

INSPECTION REPORT

BAMBURGH SCHOOL

South Shields

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108738

Headteacher: Mrs J Fawcett

Reporting inspector: Anne J Hayward
16417

Dates of inspection: 24th January to 27th January 2000

Inspection number: 187299

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special Educational Needs (Non-boarding)
School category:	Maintained Special
Age range of pupils:	2-17
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Norham Avenue South Shields Tyne & Wear
Postcode:	NE34 7TD
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Pauline Piddington
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Anne J Hayward	Registered inspector	Art	How well the school is led and managed The school's results and pupils' achievements.
Susan E Walsh	Lay inspector		How well the school cares for its pupils. Pupils' attitudes and personal development, Partnership with parents
Kathleen Cannon	Team inspector	Science, ICT, MFL	
John K Pearson	Team inspector	Under fives, English.	
Robert B Thompson	Team inspector	Mathematics.	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Glyn Essex	Team inspector	Equal opportunities, special educational needs, physical education, Design and Technology, Music.	
Graham Pirt		English as an additional language, History, Geography, Religious Education.	How well are pupils or students taught?

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The Registrar
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Bamburgh School caters for 126 pupils both boys and girls aged between 2 and 17 years with a wide range of medical and emotional difficulties. Since 1997 the school has hosted the Alnwick unit for 12 pupils between the ages of 6 and 14 years with autistic disorders. All the secondary pupils in the unit are integrated into the main school for most of the time. All pupils apart from 2 are white, 1 pupil has English as an additional language and 52 pupils are entitled to free school meals. Pupils' attainment on entry is very low. Some pupils enter the school with a history of non-attendance and difficulties in school. Many have medical needs, which require a specialised environment. The school has access to an extensive range of therapists and visiting outside agencies who support the pupils.

The school is situated in a housing estate and adjoins a local primary school. Pupils have access to appropriate play areas and the accommodation is spacious and kept to a high standard. The school's values expect that all members of the school are well behaved, polite and friendly, thoughtful and co-operative. As a community the school must be calm, caring, have clear expectations and equal regard. The school meets all these values in all aspects of its work. The school's priorities for development are the implementation of the National Curriculum 2000, dyspraxia developments, extending the outreach support from the school and accreditation at post 16.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is very effective in providing a quality education for its pupils who have a wide range of special educational needs. By the time pupils leave the school, they have experienced a wide range of accredited courses and have the self-confidence in which to succeed. Teaching is very good and the support staff and therapists work very well as a team. The Headteacher leads the school very well. Governors work closely with the school to identify areas for development. The school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- Teaching is a strength. Teachers' subject knowledge and understanding of pupils' special needs is very good.
- The curriculum offers pupils a very good range of opportunities and links with the community.
- The leadership and management of the school is very good and the headteacher gives excellent strategic direction for the work of the school.
- Standards of achievement and progress of pupils are very good.
- There are excellent attitudes, behaviour and relationships.
- The school provides a high quality supportive and secure environment.
- The provision for spiritual, moral, social, cultural and personal development and art are a strength of the school.

What could be improved

- The role, function and future direction of the Alnwick unit.
- The inadequacies in provision of sex and drug education.
- Statutory requirements in governors' annual report to parents and annual review procedures with particular regard to transitional reviews
- Formalise and increase the consistency of assessment and recording in relation to curricular targets.
- Ensure that the Careers Service agreement is fulfilled.

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 has made very good improvement since the last inspection. There has been a significant improvement in the quality of teaching with an increase in good and excellent teaching, an overall improvement in standards and in the quality of learning. Resources have been significantly improved in information communication technology particularly at Key Stages 1 and 2, the library, science, English, geography and design and technology. Assessment is improving and the school has now good IEPs particularly for the core subjects. Accreditation is now in place for geography.

The school has produced good special educational needs and equal opportunities policies. Curriculum improvements have occurred in English with the National Literacy Strategy, all policies and schemes of work are in place and there is improved communication and planning between the Key Stages. There is a closer tracking of financial issues and the school development plan now identifies financial implications. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is now very good and there are regular assemblies. As a result of these factors, the value for money has improved and the school now gives very good value.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by age	by age	Key
	11	16	
speaking and listening	A	A	Very good A
reading	A	A	Good B
writing	B	A	Satisfactory C
mathematics	B	B	Unsatisfactory D
personal, social and health education	A	B	Poor E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A	A	

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

In Key Stage standards assessment tests (SATs) small numbers of pupils attain national standards in English, science and mathematics; this is particularly evident in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 4 in 1999 pupils gained a good range of GCSE passes in the full range of courses, some pupils attaining national standards A-C. However this represents very good achievements for these pupils. The school's population is becoming more complex and pupils entering the school have a very wide range of needs. Many pupils have been unsuccessful in mainstream school. Pupils make very good progress and very good achievements across the curriculum. Those with additional needs make very good progress across the curriculum and receive very good support from a range of therapists and outside agencies.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent attitudes were seen in all key stages. Pupils are thoughtful and listen very well to each other's contributions.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	The behaviour of pupils is excellent. Pupils are clear about how they should behave both in and out of the classroom. They appreciate the atmosphere of calm.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent and allow pupils to flourish.
Attendance	Most pupils attend school on a regular basis despite often having medical problems.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good

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

Teaching is a strength of the school. 99% of lessons are satisfactory or better. In 85% of lessons seen the teaching was good or better and over 37% of teaching was very good or excellent. Teaching in art, geography and design technology is very good or excellent. In English and mathematics it is very good or excellent. Examples of teaching at this level were seen in almost all subjects during the week. In science, lessons are predominantly good with some excellent. Teaching in PHSE (personal, health and social education) is good. The quality of the teaching leads to pupils being fully involved in lessons and demonstrating very good and often excellent attitudes to their work. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in the Alnwick unit but lacks the expertise in working with pupils with autistic disorders. Teachers' planning is very good and schemes of work are in place.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is very good and provides a wide range of opportunities. Links with the community and accreditation support pupils' very good achievements.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The support by staff and outside agencies is good and supports the good achievements made by the pupils.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to gain social experiences, an insight into values and religious beliefs, and to realise some of the wonders of today's world.
How well the school cares for its pupils	This is of very high quality. The school is supportive and pupils appreciate the very high standards of care.

There is a very high level of parental satisfaction and support for the school, and very good communication and consultation with parents. The national numeracy and literacy strategies have been successfully implemented and the school provides a very good range of external accreditation. The school provides a wide range of extra curricular activities and the links with the community are very good. In life skills, pupils' development of personal, inter personal and independent skills is very good and sometimes excellent. However, programmes for sex education and drugs and HIV awareness are inadequate. The careers service agreement is not fulfilled and there is a lack of regular careers interviews and attendance of careers officers at annual reviews and transition meetings. The very high level of care and support the school gives to its pupils is a significant strength. There are excellent relationships between pupils and all staff; these are an important factor in promoting pupils' personal development. There are very good procedures for child protection. Although assessment has improved since the last inspection there are still some inconsistencies and IEPs on annual reviews are too vague.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	This is very good and effective in raising standards and achievements of the pupils. The Headteacher provides excellent strategic direction for the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is very active and committed to the school. They fulfil requirements well although the annual report to parents has some weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school is very good at evaluating its performance, monitoring the quality of teaching and setting targets for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	The staff and governors effectively plan resources through the development plan and meetings. The school has a very low unit cost which is substantially enhanced by fund raising by the school in the local community.

The staff in the school are well experienced and qualified to meet the needs of the pupils. However, those teachers in the Alnwick unit require additional training in working with pupils with autism. The accommodation is good, spacious and provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for its pupils. The quality of displays is excellent. Learning resources are of good quality and the school has made significant improvements to the library and the provision for Information Communication Technology since the last inspection. The Alnwick unit lacks strategic direction from the local education authority and a clear role and function.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children like school and are making good progress. • They are well informed about their child's progress. • They are comfortable approaching the school with questions or problems. • The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their child become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information about curriculum. • Wheelchair activities.

