a result of reduced numbers and a change in the balance of day, extended day and residential placements. It is difficult for the school to make long-term financial decisions until the position is clarified.

44 The school has made effective use of specific grants and technology to meet its educational objectives. Routine administration and financial procedures are effective. Principles of best value are applied by the school. The costs of the school are currently high because of the interim arrangements associated with the changes to its structure. However, the standards achieved are good, the quality of teaching is good and the leadership and management are effective. Consequently the school provides satisfactory value for money.

45 The school has an appropriate number of suitably qualified teaching staff to teach the curriculum effectively. Levels of support staff are high but the nature of the building and the extended pattern of the school day make the levels necessary to manage the school effectively.

46 The accommodation is satisfactory to enable an appropriate curriculum to be taught. It's good for rural studies. The building is very spacious with ample space for games rooms, dining room, rural studies with the farm, greenhouses and land, a large library and lots of storage. The facilities for art and design, music, design and technology, food technology and science are very good. There are spacious grounds for play, sports and games. The farm house is a purpose built classroom which provides adequately for instruction in rural studies. The music room is at the end of a corridor which ensures no-one is disturbed by the excellent lively music playing sessions.

47 The school is situated in a Grade 2\* listed building. The responsibility for the fabric of the building is complex and shared between the local education authority and the school. The school is responsible for external painting and certain repairs. Advice and grants are sought from English Heritage. There is the intent to provide a new school within the next three years as part of the reorganisation of special needs

education within Durham County.

48 There is plenty of space with many offices, classrooms, specific curriculum areas and extensive beautiful grounds. However, given the nature of the pupils' needs this requires high staffing levels to manage it effectively. As there is no residential provision at present the upstairs residential site was not reviewed. The main problems encountered are in the small classrooms where pupils are too close to each other at times. The coach house which is used for design and technology, food technology, science and art and design, although spacious, is very damp. The low pupil numbers attract fewer resources and therefore it is very difficult to monitor and patrol the site which is necessary given the disturbed nature of the pupils and the wide range of activities undertaken. Time is also taken moving from one building to another although this is carried out as smoothly as possible with good staff support. The Forum which is the 'hub' of the school has had scaffolding up for four years, and this has a very depressing atmosphere on this area although regular checks ensure it is not dangerous. It is hoped the restoration to the beautiful ceilings will be completed by September 2001.

49 Since the last inspection there has been a significant improvement in the range and quality of resources. These are now good and sufficient to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum which has a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Resources are excellent in music, good in English, science, art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology and satisfactory in mathematics, history, geography and French. Resources for physical education, which were unsatisfactory at the last inspection, are now satisfactory implemented by the good use of outside school facilities. There is a library and a good range of fiction and non-fiction books, some of which are kept in the specialist classrooms. The use of modern technology is developing well and most subjects are building up a bank of software packages to support pupils learning.

#### **WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

50 In order to improve further the head teacher, staff and governors should;

(1) Improve the quality of teaching by

- (a) ensuring that work is well-matched to the attainment of boys, offering sufficient challenge. (Paragraph 14, 16, 64, 68)
- (b) ensuring that lessons move at a good pace to maintain interest. (Paragraph 14, 15, 16, 64, 68)

(2) Improve the leadership and management of the school by developing the role of subject co-ordinators in

- (a) monitoring the standards being achieved. (Paragraph 42)
- (b) evaluating the impact of teaching on learning. (Paragraph 42)
- (c) ensuring that information about the standards achieved by boys is used to plan the curriculum. (Paragraphs 32, 58, 69)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### *Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection*

Number of lessons observed	70
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	18

### *Summary of teaching observed during the inspection*

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	26	45	24	4	0	0

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

### *Information about the school's pupils*

<b>Pupils on the school's roll</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	62
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	62

<b>English as an additional language</b>	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

<b>Pupil mobility in the last school year</b>	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	10
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

### *Attendance*

#### **Authorised absence**

	%
School data	7.4

#### **Unauthorised absence**

	%
School data	11.2

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	62
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	130	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.1
Average class size	8

#### **Education support staff: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of education support staff	15
Total aggregate hours worked per week	645

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	2000 - 2001
	£
Total income	1452,232
Total expenditure	1413,926
Expenditure per pupil	28,856
Balance brought forward from previous year	152,030
Balance carried forward to next year	190,336

***Results of the survey of parents and carers***

**Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	62
Number of questionnaires returned	13

**Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	46	31	8	8	8
My child is making good progress in school.	46	23	15	8	8
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	46	8	8	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	8	33	33	8
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	77	15	8	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	8	0	0	8
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	75	25	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	62	31	0	0	8
The school is well led and managed.	77	23	0	0	0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	69	31	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	92	8	0	0	0

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

### **ENGLISH**

51 The provision for English in both key stages is good. By the age of 16 pupils make good progress compared to the poor skills and lack of confidence that most pupils have on entering the school. Teaching and progress within lessons is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Progress since the last inspection is satisfactory. As pupils enter the school at any time with a history of missed and disrupted education, appropriate assessment and monitoring is in place to support spelling and reading. Targets are set in annual reviews and referred to in lesson planning. The formal and informal approaches to reading encourage learning across the curriculum. The reading club has proved very successful in order to raise reading ages and promote interest in books. This in turn raises self-esteem and enables the pupils to engage in all subjects more readily.

