

INSPECTION REPORT

CEDAR HOUSE SCHOOL

Kendal Road, Kirkby Lonsdale via Carnforth
Lancashire, LA6 2HW

LEA area: Cumbria

Unique reference number: 112456

Headteacher: Mr Anthony W Cousins

Reporting inspector: Mr Gordon Foster
Rgl's OIN: 2470

Dates of inspection: 11 - 15 June 2001

Inspection number: 187446

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Independent
Age range of pupils:	9 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Kendal Road Kirkby Lonsdale Via Carnforth Lancashire
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Appropriate authority:	Witherslack Group of Schools
Name of chair of governors:	Mr J Bowers
Date of previous inspection:	18 March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2470	Mr G Foster	Registered Inspector	Modern Languages Religious Education Special Education Needs	What sort of school is it? How high are standards? How well is the school led and managed? Other features of the school
9214	Mrs J Garland	Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents? How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
17267	Mr N Ogley	Team Inspector	English Music Equal Opportunities English as an additional language	How good are curricular and other opportunities?
15289	Mr J Currie	Team Inspector	Science Design Technology	How well are pupils and students taught?
15197	Mr E Nash	Team Inspector	Art Geography History PSHE	
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cedar House School is an independent seven-day residential and day school for boys and girls aged 9 to 16. All the pupils have statements of special educational need except for one newly placed pupil who has a draft statement. The statements describe the pupils as having emotional and behavioural difficulties, with around a quarter of the roll having associated learning difficulties. There are currently fifty-eight pupils on roll, forty-one boys and seventeen girls. The majority of pupils are aged 11 to 16 with only six aged 9 to 11. There are forty-seven residential pupils of whom eleven are girls. Five boys and six girls attend on a daily basis. Resident pupils normally return home for the weekend every week or every fortnight. The school has DfEE approval for 70 pupils.

Pupils are placed at the school by a large number of Local Education Authorities (LEAs) and are drawn from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds. All pupils have encountered severe difficulties in mainstream schools, and many have experienced further problems in other special schools. A significant proportion have been excluded from their previous schools. As a result pupils' attainment on entry is well below that which might be expected of pupils their age. With one exception, all pupils are of white ethnic origin and all pupils have English as their main language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Cedar House is an effective school that makes good provision to meet the educational and welfare needs of its pupils. By the time they leave school, the majority of pupils learn to behave appropriately and they achieve well within the curriculum to gain external accreditation. This is the result of generally good teaching and good and very good care practices supported by effective leadership and management. The school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils aged 9 to 11 generally achieve well in all their work and those aged 11 to 16 achieve well in English, science, information and communication technology, art, music and physical education. This is the result of good teaching in these areas
- Pupils with specific literacy difficulties are taught well and most make good progress
- The majority of pupils develop good attitudes to school, and their behaviour and their relationships with other pupils and staff are good
- The support provided for pupils' welfare is good
- The headteacher and senior staff lead and manage the school well. They have a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and have agreed a clear plan for future improvement with the Witherslack Group's board of directors.

What could be improved

- The use of computers to aid pupils' learning in subjects
- Monitoring and evaluation to identify and eradicate remaining weaknesses in teaching and curriculum provision
- Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development
- Accommodation for physical education, science and for independent living provision to secure equality of access for boys and girls..

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 good progress since the last inspection in March 1996. There have been improvements in teaching and achievement in English generally, and in particular, for pupils with specific literacy difficulties, science, design and technology, art and information and communication technology. The curriculum is now broader and more balanced through the introduction of religious education and the very successful introduction of music. There are schemes of work for every subject and individual education planning has improved. Appraisal has been introduced and there are detailed plans for the introduction of a new performance management strategy next year. The school now has excellent induction and training strategies to address its continuing recruitment difficulties. Success criteria in respect of pupils' behaviour have been identified and progress against these criteria is rigorously monitored. Overall, the school has a clear view of its strengths and weaknesses and its arrangements for strategic planning to address these is now an area of strength.

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

At the time of the inspection all Year 11 pupils were on study leave prior to leaving school. Judgements relating to Year 11 are based on documentary evidence.

Teachers' assessment of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils aged 14 at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 compare favourably with those achieved in similar schools. Results of pupils aged 16 at the end of Key Stage 4 also compare favourably with similar schools, with the proportion of pupils achieving one or more grade A* to G grades and five or more A* to G grades significantly exceeding the proportion who do so in similar schools. The school sets and achieves challenging statutory and additional school improvement targets. Individual targets for learning, personal development and behaviour are also set, and pupils generally make good or very good progress against these. Pupils' achievement by age 11 is good or better in all subjects, with very good achievement in mathematics and music. Achievement by the age of 14 is very good in music, and good in mathematics, science, art, information and communication technology, physical education and personal, social and health education. At 16, pupils' achievement in science is very good, and it is good in English mathematics, art, information and communication technology, and physical education. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in respect of their reading skills is good. Achievement in religious education in Key Stage 3 and 4 is unsatisfactory.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Most pupils enjoy their time in Cedar House and co-operate with their teachers and care staff.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Despite their personal difficulties, pupils react well to the school's behaviour management strategies. They are polite and interested in visitors and know the standard of behaviour that is expected of them.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils' attitudes and social skills improve substantially during their time at the school and relationships in the school are very good.
Attendance	Good. Attendance is above the average for schools of this type and internal truancy is rare.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9-11	aged 11-16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The school meets the needs of all its pupils as a result of the good quality of the teaching and care provided. Teaching is very good or better in just over one quarter of lessons, good or better in nearly two thirds of lessons, and satisfactory or better in nearly all lessons. The teaching is consistently good or very good in Key Stage 2, particularly in mathematics. There is good teaching which supports effective learning in English, science, art, design technology, information and communication technology, physical education, music and personal, social and health education. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in all other subjects, except in religious education for pupils age 11 to 16 where it is unsatisfactory. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught, but there are shortcomings in the development of information and communication technology skills through subject teaching. The teaching provided for pupils with specific literacy difficulties and other special educational needs is good. The management of pupil behaviour by all staff is very effective in all lessons and in residential settings.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. With exception of a modern foreign language, which will be taught next year, the school teaches all the core and foundation subjects of the National Curriculum, religious education, and personal, social and health education. The organisation of the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2 and curriculum provision in English, science, art and music are particularly good.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall good. Provision for pupils' personal, moral, and social development is very good. Provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development is poor except in music, art and English.