The annual reports that parents receive although helpful can be improved to give more information on curriculum activities and coverage. There was little evidence of specific wheelchair activities for pupils. The school is currently looking to improve this area.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against age related national expectations or averages. The report does however give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements, annual reviews and individual education plans as well as lesson observations. The complex nature of pupils' difficulties means that there is a wide spread of skills and abilities within each year group. It is therefore inappropriate to compare year groups or key stages. However there are examples of higher attaining pupils attaining at national standards in Key Stage 4 in all subjects of the National Curriculum.
2. In Key Stage standards assessment tests (SATs) small numbers of pupils attain national standards in English, science and mathematics; this is particularly evident in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 4, pupils gained a good range of GCSE passes in the full range of courses; some pupils attained at national standards A-C but overall they were below. Pupils achieved Royal Society of Arts (RSA) in Travel and Tourism, and CLAIT, City and Guilds profile of achievements and Certificates of Achievements in a range of subjects. This represents very good achievements for these pupils and an improvement since the last inspection, and against their individual education targets. The school's population is becoming more complex and pupils entering the school have a very wide range of needs, many of whom have been unsuccessful in mainstream school.
3. Pupils make very good progress and very good achievements across the curriculum. In English the achievements pupils make in relation to their individual targets, as they build upon their previous learning, are good at Key Stages 1 and 2, satisfactory but sometimes good or better at Key Stage 3 and very good or excellent at Key Stage 4. The high standards of achievement reflect the school's strong emphasis on the teaching of English. The speaking and listening skills of pupils are very good at all Key Stages. The confidence with which pupils speak in class and their willingness to listen to others is a product of the school's ethos of good relationships and equality of opportunity. Pupils make good progress in reading at all Key Stages. Their interest in and enjoyment of books leads them to explore words and different kinds of text in greater detail. Pupils' achievements in writing are good overall. Pupils' achievements in literacy are good and have been improved by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy.
4. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are consistently good across all Key Stages. The majority of pupils enter the school lacking mathematical skills and confidence with gaps in their knowledge and language. Pupils become progressively more confident and competent with number work and their use of mathematical language. Much of this progress is directly linked to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school. It is particularly successful in the primary department. Teachers constantly ask "how?" "Why?" "Is there another way?" "How did you do that?" with the result that pupils realise that there are often many different strategies for arriving at the correct answer. Pupils become very proficient at explaining their workings. At Key Stage 4 all pupils follow nationally accredited courses and higher attaining pupils attain national average results for mathematics.
5. In science pupils' achievements are good overall. In Key Stages 1 and 2 pupils know how to make a fair test and understand how to predict outcomes, In all Key Stages they are able to evaluate and record their findings. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can use scientific terminology correctly and have a good knowledge of the human body. In Key Stage 4 pupils work towards accredited examinations and achieve well.
6. The significant improvements in resources in information communication technology have resulted in the pupils' good and sometimes very good progress. At Key Stage 1 pupils can use keyboard and mouse and print out their finished work. As they progress through the school they become more confident and competent in their use of computers and by Key Stage 4 they use

information technology well to support design and technology, producing good designs and brochures. Pupils with additional special educational needs can access all the curriculum using adapted computers and keyboards.

7. Pupils make very good progress in their personal and social development, particularly during the Life Skills programme. They achieve well in food preparation. They understand the need for hygiene rules in the kitchen, know which utensils to use and where to find them and organise themselves well. After they have prepared food and cooked it, they clear away and keep the kitchen tidy. Their table preparation is good, and presentation of the food is excellent. In Travel and Tourism, pupils discuss the pros and cons of tourism responding to questions such as, "Does it develop or destroy? What does it do for the local community?" Their discussion is mature and arguments well developed and thought out.
8. In design and technology in Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils' achievement is good. They are making good progress in their learning about a range of different materials and in their understanding of simple mechanisms such as wheels and axles. In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils are making very good progress, particularly in their project work and their use of information and communication technology to support and enhance their work. Pupils have achieved some very good results both in GCSE and certificate of achievement examinations.
9. Pupils attain at national standards in art. It is a strength of the school. Achievements in art in Key Stages 1 and 2 are very good and excellent in Key Stages 3 and 4. Nine pupils gained GCSE passes last year, 4 achieving grade C. This is a remarkable achievement and a tribute to the dedication and subject expertise of the specialist staff. Pupils across the key stages have a very good knowledge of artists and their styles and in Key Stages 2 and above develop very good observational skills and draw and paint to a very high standard. The ceramics produced by pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are an exceptional standard.
10. Pupils in French make very good progress and achieve very high standards across both key stages. The pupils are encouraged towards independent research and their use of the Internet enhances their theme on everyday life as they link extracts from Le Monde and other newspapers and magazines, looking at topical news, theatre programmes and weather forecasts.
11. Music is a strength of the school and achievement in music is good in all key stages. Pupils enjoy music, both performing and listening to it. They practise and rehearse willingly and work hard to improve their performance. In history only three lessons could be observed during the inspection. However, along with the observations, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and displays shows that achievement is good. They show development in historical skills throughout the school. Pupils' achievement is very good in geography. They show development in the acquisition of geographical skills throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in religious education and they learn to appreciate others beliefs and attitudes.
12. Achievements in physical education are good. There is a very wide range of abilities among pupils. A significant proportion have difficulties in mobility, co-ordination and stamina. Other pupils are performing at average levels of attainment for their age in activities such as swimming and games. All pupils make good progress in their attitudes to physical activity. They try hard to improve their performance, they cope well both with success and their limitations and they show good sporting behaviour and the ability to be part of a team.
13. Achievements by pupils with additional special needs in the main school are very good and they make very good progress across all curriculum areas. All pupils make very good progress against their IEP targets in particular their personal and social developments. Pupils in the Alnwick unit only make satisfactory progress due to the lack of teachers' knowledge of pupils with autistic disorders.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The school is justifiably proud of its pupils' extremely positive attitudes and values which are a strength of the school. Pupils have excellent attitudes towards their school work. Pupils are happy to come to school and arrive keen and ready to work.
15. Excellent attitudes were seen in all Key Stages. Pupils are thoughtful and listen very well to each other's contributions. They are enthusiastic about answering teachers' questions. They often have super ideas and make valuable suggestions. Pupils make sustained efforts in all lessons and have very good work ethics. This is closely linked with the enthusiastic approach of teachers, which promotes excellent motivation. Pupils work at a very good pace and take pride in the presentation of their work. They are understandably proud of their achievements.
16. Behaviour of pupils in the main body of the school is excellent. Pupils are clear about how they should behave both in and out of the classroom. Teachers are adept at managing behaviour and pupils develop very good self-discipline. There are no exclusions. Pupils in the Alnwick unit can exhibit quite disturbed behaviour associated with their special educational needs. They can be quite disruptive and have difficulty relating to one another. Unfortunately teachers in the unit do not always have appropriate strategies and structured routines to manage the behaviour of pupils with autistic disorders effectively. Pupils from the unit who are integrated into the school exhibit very good attitudes and behaviour.
17. Relationships are excellent. Pupils learn to participate and to support each other. They are able to operate well in small groups and co-operate well in teams. Some pupils have experienced bullying at their previous schools and many have a heightened awareness of how their actions affect others. Pupils are emphatic that although there is occasional falling out, school staff would not allow it to escalate into sustained bullying.
18. Personal development is very good. Pupils who are emotionally vulnerable and may have had very negative experiences of education in the past learn to be confident in social situations. Parents are right to be confident that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Pupils respond very well to responsibility. This starts as small responsibilities when pupils are younger culminating in prefect duty in Key Stage 4. Prefects have an important supervisory role in running the school and they take these duties very seriously. Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 are able to contribute to the life of the school through the school council. All pupils develop initiative and take responsibility for their own actions.
19. Attendance is good especially in the primary school. Most pupils attend school on a regular basis despite often having medical problems. Pupils who have not attended mainstream school regularly due to emotional problems start to attend school more regularly. Late arrival due to transport delays is occasionally a problem but parents report that the headteacher takes action as soon as problems arise.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

20. Teaching is a strength of the school. In 85% of lessons seen the teaching was good or better and over one third of the teaching was very good or excellent. In all lessons seen in art and more than half of the lessons seen in geography and design and technology the teaching was very good or excellent. In English and mathematics four out of ten lessons were very good or excellent. Examples of teaching at this level were seen in almost all subjects during the week. The quality of the teaching leads to pupils being fully involved in lessons and demonstrating very good and often excellent attitudes to their work. They persevere well at tasks, demonstrate new learning and make progress, with many pupils achieving significant accredited results at the end of their time at the school. In the one lesson seen during the week that was unsatisfactory the work was not sufficiently matched to pupils' ability. The teaching in all lessons seen in the Alnwick unit was satisfactory.

21. Teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection. A larger percentage of teaching is now good or better and there has been a reduction in the amount of unsatisfactory teaching seen. Teaching standards in English, mathematics, modern foreign language, art and music remain high with an increase in the amount of very good and excellent teaching in evidence since the last inspection. There has been an improvement in what was already seen as good planning at the last inspection, with objectives now more clearly defined and helped by the provision of more effective schemes of work. The planning is largely based on subject targets linked to the schemes of work and featuring links to annual review target setting. Many of the targets identified in subjects are matched to pupils' needs and the range of outcomes from the lesson is differentiated. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and contributes to the success of the teaching through careful and relevant planning which challenges pupils to achieve.
22. There are many strengths within teaching across the school. The quality and consistency of planning provides challenge to pupils through the provision of breadth, balance and relevance in the curriculum with content that is appropriate and meets statutory requirements. They address the National Curriculum programmes of study and the syllabus for Religious Education. The planning stages are all in place with a long term structure, medium term plans, and where appropriate exam syllabuses, defining learning objectives and a short term structure that is largely based on subject targets. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and at times excellent, in most subject areas. They explain new ideas to pupils with clarity and encourage them to consider facts and relate them to what they have already learned. In the Alnwick unit the temporary teachers address basic skills satisfactorily but do not have sufficient specific knowledge of the communication difficulties found in pupils with these needs.
23. Teachers have high expectations that leads to good levels of learning. Much of the challenge features in the very good questioning that takes place in lessons. Teachers follow up responses and encourage pupils to explore their answers further. Pupils' understanding is checked through focused and directed questions, matched to pupils' ability and understanding, which search out and require a range of pupils to answer. There is often good pace in lessons with regular changes of activity and high expectation that pupils will persevere with the task. This was particularly evident in a PHSE lesson where pupils were made aware of the expectations, there was a balance in the planning to include written work, discussion and practical activities and high levels of encouragement were given.
24. Lessons are often well-structured with a variety of teaching methods and activities being used and tasks are matched in order to meet pupils' needs. The calm approach used by teachers helps pupils to improve their confidence and encourages independent learning. There is good and sometimes very good management of pupils and the classroom environment by teachers and nursery nurses. A range of pupil groupings are used and this contributes to the learning. The strength of the teamwork involving teachers, nursery nurses and therapists within the school contributes to the very good pupils' achievements across the school.
25. The National Literacy Strategy is very well delivered with examples of very good and excellent teaching. Teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and the skills to be taught. In one of the lessons in Key Stage 2, which demonstrated characteristics of the best teaching in this area, the National Literacy content was fully demonstrated with the literacy hour structure evident. In work on the big book attention was drawn to correct vocabulary and there was an excellent use of questions. In the word level work pupils were encouraged to find digraphs and phonemes in their books. The teacher used a very positive and reinforcing approach and the group work was matched to pupils' needs. This led to excellent behaviour, attitudes and learning.
26. Work on the National Numeracy Strategy has been successful with some examples of very good and excellent teaching. There is some excellent preparation of lessons and expression of expectations to the pupils. In one high quality lesson there was an excellent demonstration by the teacher of what was required. This ensured that the pupils understood and led to high achievement in which they were able to predict and investigate three dimensional shapes.

27. Teachers use time appropriately, lessons are well structured with previous work reviewed and plenary sessions where learning during the lesson is enhanced. Resources are generally good and used well by the teachers. Assessment takes place across the curriculum. This is usually in relation to learning at the end of a module or unit of work. On-going assessment against the subject targets is not as clearly utilised and this can make it difficult to define what a pupil has learned when measured against National Curriculum levels within the modules of work.
28. Homework is used very well in the school. Much of this is planned to integrate with classroom activities and pupils have homework diaries. Homework is purposeful, is marked and contributes towards the independent learning of pupils.
29. All programmes are reviewed at least termly or more often if required. Very good liaison between teaching, support and therapy staff ensures that the best is made of this provision. The impact of this provision is to positively enhance the progress pupils make.

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

30. Since the last inspection the school has made good progress in addressing the issues relating to the curriculum. Planning to meet pupils' needs between key stages has been resolved and there are now good quality special educational needs and equal opportunity policies in place.
31. The curriculum provided is very good and meets statutory requirements. It is broad, balanced and relevant and gives pupils access to all National Curriculum subjects plus religious education. Pupils are provided with a very good range of quality learning opportunities, reflecting the school's aims and values, and curricular and health provision set out in statements. The very good knowledge, skills, qualification and experience of staff are shown in the detailed planning and in lessons. The National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been effectively implemented and are having a positive impact on the progress and achievement of pupils across the school.
32. The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs in the main part of the school is very good, ensuring they achieve well and make good progress. Some of the special information technology resources are of high quality and specific to individuals giving them access to parts of the curriculum they would otherwise not be able to access. An example of this is a primary pupil who has a special large number keyboard which attaches to the computer, enabling him to complete his work independently, building up his self-esteem and confidence. Very good classroom support is provided for pupils with visual and hearing impairments. The provision for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders is satisfactory. Those of primary age are taught mostly in a separate unit. Although these pupils are making satisfactory progress both towards the general targets of their IEPs and in their academic subjects, there is a lack of good quality behaviour management plans and levels of staff expertise in, and knowledge of their specific needs are inconsistent. Secondary age pupils with autistic disorders are integrated into the main school classes for most of their time and this is working well. There is currently one pupil who has English as an additional language. Good support has been provided for her by both the school staff and by a specialist support service.
33. There are good schemes of work for all subjects. These are well organised by key stage in the primary department, and by subject in the secondary department. These schemes ensure continuity and progression across the key stages as pupils progress through the school, or in some cases as pupils join the school later in their school careers.
34. The school provides a wide range of extra-curricular activities through lunchtime clubs. There are physical activities such as gardening, soft play and fitness clubs. Homework clubs meet regularly. Pupils have opportunities for less active activities such as computer clubs, choir, and a library club or to update their record of achievement. Activities after school are limited because of transport arrangements, but pupils do visit the theatre, art galleries, concerts, museums and many places of local interest. Once per year the school provides a residential outdoor experience at an outdoor centre in the Lake District.

35. Links with the community are very good and a strength of the school. As well as pupils going out into the community there are regular visitors to the school, such as visiting artists and groups. All such visits are well documented by photographs and video recordings. Links with the primary department are effectively planned into the curriculum to enhance specific areas, such as art where there are links with the Laing Art Gallery, Customs House Arts Centre, Theatre Royal, Beamish Museum and the Newcastle Arena. Links with technology and science are strong. Visits are made to the Hancock Museum, Sea Life Centre, Byker farm, the local ferry, plastics firms and local stores.
36. Programmes for sex education and drugs awareness meet statutory requirements but are not sufficiently developed across the school, and awareness of HIV is not provided for older pupils. The school provides a satisfactory standard of careers education and guidance, but the careers service agreement is not fulfilled. Regular professional agency representation, such as careers and LEA officers at annual reviews are lacking. There is a lack of regular careers interviews in school and the arrangement of personal careers advisors for pupils. Overall the programme for personal and social development lacks detail, and the quality of teaching is not monitored.
37. However, in discrete Life Skills lessons, pupils' development of personal, inter-personal and independent skills is very good and sometimes excellent. Pupils go shopping for their ingredients, work from menu cards, which are small steps linked carefully to sequencing, prepare and cook their meal, lay the table, set out dishes attractively, eat the meal and then clear away completely. Pupils develop personal initiative and accept full responsibility for preparing these meals. They record their work and this contributes to their Record of Achievement. In their Travel and Tourism course, pupils discuss maturely whether visitors develop or destroy local environment. They are able to put forward logical, rational argument; they debate, listen to each others points of view, form opinions and come to decisions.
38. Since the last inspection the school has improved the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All aspects are now very good. The school provides very good opportunities for pupils to gain knowledge and insight into values and religious beliefs, and to realise some of the wonders of today's world. Through poetry, pupils discuss their feelings, such as the wonder of winter, when they studied photographs of winter scenes and then put their feelings into poetry. Older pupils read letters from soldiers who fought in the First World War and expressed, in poetry, how they would have felt to be there. Spirituality is also promoted well through religious education, English, science, art, music and daily acts of collective worship. During acts of collective worship, pupils have good opportunities for reflection, prayer and singing.
39. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. All staff provide very good role models for pupils, showing examples of fairness, concern and equal opportunities for all pupils. Pupils understand right from wrong. The provision for the social development of pupils is very good, underpinned by an excellent ethos in the school. Pupils are considerate, courteous and very polite to visitors. Having lunch with the pupils is a pleasure and a very positive experience. The school council meets on a regular basis and discusses issues brought to the meeting by pupils through their representatives. The provision for the cultural development of pupils is very good. There are many opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness and diversity of other cultures. Opportunities to study local culture are very good. Pupils study a local newspaper and produce a school newspaper.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The very high level of care and support the school gives to its pupils is a significant strength. Excellent relationships between pupils and staff, including ancillary staff and the headteacher, are an important factor in promoting personal development and encouraging academic progress. Pupils are confident that they will always be given help and support. There is an atmosphere of care and trust. The school uses outside agencies including therapists to provide extra high quality support for those pupils with medical conditions and to meet the objectives on pupils' statements. The school nurses provide care and support for all the pupils in the school.