52 The subject co-ordinator has excellent subject knowledge and qualifications which ensures a comprehensive approach to planning with the two teachers responsible for teaching English to Years 7 and 8. The co-ordinator teaches Year 9, 10 and 11 pupils to Certificate of Achievement (CoA) and General Certificate of Secondary Education standard, Year 11 were taking General Certificates of Secondary Education examinations during the week of the inspection. The successful staff development sessions have produced writing frames, key vocabulary and appropriate small step work sheets. These contribute to the structure that pupils are able to cope with given their poor literary skills in the majority of cases. Monitoring by the co-ordinator would consolidate and extend this work and support assessment to ensure there is an overview.

53 The supported reading in the reading club provides both the opportunity to improve reading skills, enjoyment in reading experiences and the opportunity for individual discussion and support. The boys say they like to read with a member of staff and the process is sensitive to class work. Monitoring is comprehensive with regular feedback to pupils as to how they have improved. During the lower school meeting a pupil was reported to have improved his reading age by three years, all the pupils applauded this without any prompting. Information and communication technology supports writing skills very well with work very neatly displayed. This is evident through most subjects where opportunities are promoted to use reading, writing and spelling. The good use of dictionaries and the wide range of interesting reading books and resource books further supports literacy skills well.

54 The excellent team work of the learning and student support assistants and the teachers ensures all boys are well supported in lessons. The excellent quiet support for one boy in Year 7 encouraged him to express the difference between a biography and autobiography. Good use of resources such as topic cards supports pupils to sequence events in life and to sequence into chronological order. One boy read his cards to me and with support wrote sentences remembering to start with a capital letter and end with a full stop. This was particularly praised during the lower school meeting. Another boy recognised that Anne Frank was courageous because she was brave and had courage and must have been clever as she wrote a diary at such a young age.

55 Year 8 pupils discuss race and religion in the novel 'Jo'burg' by Beverly Naidoo. The use of praise and reference to previous work ensures the boys are on task and complete each section with the good support of the teacher and learning and student support assistants. One boy showed a lot of interest in whether the story was true and showed concern as to what happened to the children. Reading is fluent but lacks expression, a few boys follow the text with understanding. The boys showed they had understood the story with comments such as 'they would get into trouble as they did not have their pass'. One boy could explain what the 'issue' was; arresting children and it all happened because they were black. Using 'Crazy Headlines' encourages pupils to construct headlines and captions in media studies. More examples with a wider range of resources would support learning further as the pupils find it difficult to express themselves. In music pupils experience drama when they develop a playlet covering four scenes which will eventually be

set to music. The story line is developed by the class as a whole and will eventually provide the forum for a wide variety of musical illustrations. This provides good opportunities for the development of speaking and listening skills.

56 The text from 'The Picture of Dorian Gray' by Oscar Wilde is used to research a description of a person for Year 9 pupils to complete in their own words. One boy says the man smokes and has a wife. Another boy read fluently with understanding showing real interest in the text. When he had finished his work he chose a book to read to himself. At the end of the lesson pupils read on in the text. A few boys find it difficult to work independently and to understand what they have to do but are supported well by the staff. A few pupils are reluctant to write a sentence but are encouraged by the planned format of the work sheets. Silly behaviour is handled well by the staff, but some behaviour is unacceptable and results in little work achieved. Two boys wrote neatly to form full sentences while referring to the text correctly. Three boys know that Lord Henry was not a good influence on Dorian Gray and that Basil was jealous.

57 Year 10 pupils refer to their course work for Certificate of Achievement and General Certificates of Secondary Education, they file it neatly and take good care of it. The effective team work of the learning and student support assistants and teacher ensures the lessons this term progress pupil learning. They draw a time line to emphasise the importance of a sequence of a play, to consider lighting and camera angles, and to start annotating text. This results in producing the outline for the 'Director's memorandum'. The boys found it difficult to think and express how they would ask an actress to feel what it was like to be Juliet. One boy said she would have been scared in the tomb and had courage to take the poison. When reading 'The Woman in Black' the teacher encourages the pupils to recall the words which set the 'Strange Atmosphere' such as fog, the marsh, the church and the horse and cart. The pupils enjoy being read to and answer questions to show their understanding of the text. They know when the tension builds up and that this is a horror story. Year 11 pupils have completed all their course work and exams for English Literature and Language this week. In a discussion over a lunch which they had organised and cooked they commented on the English exam as being alright.