cultural development	
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. Behaviour management strategies are effective and the school cares well for its pupils. There are particularly good standards of care for the residential pupils, though regular opportunities for older pupils, especially girls, to experience some degree of independent practical living and responsibility for themselves are limited. Child protection arrangements are very good and attendance is well monitored. The social and behavioural development of pupils is also closely monitored, but the assessment of pupils' academic progress is less rigorous and this limits the quality of what is shared with parents.

The school secures effective partnership with parents despite the fact that many live a long way away. Particular features of its support for parents are the regular contact through keyworkers and the role of the pupil liaison officer.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good overall. Senior staff provide strong leadership and maintain a clear oversight of the work of the school.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good overall. The board of directors adequately fulfils its statutory responsibilities. They provide good support to the management of the school and have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory overall. The school has a clear idea of its strengths and what needs to be improved. The monitoring of teaching is less rigorous than the monitoring of care provision and pupils' behaviour.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school has clear plans as to how further improvement will be achieved.

The headteacher and senior staff provide effective leadership and management and the school has a clear understanding of what it needs to do to improve further. Strategic planning is effective and the monitoring and evaluation of its support for pupils' behaviour and welfare is very good. The school knows who its best teachers are, but systems to monitor and develop teaching need to be more rigorously implemented. Compared to similar schools, the school has generous staffing ratios. These contribute to the positive outcomes achieved. The school appropriately applies the principles of best value. Shortcomings in accommodation severely restrict the teaching of physical education and, to a lesser degree, science. Residential accommodation offers more opportunities for independent living to boys than girls

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' progress and the quality of teaching • The information provided about pupils • The approachability of staff • The school's expectation of pupils • The quality of leadership and management • The extent to which the school helps pupils become more mature and responsible • The range of activities outside lessons 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school • The amount of work provided for children to do at home

The inspection team agrees with the positive views expressed, with the exception that it is of the opinion that the school should provide more information for parents about their children's academic progress alongside the excellent information provided about their behaviour and care needs. It agrees that more work could be provided for some pupils to do at home. The school's response to behaviour difficulties is effective.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

At the time of the inspection all Year 11 pupils were on study leave prior to leaving school. Judgements relating to Year 11 are based on documentary evidence.

1. Because their education has been disrupted by periods of absence, poor attitudes to school and significant behavioural difficulties that have restricted their learning, pupils' attainment on entry is well below that expected for pupils of their age. The majority make at least satisfactory progress, but they nevertheless continue to attain at a level below that expected. Accordingly, standards are reported here largely in terms of achievement, taking into account pupils' starting points. Attainment is only reported or where there is evidence of attainment in line with expectation.
2. Teacher assessments of attainment in English, mathematics and science for pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 in 2000 all compare favourably with those achieved in similar schools. Results of pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 also compare favourably with similar schools, with the proportion of pupils achieving one or more grade A* to G grades and five or more A* to G grades significantly exceeding the proportion who do so in similar schools. No pupil has achieved the national expectation of 5 A* to C grades in recent years, but such achievement would be very unusual in a school like Cedar House. The small size of cohorts and the changes in the nature of the intake mean that comparisons with attainment at the time of the last inspection are problematic. However, given the evidence of a general lowering of attainments on entry, the rise in the proportion of pupils achieving one A* to G from 65% to 100% would appear to reflect a rise in standards.
3. As an independent school Cedar House is not required to set statutory school improvement targets. It chooses not to publish targets for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 because the numbers in a cohort are small - two or three - and because it usually does not know who the identified pupils are when it is required to set the targets. Targets for the proportion of pupils achieving one and five A* to Gs are set for the end of Key Stage 4. These targets aim for year on year improvement and are challenging compared to the achievements of previous cohorts and similar schools. In 2000 the school exceeded these statutory targets. In recent years, the school has set and achieved increasingly demanding additional targets in basic literacy and mathematics. Pupils have individual targets for their learning, personal development and behaviour set through the individual care and education planning process. These targets are challenging and pupils generally make good or very good progress.
4. Pupils' achievement by the end of Key Stage 2 is good or better in all subjects and cross curricular themes inspected, with very good achievement in mathematics and music. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is very good in music, and good in mathematics, science, art, information and communication technology, physical education and personal, social and health education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except religious education. By end of Key Stage 4, pupils' achievement in science is very good, and it is good in English, mathematics, art, information and communication technology, and physical education. It is satisfactory in all other subjects except religious education. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in respect of their reading skills is good, but the achievement of the most able pupils is constrained because the work they are set is frequently too easy. The fact that pupils achieve well overall, is due to the expertise of all staff in

managing pupil behaviour. The good and very good teaching observed is the result of teachers applying their subject expertise to plan well organised, briskly delivered lessons in which positive expectations feature strongly. Where achievements are less than good, it is often due to teachers getting the balance of activities wrong and setting too many undemanding worksheet and copying activities.