41. There are very good quality procedures for child protection and staff are sensitive to child protection issues. The school provides a cheerful high quality safe environment. There are good quality health and safety procedures including regular risk assessment. The school management works well with the caretaking and cleaning staff to maintain high standards. The start and end of the day are very well organised and there is a high level of supervision.
42. There have been satisfactory improvements in assessment procedures since the previous inspection. The school has produced an assessment policy but this is a record of what the school is doing about assessment at present rather than a whole school policy. Although assessment has been improved there are still inconsistencies in practice. Formal assessment is better developed in Key Stages 3 and 4. Teachers know their pupils very well and this sometimes leads them to depending on informal knowledge rather than structured assessment methods. Teachers do use assessment to inform curricular planning but this may also be informal in nature.
43. The monitoring of academic progress and personal development is satisfactory. The previous report identified the need to develop individual education plans and the school has worked hard to achieve this. However it recognises the need for further improvement including refining the targets to ensure there is a closer link with both the information obtained from subject teachers and the objective on the pupil's statement. At present targets on the individual education plans are too vague and not easily measurable and those on the subject individual education plan are usually related to curriculum coverage rather than being specific to individual pupils. The school has made a good start in involving pupils in setting targets but at present these targets are often too general and are not sufficiently linked with targets on the pupil's individual education plan. The pupils' involvement in the annual review is limited and there is scope for further improvements to involve pupils more thoroughly in the process of setting targets.
44. Transition reviews do not meet the requirements of the Code of Practice. Representatives of outside agencies such as the careers service rarely attend. Pupils and parents do not have adequate access to professional advice that might assist them to make important decisions about the future. Although the service level agreement with the careers service suggests that in addition to careers advisors attending transition reviews some pupils should have access to careers interviews in Year 10, this is not happening. At present careers interviews are not occurring until Year 11 and at the time of the inspection many pupils in year 11 had not had a careers interview. Vulnerable pupils are not gaining access to professional careers advice until very late in their school career.
45. The school has very good procedures to promote good behaviour and standards of behaviour are well monitored. Teachers in the main part of the school are very skilful at managing behaviour and encouraging very high standards of behaviour. Pupils who are emotionally fragile appreciate the atmosphere of calm in the classrooms and feel safe and secure in the school. Pupils are confident that bullying is not tolerated and the school provides an environment where pupils are nurtured and are free to express themselves without fear. The school has good procedures to encourage regular attendance at school. Attendance is carefully monitored and the school gets good quality support from the education welfare service.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

46. The school has very effective links with parents which have been sustained since the previous inspection. Parents are appreciative of the high standard of education that the school provides.
47. The school provides parents with good quality information including regular, very good quality newsletters. There are ample parents' consultation days in the primary school and a very good number of parents' evenings in the secondary school. Parents find the staff easy to approach with problems and questions; they find the staff, including the head, helpful and supportive. There is frequent contact by telephone and home school dairies are used very well for day to day communication between home and school. The governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements as it omits important information such as the school's policy on pupils with special educational needs.

48. Parents are provided with an annual written report on their child's progress. The format of both the primary and secondary report is not helpful as there is little space to write about the core subjects especially English, and even less space to write about other subjects on the primary reports. The quality of the reports is very variable. The best primary reports clearly inform parents about what their child knows, understands and can do and the progress they have made but those of inferior quality stress pupils' attitudes rather than what the child can do or the progress they have made. Reports in Key Stages 3 and 4 often focus on the pupils' response rather than gains in knowledge and understanding.
49. Many parents attend annual reviews. Parents and visiting professionals attending reviews are no longer provided with information prior to the review as required by the Code of Practice. Parents' views are sought before the annual review and are well recorded.
50. Many parents are very supportive of their children's work at home. They support academic homework and practical homework such as aspects of lifeskills such as letting their children help with laundry or making beds. Good communication and good support from parents enhances achievement. Parents are often involved in fundraising initiatives and many have responded to the school's recent request for help. Fund raising has a major impact on the work of the school and has led to a considerable improvement in accommodation and resources.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The leadership and management of the school is very good and effective in raising standards and achievements of the pupils. The Headteacher provides excellent strategic direction for the school. The school development plan is detailed and is shared and understood by all staff. There is an excellent system of meetings with teaching staff, support staff and therapists, caretakers and dinner staff, which ensures very effective communication throughout the school. The senior management team meets on a regular basis and all members are clear about their roles and responsibilities. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has improved since the last inspection and they now meet on a regular basis to ensure that the curriculum is planned across the key stages. The Deputy Head has worked particularly hard since her appointment to establish assessment practices and procedures. However the role and function of the LEA funded Alnwick unit remains unclear due to problems in staffing, a lack of subject and specialist expertise and little strategic direction from the LEA.
52. There is an excellent shared commitment between all the staff to improve and provide the best quality education for the pupils. The Headteacher supported by the staff constantly reviews action plans and curriculum plans in order that the best use is made of resources and that the effectiveness of spend can be measured.
53. The Governing Body play an active role in the school and has nominated governors for areas of the curriculum and aspects of the schools work. It has in place a very good policy on Special Educational Needs, which is an improvement since the last inspection. They monitor the work of the school effectively and regularly meet the Headteacher to discuss progress. However, the governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements. There is sound financial management and the school raises considerable funds to supplement the school's budget. The school has a very low unit cost. These additional funds have a very positive effect on the quality and range of resources in the school and have helped to create a quality learning environment for its pupils. This is a remarkable effort. The Headteacher is a major driving force behind the very positive community involvement in the school.
54. The Headteacher has put into place a very good system for monitoring the quality of teaching with regular visits to classrooms. This is supported by comprehensive professional development interviews of all staff and a training programme. The Headteacher along with the Governors set targets for improvement with regard to standards and regularly review the school's performance against the school development plan targets. The Headteacher and other staff provide informative and detailed reports to the governors, which keep them informed and up to date with developments in the school. However, the role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring their subject across the school is not fully developed.

55. The school's finances are administered very well. The Headteacher in conjunction with the chair of governors oversee spending and the governors receive detailed reports and have a good working knowledge of financial issues. Specific grants to develop the National Grid for Learning have provided a network suite in partnership with the adjoining junior school and is used well. Very good links have been made with local business through support from the Education Business Partnership funds. The school is beginning to use the principles of best value incorporating their performance with others. The Headteacher is constantly looking for improved performance.
56. The staff in the school are well experienced and qualified to meet the needs of the pupils. However, those teachers in the Alnwick unit require additional training and support. The school's support staff are important integral members of the school's team and make a very good contribution to the pupils' learning. Nursery nurses, medical, administrative, caretaking, cleaning and catering staff work closely with the teachers to plan and provide high quality educational experiences for the pupils. There is an excellent community spirit.
57. Learning resources are of good quality and the school has made significant improvements to the library since the last inspection. The school takes full advantage of its good accommodation, which provides a welcoming and stimulating learning environment for its pupils. The accommodation is significantly enhanced by high quality, attractive and educational displays that exhibit pupils' work and interests. The school's traffic management system has been improved by the installation of traffic calming ramps. A range of interesting and challenging games and other markings to stimulate pupils' interest and imagination enhance the educational use of the playground area. The suite of rooms in the Alnwick unit provides unsatisfactory accommodation for pupils with autistic spectrum disorders.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The LEA, governors and the headteacher need to ensure that the role, function and future direction of the Alnwick unit is clear by:

- ◆ Appointing permanent and suitably qualified staff.
- ◆ Establishing an effective admissions criteria and policy for the unit.
- ◆ Ensuring that a consistent approach to behaviour management is adopted.
- ◆ Ensuring that the accommodation is of high quality and appropriate to pupils with autistic disorders.

(Paragraphs 16,22,55,60,61 refer)

Address the inadequacies in the curriculum of drugs and sex education by.

- ◆ Ensuring that there are detailed policies and plans in place.
- ◆ Ensuring that time is allocated and the provision is monitored to ensure the quality.

(Paragraph 36 refers)

Fulfil statutory requirements with respect to;

- ◆ Governors' annual report to parents.
- ◆ Circulating information prior to annual reviews.
- ◆ Ensuring appropriate attendance at transitional meetings.

(Paragraphs 47,48,51,52,53 refer)

Formalise and increase the consistency and use of assessment and individual education plans in relation to curricular targets.

(Paragraphs 27,46,47 refer)

Ensure that the Careers Service agreement is fulfilled with particular reference to:

- ◆ Attendance at appropriate review meetings.
- ◆ Individual pupil interviews.