58 The records of work are comprehensive to give a good overview of the standard and range of work carried out. Work is marked and could be further annotated to give more feedback on areas for improvement. Work for Key Stage 3 covers all attainment targets during a lesson and this will be further progressed in September with the introduction of the Literacy Strategy for which staff are now preparing. 'Success Maker' has very recently been introduced and pupils seem to enjoy using it. Assessment is carried out but is not yet consistent across the subject. This is under review within the school development plan for the issue of assessment across the school. Durham Learning Resources are used well to access supporting materials and 'Big Books'. Most books are kept in the classrooms for reading and reference with a fair range in the large library where pupils also work.

## **MATHEMATICS**

59 Pupils' achievements in mathematics vary across the school. During the very difficult two year period up to September 2000 pupils had a number of temporary teachers and a curriculum which was not well adapted to their particular needs. As a result the majority were disinterested, made little progress and underachieved. Over the last nine months pupils in Key Stage 3 are re-establishing more appropriate work patterns because each class now has a regular teacher and pupils are expected to attend, listen and take part. As a result progress in Key Stage 3 is improving and achievements are again satisfactory reflecting the last inspection. For pupils in Key Stage 4 progress has been very good since September 2000 because of the introduction of a relevant curriculum, consistently good teaching and the added incentive of external accreditation which is providing students with a sense of purpose. Pupils' achievements in Key Stage 4 are now good which is an improvement on the last inspection.

60 When pupils start at the school, not necessarily in Year 7, most have had inconsistent schooling, their mathematical knowledge is patchy and they have low self-esteem, a lack of confidence and a fear of failure. Teachers and learning and student support assistants work hard to provide a supportive learning

environment so that pupils feel confident enough to make an effort and consequently make progress. There are lessons, however, where the attitude and disinterest of the pupils has a negative effect on the achievements made. In such circumstances the learning and student support assistants are very effective in diffusing most situations and reducing the effect of any disruption on other pupils in the class. Teaching in Year 7 is satisfactory, pupils develop an understanding of basic numeracy skills, can recognise and name two and three-dimensional shapes and most can work out the area of irregular shapes, for example tracing round their own hand onto graph paper and counting the squares.

61 In Year 8 teaching in one class is very good which reflects in their learning. Pupils can plot a graph and use the information to answer questions, for example, how the population of France has increased since 1900. They are able to show their knowledge of numbers through addition and subtraction using hundreds, tens and units and can identify fractions by shading in two-dimensional shapes. In the other Year 8 class, where pupils are finding the development of mathematical skills difficult, the teaching is less effective. The over-reliance on following a commercial scheme rather than choosing examples that relate to pupils' own experiences fails to keep their attention resulting in considerable 'off task' behaviour. Pupils continue to develop their basic numeracy skills but are not confident working independently. They do not understand the need for care and accuracy as a result of which they are unable to plot a graph or interpret the results.

62 Teaching in both Year 9 classes is by the same teacher and is consistently good, although pupils do show a high level of potentially disruptive behaviour. The use of a short mental mathematics session helps to focus attention and the interesting practical examples to supplement textbook work and relate learning to pupils' own experiences helps to keep the majority concentrating and working hard. For instance to illustrate probability an example used was "the chance of you watching TV tonight or winning the lottery". They show an increasing awareness of patterns in numbers and begin to understand the concept of probability. They are able to make tally charts and bar graphs and can draw conclusions. For instance after recording the results of throwing 2 dice they were able to recognise that it isn't chance that the combination of numbers is most likely to be in the middle range of 5, 6 or 7 rather than the extremes of 2 or 12. Pupils do not readily use their numeracy skills in other parts of the curriculum although they do weighing and measuring in food technology and make tables and draw graphs in science.

63 In Key Stage 4 pupils are following various schemes for national accreditation. The introduction of these options has already had a significant positive effect on attitudes in both Years 10 and 11. Pupils see the relevance of working in mathematics and most are keen to make progress. Unfortunately, for a few, their underlying lack of confidence and fear of failure can result in them getting upset particularly if they think they have made a mistake or their work "doesn't look good". It is at such times, when pupils may decide to get angry and give up, that the sensitive intervention of the learning and student support assistants and skilled teaching helps to ensure that everyone is confident enough to work to the best of their ability. This supportive learning environment, in which all individual efforts are encouraged and valued, prepares pupils well for tackling their General Certificates of Secondary Education examinations. As well as developing confidence and competency in all basic computational skills including the use of calculators pupils understand the use of letters to represent numbers and the formation of algebraic equations. They extend their knowledge of shapes and measuring and the importance of accuracy in measurement and can use a variety of charts and graphs to represent data.