5. In English, pupils can be seen to improve their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing as they move through the school. Achievement is good at the end of Key Stage 2, satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 3 and good at the end of Key Stage 4, with higher attaining pupils being entered for the General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE). The school does well when compared to similar schools and standards have continued to improve since the last inspection. Many pupils have limited vocabulary and lack experience in speaking in different social contexts when they enter the school. However, through their English work and regular opportunities for discussion and question and answer work in all subjects their ability to speak Standard English improves as they move through the school. Most pupils' listening skills are very poor on admission, but the emphasis on spoken language in lessons allied to improvements in their behaviour lead to significant progress. The school sets demanding targets for reading improvement and generally achieves them. The majority of older pupils are able to read a range of examination level texts without support, and the achievement levels of pupils with specific learning difficulties in reading are particularly good. The introduction of the literacy strategy has improved use of punctuation and overall, pupils' achievement in writing is satisfactory.
6. In mathematics, pupils' achievement is good or better in all three key stages and the school does well when compared to similar schools. There has been a small rise in standards since the last inspection. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is very good. Compared to when they start school pupils work confidently with mental multiplication using the 5 times tables and they demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding in the use of money and time. Achievement levels at the end of Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 are good. By the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils have made adequate progress, with lower achieving pupils using number square puzzles with confidence to solve simple addition and subtraction activities. Higher achieving pupils are able to estimate and identify acute, reflex and obtuse angles with a reasonable degree of accuracy. At the end of Key Stage 4, higher attaining pupils work with more accuracy such as in the use of angle calculations to draw triangles and identify the features of congruent shapes. They are entered for GCSE. The fact that the rates of progress achieved by the younger pupils exceed those of the secondary age pupils is due to the teacher's more interactive teaching and limited reliance on text book activities. The ability of pupils in Key stage 3 and 4 to apply their developing skills is limited due to subject teachers' low expectations of what they can achieve without support.
7. In science, pupils' achieve well in all three key stages. The standards achieved compare very favourably with similar schools and they have continued to improve since the last inspection. Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is good with pupils able to carry out investigations and experiments on friction and forces, recording their results and interpreting them accordingly. Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 3 is also good with pupils continuing to develop their capacity to carry out experiments and interpret results. By the time pupils reach the end of Key Stage 4 their achievement is very good with higher attaining pupils being entered for GCSE. Pupils' success in science is due to the good and very good teaching provided in the subject.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have good attitudes to school. Most pupils enjoy their time in Cedar House and co-operate with their teachers and care staff in completing tasks set or carrying out requests. They concentrate well once their interest is engaged. This is most marked in the lessons where the teaching is particularly good and pupils are captivated by the subject as seen for example, in art and physical education lessons; or where, as for example in the Key Stage 2 class, the teacher and teaching assistants promote involvement by the sheer energy of their support for pupils. Pupils generally treat the residential units as their home and take a pride in maintaining the condition of the units. The day pupils have less of a commitment to their day unit.
9. Behaviour is generally good. Around the school, at break-times and during more formal activities such as assemblies and school visits it is very good. Despite the personal difficulties in conforming which individuals experience on occasion, pupils react well to the school's behaviour management strategies. They are polite and interested in visitors and know the standard of behaviour that is expected of them. Exclusions are few, though pupils are often removed from classes when their behaviour disrupts the concentration of others. This is done very effectively and it causes the minimum of disruption to pupils in the class. As well as the small number of 'formal' exclusions, a handful of pupils leave the school each year by mutual agreement with their LEA and, usually, the pupil and their parents. The extremely volatile nature of the intake, the efforts of the staff to avoid such situations and the behaviours that lead to pupils having to leave the school justify the outcomes. The number of physical restraints reported to the board of directors shows that such restraints are a regular feature of life in the school, though the majority are carried out on a relatively small number of pupils. Those observed during the week of the inspection were justified by the nature of the pupils' behaviour.
10. Attendance is good, at over 90 per cent for both day and residential pupils, which is above the average for schools of this type. Internal truancy is relatively rare, though this is due more to the number of staff available to monitor the pupils, rather than the schools' tracking systems which are in need of simplification. Serious absconsions are rare.
11. Pupils' attitudes and social skills improve substantially during their time at school, and pupils who have the greatest difficulty in responding normally in the residential and classroom situation for more than a short period of time when they are admitted soon adapt successfully. Successful work to support pupils' personal development goes on across the curriculum, especially in physical education, art, personal social and health education and generally in Key Stage 2. The majority of pupils respond very well to the keyworker system and the school's other strategies for helping them to talk through and understand the consequences of their actions. The school council is proving a good way of demonstrating that pupils can discuss matters of concern in a mature fashion when they are asked to.
12. Relationships in the school are very good; staff work well with pupils, taking a firm yet often humorous approach, which results in a positive response. This was clearly apparent in the way pupils teased teachers and care staff about the presence of inspectors, making comments such as "Oh sir, can't we just watch TV like we usually do" - when this was clearly not the case. Where pupils' are challenged by staff any hostility is quickly forgotten after the incident is resolved.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

13. Overall, teaching is good across the school and it has improved since the last inspection. It is very good or better in just over one quarter of lessons and is good or better in nearly six out of ten lessons. The proportion of unsatisfactory teaching

has fallen. Teaching is consistently satisfactory or better in Key Stage 2, with one third of teaching assessed as very good or better. In Key Stage 3, the proportion of very good and better teaching is one quarter and at Key Stage 4, one in five lessons are very good or better. The very few weaknesses in teaching occur in Key Stages 3 and 4.