(Paragraphs 36,48 refer)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	101
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
12	25	48	14	1		

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	126
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	53

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	10	School data	0.8

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	2	6	4	10

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	1	5
	Girls	3	3	5
	Total	7	4	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70	40	100
	National	-	-	-

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	3	2	5
	Girls	4	3	5
	Total	7	5	10
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	70	50	100
	National	-	-	-

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	6	6	7	13

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	1	2
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	5	4	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	39	31	39
	National	-	-	-

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	2	1	2
	Girls	4	3	3
	Total	6	4	5
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	46	31	39
	National	-	-	-

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

There were too few pupils to report full statistics. However, in Key Stage 3 1 pupil gained a level 5 in English and Mathematics and 2 gained a level 5 in science.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	11/12	8	5	13

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys		3	3
	Girls	2	1	2
	Total	2	4	5
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	15	31	39
	National	-	-	-

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	3	100%
	National		N/A

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	-
Black – African heritage	-
Black – other	-
Indian	-
Pakistani	-
Bangladeshi	-
Chinese	-
White	124
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y1 – Y12

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	16
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	8.3
Average class size	9.6

Education support staff: Y1 – Y12

Total number of education support staff	12
Total aggregate hours worked per week	327

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
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	£
Total income	626677
Total expenditure	613492
Expenditure per pupil	5311
Balance brought forward from previous year	24760
Balance carried forward to next year	27386

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

124

Number of questionnaires returned

56

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	19		4	
My child is making good progress in school.	77	16	4	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	75	22			3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	50	37	4		9
The teaching is good.	82	16			2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	16	2	2	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	88	10	2		
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	89	9	2		
The school works closely with parents.	63	31	4	2	
The school is well led and managed.	84	13	2		1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	13	2		3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	46	32	6	2	14

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

ENGLISH

58. Although the standards attained by most pupils in English are lower than those expected nationally, there are a significant number of pupils at each key stage whose higher attainments are within national averages for their ages.
59. The achievements pupils make in relation to their individual targets, as they build upon their previous learning in English, are good at Key Stages 1 and 2, satisfactory but sometimes good or better at Key Stage 3 and very good and sometimes excellent at Key Stage 4 where pupils' writing skills are fully developed. The high standards of achievement reflect the school's strong emphasis on the teaching of English.
60. The speaking and listening skills of pupils are very good at all key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils give very confident answers to questions as they read their shared book. They show sustained interest, and listen intently to the plot. In a geography lesson, pupils discuss their visit to each other's homes with excitement and clarity. At Key Stage 2, pupils have the confidence to create their own class stories by listening carefully to each other's ideas and have fun with words when preparing to write a poem. At Key Stage 3, pupils discuss with confidence their analysis of newspaper articles and at Key Stage 4, pupils discuss changes to Macbeth's personality and the possible motives for his actions. The confidence with which pupils speak in class and their willingness to listen to others is also a product of the school's ethos of good relationships and equality of opportunity.
61. Pupils make good progress in reading at all key stages. Their interest in, and enjoyment of books, leads them to explore words and different kinds of text in greater detail. At Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils' enjoyment of their big book is increased when their attention is drawn to words beginning with a similar blend of sounds. Similarly, at Key Stage 2, pupils enjoy reading the dialogue of different characters in their shared book, identified from the speech marks in the text. At Key Stage 3, pupils read different styles of writing in newspapers and consider the ways that various newspapers present the same story. At Key Stage 4, pupils use their reading skills to examine the set texts for their accredited courses.
62. In all key stages, pupils are interested in, motivated by, and gain pleasure from reading a range of different types of texts, individually or together. Their reading skills are enhanced by good use of reading schemes and by good parent involvement. Each pupil takes a reading book home regularly and most pupils, when asked, name a favourite book of their own.
63. Pupils' achievements in writing are good overall. At Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have good writing skills. At Key Stage 3, writing skills are satisfactory and often good. At Key Stage 4 pupils have very good writing skills. At Key Stage 1, pupils progress from forming single letters to writing simple words, initially with only two letters, which they practice by using sand trays, finger tracing or by modelling in play-dough. Pupils extend their learning by writing their names and words from the class reading book. Higher attaining pupils write captions to their illustrations. At Key Stage 2, pupils progress to writing their own stories and poems and are inspired by a visit from a poet. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils are able to write a range of different texts from their own rough drafts or from a structure provided by their teacher.
64. At Key Stage 3, pupils write in paragraphs as they prepare answers to examination questions. They note down their ideas, for example when asked to decide if a text is from a science fiction story, then produce a rough draft before the final written version. The written work of lower attaining pupils is supported by the good use of 'writing frames' that help them to structure their ideas.
65. At Key Stage 4, the majority of pupils are able to write for a range of different purposes with appropriate sentence and paragraph structure, using drafting and re-drafting techniques and receiving varying degrees of support.

66. The school has good strategies to improve pupils' spelling, including its own spelling book, which contains key specialist words from all curriculum subjects. Individual spelling dictionaries are developed in relation to particular lessons, and spellings are then learned systematically, often as homework assignments. A good, structured approach to the development of handwriting takes account of pupils' physical difficulties.
67. Overall, the teaching of English in the school is of good quality. The teaching at Key Stages 1 and 2 is good and sometimes very good or excellent. At Key Stage 3 teaching is at least satisfactory but at times is good or very good. At Key Stage 4 the quality of teaching is very good and sometimes excellent.
68. The good quality of teaching effectively promotes and encourages the pupils' learning. For example, the very good progress pupils make in speaking and listening is related to teachers' good combination of questions with praise, which encourages pupils to listen attentively and speak confidently in lessons. Similarly, very good subject knowledge and appropriate teaching methods enable lessons to be planned so that pupils' reading and writing progresses at their own individual pace. The teachers' successful management of pupils' behaviour creates a very positive learning environment.
69. There are indications that pupils' achievements in literacy at Key Stages 1 and 2 have been improved by the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. The framework of which, together with the detailed scheme of work for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4, provides a broad and well-balanced English curriculum that covers all National Curriculum attainment targets. The development of pupils' literacy skills benefits from well-planned links with other subjects. For example, history projects select time periods that coincide with that of texts studied in English lessons.
70. The leadership and management of the English curriculum and its cross-curricular links by the primary and secondary co-ordinators is very good. The school makes satisfactory arrangements for the planning of pupils' learning between the primary and secondary levels, but the effectiveness of this is reduced by inconsistencies in the use of assessment and recording procedures at Key Stages 1 and 2.
71. Since the previous inspection, the school has improved the overall consistency of pupil achievement in English, and has raised the level of achievement at Key Stage 4. There has been an improvement in the pupils' achievements in speaking and listening. The quality of teaching has improved, particularly at Key Stage 2. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. Planning has been improved, as have resources for the library, which now has a good range of reading materials and is the focus for special events including visiting writers and a book festival.

MATHEMATICS

72. The high quality of achievement and progress has been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement in mathematics is consistently good across all key stages. The majority of pupils enter the school lacking mathematical skills and confidence with gaps in their knowledge and language. Pupils become progressively more confident and competent with number work and their use of mathematical language. Much of this progress is directly linked to the successful implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy across the school. It is particularly successful in the primary department.
73. At Key Stage 1, younger pupils recognise the value of coins up to 10p. They count up to 10 and find bigger and smaller shapes, naming the colours too. Pupils use information technology programmes well to find hidden numbers. By the end of the key stage, the oldest pupils use pairs of numbers to make 5, 6 or 7. They use this knowledge to make up money amounts to 6p.
74. Younger pupils at Key Stage 2 know the place value of two digit numbers. They understand that ten single pennies have the same value as a ten pence coin. Higher attainers work with three digit numbers, breaking them down into hundreds, tens and units. By the end of the key stage, the oldest pupils calculate the area of rectangles and work out that the area of a right-angled

triangle is one half of the rectangle. Information technology is used very effectively to allow access to the curriculum for pupils with fine motor control problems. One youngster has a number keyboard which plugs into the computer, and he shows his proficiency both in mathematics and information technology skills.

75. The oldest pupils in the primary unit understand the value of coins up to 50p, and work on problems converting into pounds. Lower attainers add up to three single digits to make ten. Higher attainers solve number problems up to 100 using number lines, and give accurate explanations of their work.
76. Younger pupils at Key Stage 3 use mental arithmetic to solve problems quickly. They carry out two operations using plus and minus accurately. Their written work is neat, accurate and well presented. By the end of Key Stage 3 the oldest pupils prepare for GCSE, Certificate of Achievement, City and Guilds and RSA courses.
77. At Key Stage 4, all pupils follow externally accredited courses. They show a good understanding of the metric system, converting millimetres into centimetres and kilometres. They use metric length, weight and volume accurately. Pupils follow their schemes of work diligently. Assessment is built into the schemes and teachers check constantly for understanding. As pupils progress through the school, the schemes they follow, matched to their ability, ensure continuity of work as they move from key stage to key stage. The concern raised in the last inspection report has been resolved and planning between key stages is now good, particularly the step from Key Stage 2 to Key Stage 3. At Key Stage 4, all pupils leave school with some external accreditation. Higher attaining pupils achieve well and attain national average results for mathematics.
78. The high quality of teaching has been maintained since the last inspection. Teaching is now good, often very good and occasionally excellent. A main strength of the teaching is teachers' subject knowledge, and their knowledge of individual pupils' needs, whether they are emotional, medical or physical. The best lessons are characterised by clear objectives set out at the beginning of the lesson. Very good use is made of demonstration to show pupils what is required, such as in a primary lesson on "nets and tabs". Resources are well organised in advance, appropriate to the needs of the pupils, often made in-house by teachers or assistants to meet individual need. Through good use of resources the pupils found out for themselves the relationship. This illustrates high quality, practical mathematical investigation.
79. Teachers' questioning is of a high quality. Time is always given to allow pupils to answer, teachers and other pupils wait until the answer is given. Pupils often spontaneously applaud each other's successes. Merit marks are used positively to re-inforce learning.
80. As part of the National Numeracy Strategy, mental arithmetic is used at the beginning of most lessons. This works well, concentrates the mind and pupils enjoy this and react very positively to this approach. The subject is well led and co-ordinated. Practical use of mathematics permeates the curriculum. There are good examples of pupils using their mathematical skills in geography, working out time differences between cities on different continents; in design and technology, using practical measurement; in PE, using a stop watch to time each other; in science they use their skills to plot graphs of their experimental results; in Life Skills, weighing, measuring and timing.
81. There is a primary co-ordinator and secondary co-ordinator. They ensure that continuity and progression between key stages is assured. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was some concern over the continuity of work through the key stages. Homework is used very effectively. It is set and marked on a regular basis; pupils and parents understand the value of this work as it enhances the progress pupils make.