64 Across the school the quality of teaching is variable. When it is good or very good the teacher's subject knowledge is good, tasks are related to pupils' own experience and seen as relevant, lessons are well planned and staff work well together as a team. Where teaching is less effective the pace of the lesson is slow, there is a lack of challenge for the higher attainers, the teacher's style lacks enthusiasm and the tasks are unstimulating so that pupils are not interested, their attention wanders and little learning takes place.

65 Since the beginning of this academic year the co-ordinator has provided a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum for Year 10 and 11 pupils and has ensured that there are sufficient resources available to meet all the requirements of the Certificate of Achievement and General Certificates of Secondary Education. Assessments are carried out regularly as recommended in the accreditation schemes so that pupils know what



they do well and what requires further practice. Key Stage 4 pupils have made very good progress over this year due to a relevant curriculum, very good teaching and frequent assessment. The school is aware of the need to review the curriculum, resources and teaching in Key Stage 3, which is already included in the subject development plan.

## SCIENCE

66 Standards of achievement in science are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection. By the end of Key Stage 4 most pupils complete General Certificates of Secondary Education courses at the lower levels. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have increased their practical and observational skills, and have learnt to name the parts of flowers, to dissect large flowers and match plant parts to diagrams with some success. Pupils are able to describe the process of seed fertilisation and plant reproduction. They have some understanding of the conditions required for growth, and have experimented with the effects on seeds' germination of soil, moisture, warmth and light. They have looked at the behaviour of the planets in our solar system, learning their names and relative positions from the Sun. In Rural science pupils are able to describe a good number of the characteristics that distinguish cockerels from hens, which they can then relate to the real birds on the farm when they collect eggs. They begin to discuss how they might calculate the relative productivity of their free range, against their deep litter birds, but don't have the mathematical concepts to hand. The teacher is very relieved when the egg count is exactly sixteen, which equates to the number of birds. In another lesson pupils sow different types and styles of seeds in commercial trays, they show good self-control and responsibility in a confined space.

67 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have completed a number of units of study covering topics such as birds of prey, the erection of green houses, a comparative study of poultry housing and the symbols that represent the elements of the periodic table. They have learnt to draw and label diagrams showing the structure of the atom and show some understanding of the human physical processes of reproduction. Investigations into chemical reactions have been carefully recorded using tables and graphs, however the use of computers to support such aspects is not yet in place. Older pupils demonstrate some very good vocational skills as a result of their work on the farm. They learn the very real skills of planting out and selling trays of plants, of the use and necessity of undertaking full health and safety procedures in relation to foot and mouth disease, and of the absolute need for safety when learning to drive small farm tractors, or using electric trimmers to keep the edges of paddocks tidy.

68 Pupil's attitudes to science are generally positive. They enjoy the practical and investigative aspects, and in many cases (showing visitors round the farm, explaining what they have learnt in a science lesson over lunch, managing the feeding of livestock) exhibit considerable responsibility and maturity. However in undemanding lessons in the laboratory, or unless supervision is very good on the farm, self-discipline and control of a minority of pupils can be unsatisfactory. While some pupils exhibit challenging behaviour, they all respond well to the best teaching. Teaching overall is satisfactory in the laboratory, but varies from unsatisfactory to good in individual lessons. On the farm it is good, and occasionally very good. The strongest teaching in both situations is very fully planned, is highly motivating in the range of methods and activities involved, shares the learning outcomes that are planned with the pupils at the outset, works at good pace, and is prepared to change and adapt during the lessons if aspects are not working as expected. In the small number of less successful teaching there is little in the preparation or resources to motivate pupils, materials are difficult to handle or limited in appeal, diversions allow some pupils to lose the thread of learning, and inappropriate behaviour is left unchallenged, or is less well managed.

69 The science curriculum is in two parallel strands. The laboratory-based science is slightly short on time in Key Stage 4 at present, but the school plans indicates an appropriate increase in September. Science is also offered as 'Rural Science' throughout the school. The school, rightly, places high value on the rich and diverse learning taking place within it, including its potential for personal and social responsibility, vocation education and transferable health and safety training. It is also a significant feature of the extended day for many pupils. Since it re-opened the school has not had time to consider how the aspects can be complementary, or to look at common assessment and accreditation of elements of learning. The curriculum

documentation requires some strengthening of the elements of investigation and experimentation as pupils move through the school, together with an agreed framework for assessment in Key Stage 3. The accommodation and resources to support science are very good, with the farm and its associated classroom representing an exceptional enrichment to the curriculum.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

70 Pupils achieve well in art and design in Key Stage 3 and very well in Key Stage 4 within the limitations of the current curriculum as they begin to use the skills they have developed in the earlier part of the school, in a creative and personal way. This has been maintained and developed since the last inspection.