14. There are some significant strengths in teaching and these have a very positive effect on pupils' learning and behaviour. Teachers and teaching assistants manage their teaching well, and when there are incidents they ensure that pupils return to learning relatively quickly and that the learning of other pupils is undisturbed. In many subjects teachers have a very secure knowledge of their subject. This shows itself in better quality planning and high expectations of the pupils by the staff. In English, science and music, for example, the observable impact of secure subject knowledge is good learning, improved interest and higher standards overall. The teaching of pupils with additional special educational needs is good across most subjects and very good in English and music. This enables pupils with special educational needs to make good progress and develop positive attitudes to learning.
15. Since the last inspection, teaching has improved in English, science, design and technology, art, information and communication technology and physical education. Music and religious education were not taught in 1996. The teaching of music is now very good, but much of the teaching in religious education is ineffective.
16. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy across the range of subjects is generally satisfactory. The teaching of literacy skills in English is very good at Key Stage 2 where the principles of the National Literacy Strategy have been applied, and at Key Stages 3 and 4 it is good. The school teaches literacy well to those pupils with specific learning difficulties. As a consequence of this, most pupils improve in their reading and writing as they move through the school. The teaching of numeracy in mathematics is good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4. Numeracy skills are appropriately reinforced in science, design and technology and geography, but in other subjects low expectations of pupils' skills limits what they are asked to do. Pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to enhance their skills in information and communication technology by applying what they are learning in the subject in the context of other lessons.
17. The teaching of English is good across the school with some particular strengths at Key Stage 2. Teachers know their subject well and this enables the pupils to improve their skills in reading and writing. Teachers plan effectively and this helps pupils sustain their interest and effort and thus make progress. Pupils with additional special educational needs learn well in English because of the secure specialist knowledge of the teachers, the effective support provided by teaching assistants and very effective management of their behaviour.
18. In mathematics, teaching is satisfactory overall and it is very good for pupils at Key Stage 2. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject across all key stages, teach the basic skills satisfactorily and make sound use of support staff in lessons. This encourages pupils to stay on task, work hard and helps them make satisfactory gains in knowledge. Teachers manage the behaviour of the pupils well. There are, however, some important weaknesses in the teaching provided for older pupils. Planning is not always as effective as it should be and pupils do not always have access to a wide enough range of activities. The consequence of this is that pupils lose interest during the lesson and thus do not make as much progress as they should. In a few cases the lack of direct teaching means that some pupils make errors in their work that might have been avoided.

19. Teaching in science is good overall with some very good features. Because the teacher has a secure knowledge of the subject, plans effectively and interests and motivates the pupils, learning is good. Pupils benefit from well thought through lessons that contain a good range of learning experiences including practical, investigative and reading and recording. Pupils concentrate well and try hard. As a result, they develop their skills of observing and investigation and improve their knowledge and understanding of the subject.
20. Teaching is a significant strength in music where the combination of very good subject knowledge, enthusiasm, very effective planning and teaching methods enable the pupils to apply considerable effort in lesson, learn a lot and understand what they have learnt. Teaching in physical education is also a strength. Teachers plan well and pupils make good progress, especially in respect of their confidence. Teaching is good in art and design technology. Teaching is weak in religious education where a lack of subject knowledge, poor planning and a general insecurity of the subject results in unsatisfactory learning overall.
21. One significant area for development and improvement in teaching is the use of assessment information to help teachers plan for learning. Teachers know their pupils well, they respond well to the difficulties they experience in lessons and they assess their behaviour effectively. However, teachers do not all routinely plan assessment opportunities, and the recording of what pupils know, understand and can do in relation to the planned curriculum in most subjects is underdeveloped. As a result, teachers find it difficult to identify and share appropriate learning outcomes for pupils who thus do not necessarily know what is expected of them in lessons. There is also room for improvement in the way teachers plan to promote spiritual and cultural development including cultural awareness and to encourage and promote pupils' initiative and personal responsibility in learning.

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

22. The curriculum at all key stages is broad, balanced and relevant. The school is not required to teach the National Curriculum, but in line with its aims, it teaches the core subjects of English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology. Religious education and all the foundation subjects other than a modern foreign language are also taught, and a teacher has recently been appointed to co-ordinate this subject. Personal, social and health education, including sex and drugs education is appropriately provided. The integration of the curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 2 is a strength, as is curriculum provision for English, science, art and music. Opportunities are provided for all pupils to acquire qualifications at the end of Key Stage 4. Whilst the current balance of GCSE, Certificate of Achievement (CoA) and the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) reflects the needs of the school's population, the need to develop an alternative is rightly under active consideration.
23. The school's aim of providing access to the statutory curriculum is reflected in what is taught in individual subjects except in physical education and to a lesser degree in science and in design technology. All three subjects are affected by less than adequate accommodation. Subject curriculum statements and schemes of work outline the aims, objectives and content for all subjects taught. However, though the school has a system for monitoring curriculum planning, this is not carried out with sufficient rigour and this allows remediable weaknesses to go un-detected.
24. During the inspection, the extra-curricular activities offered included art and craft, home economics, swimming, football, fitness, gardening, orienteering, canoeing and

walking. Overall, the quality and range of such activities for residential pupils is very good and, though there is no coherent curriculum statement describing the relationship between activities in school and the residential programme, they appropriately complement the educational curriculum on offer during the school day. Because of transport, and because no formal programme operates during the lunch break, day pupils have only very limited access to extra-curricular activities. Despite a flexible policy that encourages the setting of homework to support basic skills and develop class based learning, very few pupils are set homework to take home or work on in the residential units. Whilst a rigid policy would be clearly inappropriate, pupils would benefit from a more rigorous implementation of the current policy.