SCIENCE

82. The pupils make good progress overall in science. At Key Stages 1 and 2 they make very good and sometimes excellent progress, with over half the pupils achieving at or near the national average expectations at the end of their key stage. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils make

satisfactory progress overall, with a small number reaching national average levels. At Key Stage 4, pupils follow courses towards either the General Certificate of Secondary Education in both single and double science, the Certificate of Achievement or a Royal Society of Arts certificate.

83. In the previous inspection report, the teaching of science was good overall, but variable at Key Stage 2. This has significantly improved, and the teaching of science is now good or very good at Key Stage 2 and excellent at Key Stage 1. At Key Stages 3 and 4, the standard of teaching is satisfactory overall with some good teaching. One lesson was less than satisfactory due to its lack of challenge for higher achieving pupils and its slow pace. This was an aspect highlighted in the previous inspection, which has not yet been fully resolved.
84. At Key Stage 1, very well planned lessons are taught on a thematic basis matched to the National Curriculum schemes of work. The teachers consolidate and enhance the pupils' learning through well-balanced, lively and imaginative lessons. They encourage the pupils in challenging question and answer explorations, and the pupils respond enthusiastically explaining why plants need light and soil to thrive. They ask sensible questions about leaf colour, and they plant pansies outside the classroom. They record their work by sequencing and pasting pictures and sentences. Cross-curricular links allow the pupils to sketch the plants, which they do with care, ensuring that they achieve the varieties in colour, or they use computers to research different plants and their fruits or flowers, competently printing out their own results. Other sessions on living things include links to personal and social education, such as when the pupils observe guinea pigs and discuss how to feed and care for them. There is evidence in the pupils' work that they can classify living and non-living things.
85. At Key Stage 2, the good and sometimes very good standards of teaching ensure that the pupils make good progress. Their work continues the theme of living things through off-site visits to a local farm. They look at earth and space by investigating the causes of day and night and they record their work through drawing and writing. By the end of the key stage, they begin to examine forces and motion, experimenting with gravity and thrust, which is further, supported by the teachers' use of relevant video resources. Plans to improve the continuity between year 6 and their transition to year 7, are currently being developed through 'Moon Colony', a practical based programme designed to encourage links with mainstream schools on a regular basis.
86. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 is variable, but satisfactory overall. Where it is good, well-planned lessons are balanced and include extra work for higher achieving pupils, such as opportunities for extra research or independent writing on the lesson theme. Where lessons are less than satisfactory at Key Stage 3, the level of challenge is inappropriate to the age and ability of most pupils, the lesson pace is too slow and planning for individual needs is not always clearly defined. This suggests that the teacher is not fully aware of the differing abilities between lower and higher achieving pupils. By the end of the key stage the pupils use scientific terminology correctly, and have a good knowledge of the human body, which they demonstrate by showing how muscles contract or relax. They record their work in commercially produced topic worksheets. The pupils take pride in their work, indexing their book under different scientific topics. An examination of these shows that they can conduct a fair test, making predictions on solar radiation for example, where they test various materials, recording and evaluating their results against their original estimates.
87. At Key Stage 4, the quality of teaching is good. The teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject, and the pupils' earlier learning is reinforced through skilled question and answer sessions. They examine plant growth in detail, and they recall the difference between positive and negative geotropism. They build on this to look at the effects of gravity on plant roots, consolidating their work with annotated sketches. There are good cross-curricular links with maths, such as when the pupils conduct a fair test on velocity and time, recording their findings by plotting graphs to calculate total and average speeds in seconds. In years 10 and 11, the pupils work towards accredited examinations, the syllabus being determined by individual ability levels, but in a sample of work by average achieving pupils, there are good examples of fair testing in their studies of compounds and elements, where they experiment with copper sulphate.

88. At all key stages, the teachers have very good classroom control, which is reflected in the very good behaviour and response of the pupils, and in the good relationships between staff and pupils. The teachers have a very good knowledge of their pupils and their individual abilities. However, the practice of assessing and recording the pupils' progress in subject areas is too informal, particularly at primary level. This impacts on the continuity between year groups and key stages, and is reflected in annual reports to parents, which do not specify what the pupils know and understand.

ART

89. Pupils attain at national standards in art. It is a strength of the school. Achievements in art in Key Stage 1 and 2 are very good and excellent in Key Stages 3 and 4. Nine pupils gained GCSE passes last year, 4 of whom achieved grade C. This is a remarkable achievement and a tribute to the dedication and subject expertise of the specialist staff.
90. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can use their observational skills and draw leaf shapes with some accuracy. They can name colours and start to describe the difference between shiny and soft materials. Pupils made a brightly coloured collage some independently and all pupils were able to appraise their own work and described it to others in front of the class. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils are developing their knowledge of art in other countries through research skills into North American Indians and understand the specific materials used such as feathers and beads. Pupils create their own mobiles representing the circle of life using crepe paper and cardboard hoops. They use books and information gathered during a visit from a North American specialist to design their patterns and can talk avidly about their feelings for their work. Pupils develop their own thought and ideas about what is important to them e.g. family, friends and animals and draw these symbols on their circles.
91. Displays around the school and in classrooms show pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 using water colours, copying the work of a range of artists and able to complete simple cartoons following the visits of a local cartoonist. Pupils print using a variety of materials including pasta shells and paint using a range of brush strokes.
92. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils appreciate different artists and their styles such as Van Gogh, Matisse, Monet, Hocking and Leger. They paint a range of winter scenes using a range of brush strokes and have developed very good observational skills. In ceramics they make churches, candleholders and fire places, copying Victorian designs with accuracy and excellent attention to detail and colour. This is excellent achievement. Pupils learn how to glaze and use a variety of colours. They plan and design their work and constantly appraise their own and others' finished products. The excellent subject knowledge of the teacher and his enthusiasm has a very positive impact on pupils' achievements in art.
93. By the end of Key Stage 4 some pupils take GCSE and others now have the opportunity to take City and Guilds in art and design. Pupils make excellent achievements. They produce outstanding work in ceramics. Through the excellent teaching and subject knowledge pupils build on their achievements in Key Stage 3 and produce comprehensive and detailed drawings with flair and confidence. They use a wide range of local and national artists, the local community, old and new photographs and books to research and build upon their very good knowledge of artists' styles and approaches. Teachers have very good questioning skills which elicit some excellent information from pupils and encourage them to think and reflect.
94. The quality of teaching is constantly very good and often excellent. There is excellent subject knowledge and use of resources both within the school and through the local community. This very high quality of teaching inspires pupils to achieve their potential and in many beyond. Pupils become independent learners by year 8 and through the excellent questioning by staff learn to critically analyse and challenge their own and others' work. Work is constantly checked and reviewed by staff, pupils regularly explain their work to others and can take constructive criticism.
95. The school has improved the resources since the last inspection in art and has maintained and improved on the high standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

96. Achievements in design and technology are good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and very good in Key Stages 3 and 4. Key Stage 1 pupils are developing their understanding of simple mechanisms such as wheels and axles and they talk confidently with a growing vocabulary about features of the models with which they work. Oldest pupils in Key Stage 1 discuss ideas for design, such as logos for cardboard packaging, and talk about the qualities of different materials has developed well. They are writing well about the methods used and difficulties encountered in their work with a growing variety of materials. Pupils make good use of the very good stock of construction kits held in the primary department to experiment with different ways of assembling components including joints that allow movement.
97. In their work with food, they show very good levels of awareness of the importance of hygiene and are putting together different sandwich fillings with good understanding of the effects of different combinations on taste and texture.
98. During both Key Stages 3 and 4, pupils make very good progress in using their own ideas to design and make a variety of items. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils' use of graphics shows remarkable improvement in the design stage of their projects. Year 7 pupils, for example, were observed learning techniques for reproducing surface textures of different materials in their drawings. In the design projects of pupils by the end of Key Stage 4, these skills are being used to very good effect to produce work worthy of the higher grades of both GCSE and the Certificate of Achievement. In the making of objects in a variety of materials, such as wood and plastics, a very good rate of improvement is apparent over time in the quality and finish of what is produced by pupils. Their design work shows increasing awareness of the need to review and evaluate their work and to implement the improvements which they have identified. The use of computers to modify and present their designs is particularly impressive. Pupils' knowledge of specialist vocabulary also develops very well during these two key stages.
99. Pupils show high levels of interest and application in both the designing and making elements of the subject. Their ability to work independently develops very well, particularly when they start to work on longer projects from Key Stage 3. They respond very positively to the challenge of working out problems for themselves.
100. Teaching is consistently good or better. Particular strengths are in knowledge of the subject, in the challenging tasks which are set for pupils and in the very effective way questions are used to extend their understanding and independence. In Key Stages 3 and 4, there is excellent use of information and communications technology. Teaching does much to promote the high level of pupils' interest in the subject through the lively pace of lessons and the very good use of a variety of learning resources. The quality and quantity of these have been significantly improved since the last inspection, particularly at Key Stages 3 and 4. There is still, however, no dust-extraction equipment in the subject's specialist room, which is unacceptable from the point of view of pupils' and teachers' health and safety.
101. The rate of improvement in the subject, specifically at Key Stages 3 and 4, since the last inspection has been very good.