71 By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils have developed good mark-making skills in a variety of media. Pencil drawings are increasingly confident. Pupils have achieved some carefully blended landscapes using pastel showing a developing sense of form and a vibrant use of colour. Pencil portraits show a good sense of proportion and an emerging range of mark-making, grading and blending of line. Paint is used expressively in compositions that draw heavily on pupil's interests, although this is too often linked with copied computer game images. Three-dimensional work is under-represented.

72 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupil's work is often very good. They demonstrate greater ownership of a wide range of techniques, enabling them to undertake imaginative pieces of work with confidence. Individual pupils demonstrate particular skills they have taken on to a good level. One boy blends coloured pencils very well, another has good freehand drawing skills, and another is very excited by the newly discovered effects of air-brushing. The pupils' General Certificates of Secondary Education exhibitions are of a good standard, reflecting the work of some artists, although otherwise culturally a little narrow. Ideas have been developed well, and pupils are learning to chart, but not yet annotate the journey of the idea. Again three-dimensional work is under-represented. Many pupils produce some exciting graphic ideas, and explore the capacity of the computer to distort and repeat images successfully.

73 The very good standard of teaching, together with the excellent accommodation and resources combine to give pupils a growing confidence in the subject, and some real pride in their work. As a result attitudes towards the subject are very positive, behaviour is very good and pupils offer extended periods of concentration. The staff team have very strong relationships with pupils, backed by substantial subject expertise both as teachers and practitioners, and these qualities are used to set high standards. This is true whether in a group learning to stretch paper for water colours, an individual learning to use an air brush, or a group re-branding chocolate bars who have little confidence in their own ideas at the start of the lesson, and are roaring away by the end. An appropriate curriculum with opportunities for accreditation is in place, but in the recent period of staff stability a narrower focus than desirable is evident. Staff are aware of the need to increase pupil's artistic literacy, their awareness of the contribution of a wide range of cultures, and their opportunities to work in three dimensions. Once the full curriculum is implemented there is also a need to establish good assessment practice in Key Stage 3.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

74 Standards of achievement in design and technology are good with some examples of very good achievement in food technology in Key Stage 4. This has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils in Key Stage 3 develop a good understanding of the design process whether working on a brief for a 'healthy pizza' or an egg and toast holder in thermoplastic. By the end of the key stage they will have worked with a range of materials including wood, both hard and soft, ferrous and non-ferrous metals and plastics. Pupils will have used some simple electronic circuitry components, looked at simple pneumatics and seen an example of model control technology. They will have baked, cooked hot meals from fresh ingredients, designed menus against specific criteria and evaluated their results. They will have undertaken some comparisons of commercially available products such as a range of plastic mouldings for wall clocks.

75 Key Stage 4 pupils continue their exploration of the design process and these materials. They have

solved structural problems around the building of model bridges. They have a greater understanding of the properties of the materials they use, and of the health and safety considerations to be observed. One or two of the boys are over-enthusiastic users of tools and easily frustrated, requiring very close supervision from staff.

76 An outstanding example of achievement is seen when a group of Year 11 boys design, cost, purchase, cook and present a three course meal with sweets and coffee to follow. They serve a group of staff and visitors, introducing themselves and maintaining the flow of conversation throughout. Pupils generally show very positive attitudes towards this subject in almost every class, although some challenging and occasionally inappropriate behaviour and attitudes towards staff are seen, particularly in Year 10, requiring tenacity, imagination and teamwork to keep the lessons on track.

77 Teaching is generally good with some very good teaching in the specialist food technology room. Lessons are well planned and move pupils through design to making or cooking quickly. Resources are plentiful and well prepared. In both disciplines lessons have individual pupil targets. Assessment, teamwork and the pace of lessons are particularly strong during food technology lessons. In design and technology relationships are not fully secure with a minority of pupils requiring a high level of visual monitoring to ensure safe practise.

78 The curriculum planning is very strong and detailed. Curriculum leaders are knowledgeable with very good subject expertise and a clear sense of strengths and areas for development. Information and communication technology is well used in food technology to plan menus and calculate the values of well-balanced meals. Control technology is being introduced and further topics are planned. The two subject strands both have considerable relevance to the pupils' lives, but are running in parallel at present. Closer planning might produce both economies of time, and planned reinforcement leading to better achievement. Both teaching areas are very well equipped and presented. The standard of presentation of pupil's work and models of good and safe practice is exceptionally high in the workshop.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

79 Geography is only taught in Key Stage 3 currently. It is available as an option in Key Stage 4 although no-one in the present Years 10 and 11 took up the offer. Pupils' achievements up to the end of Year 9 are satisfactory which, while being similar to that at the time of the last inspection, reflects good progress since September 2000 as a result of good teaching and a relevant curriculum.