25. Particular attention is given within the curriculum to pupils' individual needs. Pupils have personal development and behaviour targets, support is provided through a keyworker system and there is a strong personal, social and health education programme. There is also an emphasis on raising pupils' standards of literacy, particularly for those pupils identified as having specific difficulties. Again, pupils are set individual targets and teaching assistants provide good quality regular support. Whilst both these strategies are highly effective, pupil progress would be improved if targets were more clearly set in collaboration with pupils and progress jointly monitored by staff and pupil. Withdrawal of pupils for keyworker and reading sessions is disruptive of the time-tabled day, and such practice can give pupils an unduly negative view of the importance of their schooling.
26. Careers and vocational education including the provision of work experience are developing well in Key Stage 4, and the school has gained the Quality Standard Award in Work Experience which is a module of the Certificate of Achievement in Careers. All pupils receive careers interviews, and the use of ASDAN modules very appropriately reflects the individual needs of older pupils. The support provided by local and pupils' careers services is good and this is well used by the school. Appropriate training has been given to staff responsible for careers education.
27. All pupils have access to the full range of curriculum opportunities and, if they are residents, the residential activities on offer. However, there are some differences in the opportunities available for day and residential pupils. To some extent this is unavoidable, but there are differences that could be avoided. For example, as well as differences in terms of extra curricular activities, day pupils have separate lounge and reception areas, and they do not normally attend the end of day assemblies. At the institutional level there are differences in the way pupils' records are stored and their keyworker system operates. A stronger focus on the promotion of interaction between all pupils in both residential and day education settings would strengthen overall provision, and as a result further support the social curriculum. The school is sensitive to gender issues, and whilst boys and girls have equal access to the curriculum, the school also provides planned opportunities in the residential units for girls and boys to spend time in single sex situations. The overall lack of residential accommodation and the relatively small numbers of girls in residence mean that they have access to a more limited range of independent living settings.
28. Provision to support moral development is good. When they behave in a disruptive or anti-social manner towards other members of the institution, pupils are challenged swiftly and appropriately. Education and care staff support pupils in their understanding of the principles that distinguish right from wrong through their own behaviour, and through formal and informal discussions in school and residential settings, especially in keyworker sessions. Moral issues are also addressed through the planned curriculum in personal, social and health education and in a other subjects such as English within literature and in geography through discussions about immigration.

29. Provision to support pupils' social development is also good overall, and, given the pupils' starting points, the school meets with considerable success in this area. There is a strong personal, social and health education programme and opportunities within other subjects to support good social relationships are sought. Good social development is also promoted through the planning of specific activities such as in a canoeing lesson where individuals work together to avoid a capsized boat and through other team activities. All pupils are encouraged to live in harmony through the relationships and interactions modelled by staff in classrooms and residential units, and through the opportunities provided to eat, work and relax together in the school. However, despite the school's considerable success, there are areas where practice could be improved. Too many of the activities planned within the curriculum are individualised, although, when pupils are asked to collaborate in such subjects such as science and physical education, they do so effectively. A second concern relates to the extent which individual pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in and around the school. For example, teaching assistants will sometimes clear up when pupils could do so; and pupils are routinely asked to line up to calm their natural exuberance, when they could be encouraged to behave appropriately without recourse to institutionalised control strategies.
30. Curriculum planning does not give sufficient emphasis to the development of spirituality. Religious education provides only limited opportunities to explore spirituality and assemblies that give real opportunities for reflection, quiet and wonder take place infrequently. In almost all areas of the curriculum discussion explores social and moral issues, but it does not probe into the spiritual dimension. In areas of the curriculum where spirituality is addressed - the passionate recitation of poets' poetry in assembly, experiencing and reflecting on fear in outdoor education, responding to the emotions of music - the pupils respond very well.
31. Since the last inspection the school's provision to support cultural development has been improved through the introduction of religious education and the very successful introduction of music. Support for pupils' cultural development in art and literature is satisfactory and history and geography offer some opportunities to learn about other cultures. In addition pupils have occasional access to cultural activities through the residential activity programme. However, overall, opportunities for cultural development are limited and in particular there is little evidence of curriculum planning to secure pupils' understanding and valuing of life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

32. The school cares well for its pupils. There are particularly good standards of care for the residential students, who flourish in the family atmosphere generated in the units. However, regular opportunities for older pupils, especially girls, to experience some degree of independent practical living and responsibility for themselves, and to prepare them for life after school are constrained. This is partly due to the limited range of living accommodation available and because staff do not always modify routines established for the majority. Keyworkers provide good individual support and advice for both day and residential pupils and there is a weekly review of progress carried out on a one-to-one basis.
33. Child protection arrangements are very good and training is thorough, with working links through to local support services. Health and safety matters are well addressed and there is a great deal of attention given to the safe management of pupils.
34. Attendance is well monitored. However, there are many instances where pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra work or to calm them down and the details of pupils whereabouts are not all kept in the same place. The school's systems to

track pupils need to be simplified to ensure teachers know where pupils are during the day.

35. The school's behaviour management strategies are consistently and efficiently practised, resulting in minimal disruption to work and a quick re-entry into class when pupils have displayed unacceptable behaviour. Systems of rewards and sanctions are clearly understood by pupils who appreciate the fact that they can earn grades to benefit from privileges which come with good behaviour and improvements in attitude. Pupils' emotional problems are handled by staff with sensitivity, and close attention is paid to potential friction to ward off bullying. Pupils with specific difficulties are given help to minimise the effect on their education and relationship with their peers. The school makes good use of the medical and psychological services available to it, enabling detailed work to be carried out to support and encourage pupils.