GEOGRAPHY

102. Pupils' achievement is very good in geography. They show development in the acquisition of geographical skills throughout the school. In Key Stage 1 work covers mapping skills based on the immediate environment of the classroom and the school as well as physical aspects of the subject. In Key Stage 2 more advanced mapping skills are introduced and thematic studies such as that on the Indus Valley are undertaken. Physical aspects of the water cycle are covered. In Key Stage 3 there is work on the place of Britain in the world, physical geography covering more advanced work on the water cycle linked to the topography of France as well as work on the eco-systems relating to the rainforests. In Key Stage 4 pupils follow the syllabus of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) accredited course in Travel and Tourism. This is an appropriate course linking geography and life skills. Very good questioning takes place in lessons when teachers follow up responses and encourage pupils to explore their answers further.

103. The quality of the teaching is very good. The high quality of planning provides breadth, balance and relevance in the geography curriculum with content that is appropriate and meets statutory requirements. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and at times excellent, leading to very good course content. New ideas are explained to pupils with clarity. Teachers have high expectations and this leads to very good levels of learning. Lessons are well prepared and there is often good pace in lessons with regular changes of activity and high expectations, helping pupils to persevere with the task. This was particularly evident in a Key Stage 3 lesson where pupils responded by using subject based vocabulary demonstrating the application of newly acquired knowledge.
104. The introduction of the Royal Society of Arts (RSA) accredited course at Key Stage 4 is an improvement in the subject from the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has also improved with more very good teaching and no teaching less than good. The change to the delivery of the subject has led to an improvement in the cross-curricular aspect of the subject in Key Stages 1 and 2.
105. The subject is very well led and managed and there is good liaison between the two co-ordinators. Schemes of work for the subject are very good and they lead to a very good level of planning across all key stages. The subject monitoring is good although classroom monitoring of teaching in the subject is not fully developed. Resources for the subject are good and well utilised. Displays are very good throughout the school.

HISTORY

106. Only three lessons were able to be observed in history during the inspection. However, along with the observations, scrutiny of pupils' work in books and displays shows that achievement is good. They show development in historical skills throughout the school. The high expectations expressed by teachers lead to good levels of learning. Very good questioning takes place in lessons and teachers encourage pupils to explore their answers further. In Key Stage 1 pupils learn about changes in their own lives and families and in Key Stage 2 work covers key elements of the subject through a range of study units. These include work on Victorian Britain and the history of ancient Egypt. At Key Stage 3, work was seen on Mediaeval Realms. Work at Key Stage 4 covers the GCSE syllabus and work was seen relating to the history of the USA from 1919 to 1941. Where achievement is good, pupils demonstrate factual knowledge, which they can draw upon in discussion and relate to key elements of the subject such as chronology and interpretation of history. This was particularly evident in a Key Stage 4 lesson where pupils responded by using subject knowledge from previous modules relating it to current work. Lessons often have good pace and there are regular changes of activity.
107. The quality of the teaching in history is good. The planning, which is of high quality provides breadth, balance and relevance. The history curriculum content is well considered, appropriate and meets statutory requirements. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good, and at times excellent, and this leads to very good course content. Teachers explain new ideas to pupils with clarity. Lessons are well prepared.
108. The results in GCSE grades in the subject are an improvement from the previous inspection. There has been an improvement in the liaison between Key Stages 1 and 2 and Key Stages 3 and 4.
109. The subject is very well led and managed and there is good liaison between primary and secondary co-ordinators. Schemes of work for the subject are very good and they lead to a very good level of planning across all key stages. The subject monitoring is good although classroom monitoring of teaching is not yet fully developed. Resources for the subject are good and well utilised and meet the needs of the subject. There are good displays in evidence throughout the school.

INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

110. At all key stages the pupils make good, and sometimes very good progress in information

communication technology. They respond positively and enthusiastically to the high standards of teaching both in classroom settings and in the computer suite. There is evidence in their work and in classroom observations that they develop and improve their manipulation skills, using computers to support a range of aspects in their learning. At Key Stage 4, the pupils are entered for the nationally accredited CLAIT certificates, which denote their expertise in basic computer skills.

111. The good levels of achievement described in the previous inspection report have significantly improved, particularly for those pupils with special needs. This is due to the high standards of teaching, very well planned and challenging lessons, and the good range of quality equipment. The teaching has improved, and is now good and sometimes very good, with all staff having varying degrees of computer literacy and competence. The use of computers to enhance learning continues to be well integrated into the curriculum. The pupils now use the Internet and E-mail to widen their knowledge of the world.
112. At Key Stage 1, lesson plans include the use of technology to enhance the pupils' learning, and all the pupils are encouraged to research CD-ROMs for information relating to their topics. They manipulate the mouse and keyboard, and use printers with confidence. In discrete sessions in the computer suite, they begin to use Clip Art, writing short sentences to accompany their chosen picture. The pupils with special needs use enlarged stand-up keyboards to fully access the lesson, and make very good progress. Classroom assistants are effective in providing strong levels of support and encouragement.
113. At Key Stage 2, the teachers' well planned lessons ensure that all computers are switched on in advance and ready for use, which ensures that no time is wasted. The pupils use word processing skills to develop and complete English tasks. They use "Roamer" and control toys to initiate them in the use of robots and computerised movement. By year 6, they begin to investigate databases, entering information accurately, and asking for help appropriately. The teachers assess the pupils' progress on a daily basis, increasing or adapting the levels of challenge to suit individual abilities.
114. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils are producing vegetarian menu cards and calendars. The teachers' high standards and expectations are reflected in the pupils' work. There is evidence that they take care and pride, accurately aligning appropriate pictures matched to well laid out text. The pupils can explain exactly what they are doing and why, which reflects the clarity of the teachers' lesson guidelines.
115. By Key Stage 4, the pupils have acquired a good range of computer skills, including using programmes to aid their design work in design and technology lessons. They rough outline their work, before transferring their ideas to the screen with scanners and draw packages. Their work is then constructed into 3D creations. For the pupils with special needs, voice activated controls and laptop computers allow them to fully access the curriculum.
116. Information communication technology is well led throughout the school. An efficient system for monitoring and assessing the pupils' progress has been developed by the subject co-ordinator. In the best examples, the teachers' records also contain exemplars of the pupils' work, with attainment levels matched against National Curriculum targets. Resources at primary level are very good, with a wide range of software and a networked computer suite, shared with the nearby primary school, funded by the National Grid for Learning. However, at secondary level, although there is access to primary equipment, there is a lack of suitable hardware and software. There are plans to address these issues through the links with the Harton Technology School. A number of computers are very old and unsuitable for using with the school's electronic and control programmes and hardware. This has been identified in the school development plan as a priority to be addressed when funding becomes available. The subject fulfils statutory requirements and the overall improvements in information technology, coupled with the high standard of teaching and teacher expectations, make this a good department