80 In Year 7, pupils initially learn about features in their local environment and the cause and effect of weather, temperature, rainfall and wind particularly as these affect their own lives. The good use of visual aids such as a video on rainfall results in pupils of all abilities understanding the rain cycle and the meaning of such difficult words as precipitation, evaporation and condensation. As one boy explained "it rains, then the sun comes out, water goes up into the sky then comes down again". Having looked at the local landscape pupils then study an area in France finding similarities and differences among the two regions studied. They are able to understand that different types of farming may be more likely in some places than others. Pupils learn about major earth movements such as earthquakes and volcanoes and know why these happen. The higher attainers can describe in their own words what it is like when a volcano erupts 'a fireball shoots out and burns houses'.

81 In Year 8 pupils learn about contour maps and know what the different colours represent. They understand that coastal landscapes are made of different types of rock, for example headlands are created by hard rock and bays by the erosion of soft rock. In one lesson pupils had a discussion as to why a hotel in Scarborough fell into the sea. They study the causes of flooding and other natural phenomena and how these affect the people involved.

82 No lessons were seen in Year 9 but the evidence from pupils work shows that they can understand that we must look after our world and especially the need to preserve water. They know some reasons why

human settlements occur in certain places and not others and make tables to show their understanding.

83 A specialist teacher who is also the subject co-ordinator teaches all the geography lessons. The quality of teaching is always good and sometimes very good. Very good subject knowledge, clear planning and effective use of a variety of resources makes the lessons interesting and the pupils motivated so that pupils generally behave well, work hard and make good progress. The skilled and knowledgeable learning and student support assistants is invaluable in helping to maintain pupils' interest in their learning and also in diffusing any potentially disruptive behaviour and reducing the effect this might have on the rest of the class.

84 The subject is well managed and the Key Stage 3 curriculum covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum. The co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop an equally relevant curriculum for Key Stage 4 to include accreditation. Assessment is being developed and will be started at the end of each topic, initially for Year 9, at the end of this term. There are plans to re-introduce outside visits and fieldwork once the staff are confident the pupils can control their behaviour in public.

## **HISTORY**

85 At present history is only taught in Key Stage 3 although it is available as an option in Key Stage 4. Pupils' achievements in history are satisfactory. In view of the disruptions experienced by the pupils for the two years up to September 2000 it is a credit to the present staff that achievements are as good as at the time of the last inspection.

86 In Key Stage 3 pupils learn about history in a chronological sequence. In Year 7 they look at Medieval Britain and the Romans. They know that King John did many good and bad things and can list some of them. For example, they know that although King John imposed heavy taxes on the people he also made sure his ships were well made and strong so they could win battles and return home safely. Pupils can identify differences and similarities between medieval times and the present day, understanding that paintings are a useful source of information. For instance from pictures of paintings they could recognise that medieval people ground wheat in a mill and ate bread.

87 In Year 8 pupils learn about life in England in the Middle Ages and life in another culture such as the North American Indians. They understand how to make a 'timeline'. Have discussed the effect on ordinary people of the plague and the Great Fire of London, know basic facts about the Jacobite rebellion and the battle of Culloden. Pupils are aware of important things that mattered to the North American Indians such as caring for animals and the world around them and that a 'totem pole' was a pictorial record of their lives similar to a timeline.

88 In Year 9 the focus moves to more modern history including the Victorians and the two World Wars. The higher attainers can write in their own words about the effect of war on the people, for example "I lost two brothers in the war. Kaiser Bill was determined to fight from the moment he started building all those weapons" and they know the importance of the Treaty of Versailles. They understand about the rise of Nazi Germany and the persecution of the Jews and a few can ask relevant questions such as "did any Jews fight in the war?".

89 The quality of teaching is always satisfactory and often good. The clear planning, good relationships between staff and pupils and very good teamwork create a learning environment that encourages and motivates pupils to listen and take an active part in discussions. The good use of resources and skilled question and answer strategies helps develop pupils' observational skills and raises their awareness that interesting information can be found from many different sources such as books, pictures or videos.

90 There are cross-curricular links with English where pupils are reading 'The Diary of Anne Franks'. At the moment there are no organised visits to museums or places of historic interest because of the need to re-establish acceptable behaviour before taking pupils out to public venues.

91 The co-ordinator organises and manages the subject well. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum but recognises the need to enhance the curriculum with outside visits. The assessment procedures are only just being developed and will be introduced at the end of each topic for Year 9 later this term. There is also the need to develop an appropriate curriculum for Key Stage 4 with possible options for accreditation.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

92 Pupils of all ages achieve well in information and communication technology. Although attainment is just below that expected of pupils of the same age nationally, all make good progress, building on their learning as they move through the school. This is the result of the consistently good teaching and the well-planned curriculum. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.