36. Pupil profiles monitor and assess pupils' learning and enable broad targets to be set from their entry to the school after baseline testing. These are further refined through an effective system for individual care and education planning. The social and behavioural development of pupils is then closely monitored and regularly recorded throughout the school, but the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' academic progress is less rigorous. Curriculum assessments do not focus on the detail of what pupils can do and what they still need to learn, and they are not used to help teachers secure individual progress. The assessment and monitoring of basic literacy and numeracy progress is sound and used to set appropriate targets, but these are not shared with pupils or parents. The school does not use the Key Stage 2 and 3 tests or tasks, relying instead on teacher assessment. This limits the opportunity of higher attainers to demonstrate their achievements and develop their capacity to take formal tests. A system of weekly contact with parents, annual reports and well run statutory reviews keeps parents very well informed about their children's personal development. The quality of what is shared with parents in relation to their academic progress is constrained by the unsatisfactory quality of assessment of pupils' progress within the curriculum.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37. Parents are very supportive of the work of the school and feel that their children make progress during their time there. Almost fifty per cent of parents replied to the questionnaire and the majority of responses were positive. Despite the fact that most families live a long way from the school, parents feel very well informed about their children's behaviour and personal development through their keyworkers. The role of the keyworker is a crucial feature of liaison with home, and parents are provided with weekly information on each pupil's progress. This enables problems to be aired and praise to be reinforced. The school is prepared to advise parents on possible solutions to behaviour problems at home if necessary.

38. Separate handbooks for pupils and parents provide useful information about procedures and routines for newcomers and their families. However, information about the curriculum is scant and there are few details provided for parents about what their children will be learning in any particular class. Reports currently provide good information about pupils' attitudes to subjects and some information about achievements in the core subjects of English, mathematics, information and communication technology and science. However, the reporting of performance in other subjects should be improved to provide more useful detail for parents and pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39. The headteacher provides strong leadership and maintains a clear oversight of the work of the school. The deputy headteacher supports him well in this and ensures the efficient day to day implementation of school policy. They are effectively supported by the head of care, education manager and bursar. Roles are generally well understood with the exception of those relating to the responsibilities of subject co-ordinators to secure the quality of the curriculum in their subject. Co-ordinators understand the need to provide support and advice to teachers who teach the few lessons they do not teach themselves. They do not necessarily regard themselves as being responsible for the quality of teaching across their subject or know how they should go about improving provision. At the time of the last inspection, the school's management put undue emphasis on promoting high standards of behaviour and personal development at the expense of attainment within the curriculum. This is no longer the case, though the school is still more successful in terms of the implementation of its strategy for promoting good care provision than it is in terms of the implementation of its strategy for improving teaching and learning.
40. All statutory requirements that apply to an independent school are met with the exception of the requirement to publish the school's fees in the prospectus. These are published separately. Because Cedar House is an independent school, there is no requirement to have a governing body and the Witherslack Group's board of directors does not seek to replicate such a role. However, it does fulfil many of the functions of a governing body and a local education authority very effectively. These include carrying out aspects of the role of 'critical friend', the defining of policies and the monitoring of the performance of the school against key indicators. When measured against its aspirations the board is successful. A clear set of policies covering all aspects of the running of the group's schools has recently been published, and overall, the board provides good support to the management of the school and has a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. However, the board does not receive regular reports on the outcomes of the headteacher's monitoring of teaching, and its understanding of curriculum and teaching strengths is less well developed than its understandings in respect of care and leadership and management. The board has approved a new performance management policy to replace its appraisal policy that reflects requirements in the maintained sector. There are detailed plans for its implementation during 2001 to 2002. These include a requirement for the headteacher to be appraised against agreed performance targets.
41. The monitoring and evaluation of care provision is rigorous. The board of directors and senior management team monitor outcomes against a set of success criteria on a weekly basis. This includes an assessment of the involvement of all staff in restraints and other incidents. Care and classroom support staff are under almost constant observation because they work alongside their line managers, they meet with managers on a termly basis to discuss their needs, and their training needs are carefully assessed and monitored. There are also systems in place to monitor and evaluate and develop teaching, but they are less rigorously implemented. Members of the management team check teachers' termly planning and teachers are all observed as part of the induction and appraisal schemes. They too benefit from assessment and recording of their training needs. However, weaknesses in schemes of work are not always challenged and to date the programme of classroom observation has not been sufficiently extensive or challenging to drive up standards in areas of weakness. The school knows who its best teachers are, but it does not adequately use their strengths to influence the rest.

42. The previous inspection report identified the need to improve procedures for strategic planning, monitoring of resources and the evaluation of the outcomes of spending decisions. Since its publication, the board of directors has made its expectations in respect of strategic planning clear and this is now an area of strength. The senior management team produces a well thought through three-year development plan that is up-dated annually. It sets out a valid vision for the future development of the school and identifies what needs to be improved to achieve that vision. Where a need for extra resources is identified funding is identified. For example, as in the present plan that identified a need to increase the staff development and information and communication technology budgets. The board of directors receives termly reports on the implementation of the plan and audits progress annually. Implementation is currently in line with the target dates set.
43. The headteacher and bursar work closely with the Witherslack Group's board of directors and financial services to set and monitor the school's budget. Financial management is unobtrusive and efficient. Where unexpected needs arise they can be addressed by virement within the budget or through additional support from the directors. The regular contact between the school and the directors is adequate to evaluate the need for such support. Long-term pressures are addressed through the school development planning process. The board of directors and senior managers apply the principles of best value in setting its fees for the school - for example, by comparing the school's performance with other schools, by conducting market research on the needs of LEAs and actively seeking out the views of parents.
44. Compared to similar schools, the school has above average levels of teaching, classroom support and administrative staff, and well above average levels of care staff. Staffing ratios exceed the guidance contained in DES Circular 11/90. These generous ratios reflect the levels of challenge presented by pupils and contribute to the positive outcomes achieved. Classroom support staff are highly skilled and committed to the work of the school. They work effectively with teachers and make a major contribution to the success of the school.
45. Care and classroom support staff are appropriately experienced and qualified. They benefit from excellent induction and in-house training programmes developed by the group training officer and the school's own staff development officer. Teaching staff also benefit from the excellent induction and in-house training programmes with excellent levels of support offered to new, newly qualified and unqualified teaching staff as appropriate. This has helped the school respond to the continuing recruitment problems identified in the previous inspection report. The school has experienced difficulties in providing access to training commensurate to that offered in the local authority sector in literacy, numeracy, information and communication technology and other subjects. Moreover, there is insufficient subject expertise in mathematics, religious education and, to a lesser degree in design technology, to secure effective provision. The understanding and skill which all staff are able to apply to the management of pupil behaviour is exceptional and makes an enormous contribution to the learning process.
46. Learning resources are variable in quality but generally adequate for the school's curriculum and range of pupils. Until recently hardware resources for information and communication technology were less than adequate, and this continues to effect achievement in respect of the use of information and communication technology across the curriculum. There is still a shortage of software to support its use in subject teaching. The school does not have indoor facilities for physical education and the school field has not been available for two years. This severely limits the quality of physical education teaching. There are also shortcomings in respect of accommodation for science teaching and independent living for girls. Accommodation for design technology also restricts the delivery of the statutory