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

117. The standard and quality of teaching in French is very good, with the pupils at Key Stage 4 achieving a 100% pass rate in the General Certificate of Education A*-C grades in 1999. Those pupils who took Certificate of Achievement examinations passed with merits. At both key stages, the majority of pupils are working at or near the national average expectations.
118. The very good standards of the previous inspection have been maintained. The standard of teaching continues to be at least good and often very good, as do the pupils' attitudes to work. They are still well motivated and show sustained effort, with good levels of concentration. The very good relationships between staff and pupils continue to have a positive impact on learning. The reorganised accommodation has improved, with an area of the library now specifically designated to French.
119. Lessons are very well planned and structured to include the four learning areas of the National Curriculum. The high quality of teaching promotes the pupils' confidence and encourages their good standards of speaking and listening, and throughout the lessons, they respond very well in speaking French.
120. This is very well encouraged by the teacher's excellent use of the language throughout the lesson. By the end of Key Stage 3, the pupils enthusiastically participate in role play sessions, holding simple conversations about themselves, their families and pets, the weather and their likes and dislikes. There is evidence in their books and folders that the teacher caters for individual needs through extension work for the higher achievers, who improve their independent writing skills in short sentences about themselves. They develop their written vocabulary on body parts, illnesses and medication, and copy or spell with accuracy. The pupils of all ability levels complete worksheets, and begin to use everyday regular and irregular verbs such as *être*, *avoir*, and *faire* in their writing. Cassette tapes are used effectively to support learning, and the pupils develop their knowledge listening to and translating short sketches such as 'Rendezvous a la Gare'. They use street maps to identify if a location is opposite, in front of, beside or behind another landmark. Their progress is well monitored and recorded on a daily basis, and is used to inform their future lessons and levels of examination work.
121. At Key Stage 4, the pupils follow accredited examination courses. Those taking the General Certificate of Secondary Education receive two lessons per week, whilst others receive one lesson plus a life skills session which includes elements of French shopping and everyday recipes. They work hard and try to perfect their accents. The well-balanced curriculum offers good cross-curricular links, such as when the pupils discuss the careers they would or would not like. They draw on earlier learning in their spoken French, and consolidate their work in written exercises. The very good levels of teaching and attention to all needs within the classroom ensure that all pupils have a secure understanding, and the teacher checks and rechecks this, using different sentence constructions and vocabulary. The pupils are encouraged towards independent research, and their use of the Internet enhances their theme on everyday life, as they link into extracts from 'Le Monde' and other newspapers and magazines, looking at topical news, theatre programmes and weather forecasts.
122. The overall management of the subject is good, with ongoing assessment against the pupils' subject specific individual education plans, and levelling against National Curriculum attainment targets as a strong feature. There is a well-constructed policy for French and long and short term planning and schemes of work are good. Adequate resources support the subject, and are effectively used to reinforce learning. A commercial software package, with microphones and headphones creates opportunities for independent work and matches individual ability levels. This is further enhanced by the occasional use of the language laboratory of a local college. The overall provision and teaching of modern languages is very good.

MUSIC

123. Only two music lessons were observed during the inspection week but it was clear from these and from a lunchtime session of the school choir that achievements are good in singing and in performing with untuned percussion instruments. In the two lessons observed, both of which involved Key Stage 2 classes, pupils were learning a new song and were quickly picking up the pauses, tempo and dynamics of the new piece. They sang with enthusiasm and with good accuracy and phrasing. One group was learning to compose and perform an instrumental piece using a symbolic notation system and they are clearly making good progress in these skills. They performed their piece in front of the rest of the Key Stage, listening well to their fellow performers and playing with good accuracy and control. During the same session, pupils listened to a recording of part of Holst's "Planets Suite". They expressed their opinions about the music with confidence and good understanding of how different musical elements can produce different moods and impressions of character.
124. The written work of older pupils shows that they have continued to develop their response to classical music. They are also using specialist musical vocabulary and notation with good understanding. The school choir is singing from memory confidently and accurately. They have clearly developed their ability to vary the structure of songs successfully, through repetition and rounds in two parts, for example.
125. Pupils enjoy music, both performing and listening to it. They practise and rehearse willingly and work hard to improve their performance. Their ability to listen carefully to music and to concentrate for lengthy periods has developed very well by the end of Key Stage 2.
126. Teaching is very effective in promoting pupils' positive attitudes to music. Lessons have a lively pace and stimulating variety. Knowledge and understanding of the subject are very strong. At Key Stage 2 the teaching and reinforcement of the subject's specialist vocabulary and the introduction of more demanding musical ideas, in composition and musical patterns, for example, are very successful. Teachers have high expectations to which pupils respond enthusiastically.
127. Curriculum planning shows a good range of musical activities. Termly planning is very good, with close reference to the Programme of Study. Although it was not possible to see a Key Stage 3 class in music, the planning of the performing arts course which these pupils take includes very effective links with dance and drama through which they can continue to experience a well-balanced mix of performing, composing, listening and appraising. The subject makes a very strong contribution to pupils' cultural development and has maintained the good standards reported in the last inspection.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

128. Achievements in physical education are good. There is a very wide range of abilities among pupils. A significant proportion have difficulties in mobility, co-ordination and stamina. Other pupils are performing at average levels of attainment for their age in activities such as swimming and games. All pupils make good progress in their attitudes to physical activity. They try hard to improve their performance, they cope well both with success and their limitations and they show good sporting behaviour and the ability to be part of a team.
129. The youngest pupils enjoy taking part in activities such as "the parachute". They listen very well to instructions and are able to co-operate effectively in a variety of manoeuvres.
130. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good use of the soft play area to experiment with different ways of travelling. Some are jumping, balancing and performing forward rolls with good control. Others with lower levels of attainment are making good progress in basic mobility. One pupil who uses a wheelchair, for example, relished the freedom of the soft play area in one session observed and was displaying increasing confidence in the movements she attempted such as sliding on her front down a 45 degree slope. By the time they are eleven or twelve, pupils have developed their games skills well. They are throwing and catching, for example, with improving accuracy

and in orienteering they are beginning to show very good teamwork in order to solve problems together.

131. In Key Stage 4, these skills have continued to develop steadily and in team games such as indoor cricket they are competing enthusiastically with a good grasp of rules and tactics even though a significant number of them continue to experience difficulties in bowling and striking the ball with consistency.
132. All pupils apart from those in Key Stage 4 have swimming sessions, either in the school pool or at another school in the area. They make good and in some cases very good progress in this activity. By the time they are eleven or twelve, nearly all pupils are swimming unaided for distances of 10 metres or more and have developed competent technique in two or more strokes. Progress is particularly good among pupils with severe physical difficulties.
133. Pupils' very positive attitudes towards their physical education lessons play a major part in their success in the subject. They enjoy physical activities and always try hard. They appreciate others' success. On several occasions during the inspection week they were seen spontaneously applauding the efforts of others. Their personal development, particularly their social skills, are developing as a result of the subject.
134. Teaching is consistently good. The very good relationships and effective class management and organisation promote busy and purposeful lessons in which time and resources are used very productively. Support assistants make a valuable contribution to lessons, particularly in the way in which they support the participation of pupils with additional physical difficulties without unduly restricting their independence. Teachers' knowledge of the various elements of the subject's programme of study is extensive. The teaching of swimming at the school displays high levels of expertise in coaching skills. Expectations are high and pupils of all abilities are encouraged to maximise their potential. Physiotherapy, medical and nursing support and advice are used well to promote the increasingly independent participation of pupils with additional medical or physical difficulties.
135. Planning includes a good balance of activities but there are insufficient opportunities for sporting contact with other schools or with the local community. There is no effective scheme of assessment in the subject to measure pupils' progress against consistent criteria for what they know, understand and can do. This is a shortcoming which was noted in the previous inspection report. In other respects, however, for example in the planning of the curriculum and in the progress made by pupils, improvement in the subject since the last inspection has been good.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Only two lessons of religious education were seen during the inspection. However, a considerable amount of work was seen in pupils' books during the work scrutiny and displays were evident throughout the school. Achievement is good. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this leads to interesting course content, which is delivered well. Teachers take time to explain new ideas to pupils using good examples. The high expectations of teachers for their pupils lead to good levels of learning. Pupils respond well and show an increase in knowledge. In Key Stage 1 pupils can identify objects in relation to "who made them" and relate this to the story of the Creation. In Key Stage 2 pupils are able to name Islam and were able to describe the method of prayer and recall the use of the prayer mat. Some pupils are able to recognise similarities between the Bible and the Qur'an. There is good achievement in cross-curricular skills of speaking and listening. At times questioning is very good and teachers encourage pupils to explain their answers further. There was a particularly good example of this in a Key Stage 2 lesson where pupils responded by using subject knowledge from a previous lesson, relating it to the teacher's questions and explanations.
137. The quality of the teaching in religious education is good. The planning is of high quality, based on the South Tyneside Agreed Syllabus and provides breadth, balance and relevance. Lessons often have good pace and there are changes of activity that keep pupils involved. Work in pupils' books shows high expectations of good presentation of the activity.

138. The development of schemes of work and the management of the subject have improved since the previous inspection. The subject contributes significantly towards pupils' spiritual development. The understanding and respect shown by pupils to the handling of the Qur'an was of the highest order. They were able to explain the necessity of washing their hands first before handling the book and did not have to be reminded to do this. Moral development is also enhanced by the subject and pupils could relate the concept of rules in the school to rules in both the Qur'an and the Bible.
139. The leadership and management of the subject are very good. The syllabus is well designed and appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The planning is monitored although monitoring of the teaching of the subject by the co-ordinator is not yet developed. Resources for the subject are very good and utilised fully to meet the needs of the subject. There are good displays in evidence throughout the school.