93 The curriculum is planned in detailed units of work which enable boys to progressively develop knowledge, skills and understanding. The present Year 10 and 11 boys are developing their use of the Internet; they use different search engines to discover information about buildings in different European countries and are able to print out details to demonstrate their new knowledge. Boys of all ages including Key Stage 3, are able to use computers for desk top publishing activities using text and graphics to produce good pieces of work. Pupils of all levels of attainment make good progress in all units of work; assessment is an integral part of each unit enabling pupils to evaluate their work themselves. Resources are good and this enables pupils to develop confidence because they all have hands on experience and are able to experiment. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the learning and student support assistants provides invaluable support to pupils. Both the teacher and the learning and student support assistants are very knowledgeable and this again inspires trust and confidence. The classroom has an air of calm and purposeful work where boys enjoy what they do and get a real sense of achievement. Attitudes to work are very positive with boys working independently or co-operatively depending upon the task. The teacher and learning and student support assistants work with great enthusiasm moving amongst the boys and anticipating difficulties to ensure that the maximum success is achieved. There are very good curricula links between information and communication technology and design and technology, which ensures that the work in the subjects is complementary. Information and communication technology is not yet fully used to support learning in all areas of the curriculum and the school is aware of the need to develop this further.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

94 The provision for modern language is satisfactory with French taught to Key Stage 3 pupils. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve appropriate standards. The co-ordinator for French also co-ordinates English and teaches both subjects. This provides a good overview of pupils linguistic skills and enables a sound grammatical knowledge to be developed. The approach is practical with pupils learning about money, shops, days of the week, months of the year and counting. The Learning and support assistant has lived in France and provides secure pronunciation for the boys. One Year 8 boy had been camping in France with his family and was keen to name items in the Supermarche. It is difficult for the boys to learn the names of shops as most are used to supermarkets where everything is bought. A few boys managed to write and say the words boulangerie, pharmacie and charcuterie. More French speaking and a range of resources would provide better opportunities. Using 'En Route' IT program provides a good dimension to the language where the boys are able to revise and follow the words and correct answers using the practised words in class. One boy can count to 20 and a few can say the money values. The programme captures their interest and is well supported by the adults.

95 Year 9 search the internet for French school sites. The teacher reminds the boys that the adjective comes after the word in French. A few boys are very negative towards the subject but are encouraged well by the learning and student support assistants. There are good links to the English criteria to look, cover, write and say. A useful exercise involved pupils recognising left, right and centre when one boy said these

could be on road signs. They completed the work sheet 'Au Match' where they identified football players and their positions. A more practical session would have helped them to see the positions.

96 Assessments take place at the end of each unit but the boys find it difficult to recall French words, because they come from a variety of schools where some have studied Spanish or German. Where possible they are given additional support to overcome this difficulty and this helps them to make better progress.

## **MUSIC**

97 Pupils' achievements in music, throughout the school, are good and very good in the development of their abilities to play a variety of musical instruments and so take advantage of the excellent facilities available. This reflects improvement since the last inspection and significant progress over the last 9 months. The good progress is because of the well-developed and relevant curriculum, consistently very good teaching, excellent support from the learning and student support assistants and excellent resources.

98 Music is only included on the timetable in Key Stage 3 but is offered as an option in Key Stage 4. In Year 7 pupils develop all the skills for appreciating and playing music outlined in the national curriculum. They develop a sense of rhythm, pitch and dynamics and are introduced to a variety of instruments both tuned and untuned which they learn to treat carefully and with respect. For example returning the electric guitars to their stands after use rather than leaving them lying around. Pupils take part in writing their own songs, which they set to music, perform and record. In one lesson a small band composed of drums, beater and electric guitar supported by a lead singer performed a class song.

99 In Year 8 pupils continue to develop their musical skills and combine these with drama and mime. They listen to, and with guidance can discuss and appraise, a wide variety of musical styles using CD's from Rave, Rap and Reggae to Pop and occasionally classical pieces. With skilled teaching they can adapt these sounds for themselves playing by ear and using graphic notation constantly aware of the necessity to watch and listen carefully in order to work together as a group. Pupils are encouraged to develop their literacy skills by writing a storyline for short plays that are then set to music, for example a comedy story about a bungled burglary. With very skilled teaching the music needed to support this script requires pupils to select a wide variety of musical styles from stealthy and quiet through rapid for a chase and loud for a conclusion.

100 In Year 9 the individual skills of some pupils is beginning to be apparent which is always fostered and developed. They are taught the basics of Rock and Roll and the 12 bar structure for the Blues. They understand the significance of blues songs with their strong emotional content, which they replicate when writing their own words. They understand the need to rehearse in preparation for a finished performance, record their work and make comments on the outcome. Three boys from Year 9 took part in the production of a professionally recorded CD. The sensitive and skilled work of both teacher and learning and student support assistants helps pupils accept constructive criticism without over-reaction with an acknowledgement that everyone, including adults can make mistakes.