curriculum and outdoor playground accommodation is in need of improvement. These shortcomings were identified in the previous inspection report, and although there are plans for extending the accommodation no significant improvements have taken place to date.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

47. The school should:

(Items 1,2 and 4 are recognised by the school and feature in the school development plan)

- (1) Improve the use of computers to aid pupils' learning in subjects by:
 - enhancing staff competency and confidence in the use of information and communication technology through training (16, 45, 60, 61, 82,87, 94)
 - extending the range of software available to subject teachers to support pupils' learning (46, 89, 91,94)
 - ensuring that opportunities to use information and communication technology are incorporated into teachers' planning (16, 91)

- (2) Improve monitoring and evaluation to identify and eradicate remaining weaknesses in teaching and curriculum provision by:
 - ensuring that subject co-ordinators understand how they are expected to monitor the quality of provision in their subjects (39)
 - ensuring that senior management and subject co-ordinators, observe teaching on a regular basis, challenge areas of weakness and routinely report outcomes to the board of directors (40, 41)
 - ensuring that senior management rigorously implement the school's strategy for monitoring planning (23, 39, 41)

- (3) Improve provision for pupils' spiritual and cultural development by:
 - enhancing staff competency and confidence in promoting spiritual and cultural development (30, 31)
 - ensuring that teachers plan opportunities to experience and reflect on the spiritual dimension (30)
 - planning improved access to cultural activities within the school and residential curriculum (31)
 - providing more opportunities to develop pupils' understanding of multi-cultural issues (31)

- (4) Improve accommodation for physical education and science and for independent living provision to secure equality of access for boys and girls by:
 - working with the board of directors to implement existing plans to improve accommodation (27,46, 68, 99)

In addition to the key issues the following minor issues should be considered by the board of directors for inclusion in their action plan:

- improving the quality of provision for religious education (15, 20, 101)
- ensuring that teachers make better use of assessment information in their planning (21, 36, 54, 60, 67, 81, 87, 98,103)
- ensuring that pupils are more fully involved in the setting of their targets (25,36)
- reducing where practical the incidence of pupils being withdrawn from lessons for individual support (25, 87)
- seek ways to break down differences between provision for day and residential pupils (24, 27)
- improving accommodation for design and technology and playground activities (23, 46, 78)

- developing arrangements for securing specialist subject training, and in the first instance in subjects such as mathematics, religious education and design technology (18, 20, 45, 60, 77, 102)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	68
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
3	25	34	34	4	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	58
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	0

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	31
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	4.7

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 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	11	5	16

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	2	1	3
	Girls	0	0	0
	Total	2	1	3
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	13	7	20
	National	(5)	(13)	(10)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	0	0	0
	National	(1)	(2)	(1)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	6	6	12

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	0	n/a	n/a
	Girls	0	n/a	n/a
	Total	0	6	12
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	0(0)	50(23)	100 (100)
	National	(0.5)	(8.5)	(46.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	10.4 (6.5)
	National	(3.9)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	1
White	57
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
White	20	2
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y4 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	4.3
Average class size	6.1

Education support staff: Y4 – 11

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked per week	195

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	Sept 1999 to Aug 2000
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	£
Total income	1,302,876
Total expenditure	1,306,833
Expenditure per pupil	21,423
Balance brought forward from previous year	28,876
Balance carried forward to next year	24,919

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	58
Number of questionnaires returned	23

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	26.0	61.0	9.0	4.0	0.0
My child is making good progress in school.	43.0	43.0	4.0	0.0	9.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	18.0	50.0	14.0	9.0	9.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	15.0	25.0	30.0	15.0	15.0
The teaching is good.	48.0	48.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	52.0	35.0	0.0	4.0	9.0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	74.0	22.0	0.0	0.0	4.0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	61.0	35.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
The school works closely with parents.	52.0	48.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school is well led and managed.	74.0	26.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65.0	30.0	4.0	0.0	0.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	73.0	18.0	5.0	0.0	5.0

Summary of parents' and carers' responses

The questionnaires were very supportive of the work of the school and parents believe their children make good progress during their time there.