101 In Key Stage 4 pupils can select music as an option or when the work includes the use of the school's own basic recording studio as well as the opportunity to develop skills as a Disc Jockey using the decks. Those pupils who opt to take music in Year 10 can analyse, evaluate and compare pieces of music and talk about their reasons justifying their opinions. For example, one Year 10 pupil was able to demonstrate his ability to listen carefully to a recording made earlier, identify the role of the different instruments, recognise the slight changes in tempo with the subsequent effect and suggest possible improvements. A General National Vocational Qualification accreditation course is being considered for those pupils who choose to study music in Years 10 and 11.

102 The subject is very well organised and managed. The curriculum, which covers all the requirements of the National Curriculum is adapted and taught in a way that is relevant for the special needs of the pupils and acceptable to their particular lifestyles and experiences. Assessment is regular and used to inform planning which also identifies areas for promoting pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural

development.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

103 Pupils of all ages achieve well in physical education. Standards attained are similar to those reached by pupils of the same age nationally. During the inspection it was only possible to observe athletics and football however, additional evidence confirmed the standards achieved. The good quality of teaching is a major factor in the standards achieved. Standards in physical education are better than at the last inspection.

104 In athletics pupils compete very well in middle distance races, improving their performances as a result of good coaching about technique and for example, the importance of timing a run and conserving energy for the last stretch. Pupils join in with great enthusiasm; they are very keen to improve and show great spirit when they encourage others to improve. In shot putt all pupils improve their performance as a result of their careful listening to teaching and their determined application. The teamwork between the teacher and the learning and student support assistants is very effective in supporting and encouraging pupils. They have a very good understanding of the needs of the pupils and of the skills they are teaching and this has a very positive effect on learning. In a football match against another local school, the skill level was good and boys demonstrated good tactical awareness and high levels of co-operation and teamwork to record a well-deserved victory.

105 The expertise of the staff is very good and the positive relationships they have with each other and with the boys is a strong factor in the standards achieved. The curriculum is appropriately planned to enable pupils to develop and build on their skills, knowledge and understanding as they move through the school; resources are adequate for the planned curriculum and although the lack of appropriate indoor teaching facilities has remained a problem since the last inspection the use of community facilities overcomes this.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

106 Religious education is taught to all year groups and is satisfactory overall. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. The scheme of work is about to be reviewed. The Agreed Syllabus for Durham is comprehensive. It provides the statutory orders with very good examples and guidelines to cover the full range of learning ability. The syllabus promotes spiritual, moral, social and cultural education [SMSC] and personal and social education [PSE]. This fits well with the school's philosophy and teaching of PSE. However, the school does not track opportunities for spiritual, moral, SMSC throughout the curriculum.

107 A good introduction was given to Year 7 by the teacher who gave an example of what was said to her first baby. The lesson follows the work on the 5 Pillars of Islam to look at what is said and done to a new born baby. A good simple method is used in teaching the Islamic naming ceremony and a writing frame is used with concise questions. However, the boys find it very difficult to read unfamiliar words and answer comprehension questions. Year 8 pupils look at the Ten Commandments and they are supported well by the learning and student support assistants and teacher in a humorous manner which encourages them to concentrate. The good use of a game ensures focus on the task. Pupils are able to name Mount Sinai and they know Moses was given the Ten Commandments by God. The pupils put the Commandments in order and realise that they are similar to our laws. The lesson plan flows to build on concepts as the next lesson is to locate geographical origins for Abraham and his importance to the Jewish Tradition.

108 Year 9 pupils discuss materialism to reflect that wealth and possessions can have a positive or negative effect on a person. Constant praise and encouragement is necessary to keep the boys on task even then this does not always work. One boy read part of the sheet to the others. The boys had little concept of what it would be like to have a lot of money. The teacher recaps on the content of the lesson, and with the learning and student support assistants supports the two Year 9 groups very well. The discussion on divorce and the pressures on marriage such as finance, children and lack of communication encourages a good

discussion gently led by the class teacher. One boy said you can become more mature. The good worksheet format ensures the boys follow the content and text. The words are hard such as 'disillusioned', 'percentages', and 'realities'. The pupils are introduced to the words, desertion, Judicial and divorce. One boy gave a good description of divorce. Another boy referred to the Roman Catholic church and laws. A good discussion followed about child allowance and shared money or lack of it. The teacher appropriately brought the discussion around to the religion in the marriage ceremony. One boy referred to the romance and marriage of Romeo and Juliet which he is studying.

109 The review of the scheme of work and the scheme of work for PSE with the implications of SMSC will ensure a common approach through the curriculum. This will be helpful in providing a coherent approach to the personal, social, spiritual and moral development of pupils and identifying which elements of the programme can be taught through religious education.