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

ENGLISH

48. Pupils improve their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing as they move through the school. Their achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is good. At the end of Key Stage 3 it is satisfactory and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is good with higher attaining pupils being entered for GCSE. Compared to similar schools the school does well. This represents good improvement in the standards achieved in English since the last inspection.
49. In all key stages pupils are developing their ability to speak Standard English, but many have limited vocabulary and lack experience in speaking in different social contexts. When speaking, pupils generally have confidence but not clarity, and when answering questions, they seldom give a full explanation or response. Teachers provide appropriate opportunities to develop these skills. For example, by asking questions about shared passages to pupils in the Key Stage 2 class, and by encouraging pupils to speak with confidence about newspaper articles in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 4, pupils are able to express opinions and ideas whilst discussing the foot and mouth disease outbreak. Pupils can generally sustain their listening skills during lessons and in assemblies. They respond well to most teacher-led information, especially stories. Role-playing, drama and group discussion are well used to further develop pupils' feelings and thoughts. Pupils in Key Stage 3 produce felt puppets that portray members of the school. They add dialogue and characterisation prior to performance.
50. The development of reading is well supported by the school. Improving the standard of pupils' reading is seen as a priority and the school sets and achieves high targets for reading improvement. There are good links with the development of the library curriculum and the purchase of new resources. Pupils in the Key Stage 2 class learn via paired and individual reading. They all have timetabled daily reading sessions. Class library books at appropriate reading levels are well used. An interest in reading is also generated through the appropriate use of integrated language programmes. In Key Stage 3 pupils are encouraged to respond to non-literary text and to study shared texts and short plays. In Key Stage 4 they are offered a wider range of texts towards GCSE and CoA. Classic literary texts are introduced such as Romeo and Juliet, Of Mice and Men, Frankenstein and To Kill a Mocking Bird. The most able readers are able to analyse, compare, discuss technique, study characters and critically review. Phonic skills are appropriately introduced. The school is particularly successful in teaching reading to pupils with specific learning difficulties.
51. Workbooks show a clear progression in writing skills across the school. Pupils are encouraged to write at length and for a good range of reasons. For example, during the inspection the Key Stage 2 class was very effectively supported in writing stories for younger children, while a Year 10 class was encouraged to write letters of application for employment. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils understand that there are different forms of writing such as narrative, stories, poems and descriptive pieces. Pupils are able to plan stories and show awareness of character and plot development. An excellent example of this was observed as a developmental activity following a class story when individual pupils in the Key Stage 2 class wrote very enthusiastically about 'What happens next?' Emphasis on the literacy strategy encourages the improved use of punctuation and the fuller recognition of the different parts of speech such as nouns, verbs and adjectives. There is an emphasis on good presentation of work and pupils make effective use of computers

to enhance their presentation in English. Handwriting is taught regularly to all pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 using the Berol handwriting scheme, and the strategies used to enhance achievement are effective. Any new pupils in Key Stage 4 who are unfamiliar with the writing scheme are encouraged to modify their writing to a clear, cursive script. Pupils with very poor handwriting are given appropriate additional help from the specific learning difficulties department.

52. Pupils show good attitudes to their learning. They concentrate well and are generally keen to produce good quality work. Their behaviour in class is satisfactory. This is a direct result of the very positive behaviour management strategies adopted.
53. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. It is very good in Key Stage 2 and good in Key Stages 3 and 4. On entry to the school pupils are tested for reading, spelling and comprehension and appropriate individual programmes are designed to secure their progress. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to identify the very best strategies to assist individual pupil's learning. Planning is effective. This informs learning and supports pupils in sustaining their interest and effort. Where teaching is very good, teachers make excellent use of question and answer technique to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Strategies to develop writing skills are effective and pupils are encouraged to draft and re-draft text to produce longer, more descriptive and accurate pieces of writing. The pace of teaching is brisk and pupils are clearly on task and kept busy by the efforts of teachers and teaching assistants who work very effectively together. Marking is satisfactory but written comments should be more informative. Homework is not regularly set for all ages.
54. The subject is well co-ordinated. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic and dedicated to raising standards. A clear English curriculum statement is in place and schemes of work appropriately inform lesson planning. The assessment of pupils' achievements is largely effective and this informs curriculum planning to ensure that all pupils have work set that matches their abilities and needs. However, the school does not enter pupils for the end of key stage tests or tasks at the end of Key Stages 2 or 3. This limits the opportunity of the higher attainers to demonstrate and develop their capacity to take formal tests.
55. The availability of suitable books and other learning resources is good. The school library has not been well used in the past, but developments are well underway to improve this situation. All pupils have access to the library and additional reading boxes are available around the school for regular access. A lending system where pupils have set times to borrow books and greater access to current affairs materials such as newspapers/magazines is a development to be commended. English makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development through the opportunities it offers for collaborative work and discussion about moral and social issues

MATHEMATICS

56. Overall, achievement in mathematics is satisfactory. Pupils' achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 is very good in relation to their low attainment when they start school. This is a result of excellent teaching and effective planning. Teacher assessments that are carried out at the end of Key stage 3 indicate steady progress year on year but, whilst achievement levels are good, pupils do not make as much progress as in Key Stage 2. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 also achieve at these levels with examination results in GCSE and CoA being consistently above average for this type of school. These results reflect a small improvement in standards since the last report.

57. In Key Stage 2 most pupils make good progress, working confidently with mental multiplication using the 5 times tables and demonstrate increased knowledge and understanding in the use of money and time. In Key Stage 3 most pupils make adequate progress, with lower achieving pupils using number square puzzles with confidence to solve simple addition and subtraction activities. Higher achieving pupils are able to estimate and identify acute, reflex and obtuse angles with a reasonable degree of accuracy. In Key Stage 4 higher attaining pupils work with more accuracy such as in the use of angle calculations to draw triangles and identify the features of congruent shapes. The ability of pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 to apply these skills in other subjects is limited due to low expectations of what they can achieve without support.
58. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall. The teaching in Key Stage 2 is very good. The teacher uses methods that are challenging and creative, setting high expectations that result in pupils being on task and attentive despite the occasional disruption. Imaginative activities maintain pupil interest and create a desire to reach high standards of behaviour and academic achievement. The quality of teaching for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 ranges from good to unsatisfactory. When it is good, lessons are well planned and structured, the pace is brisk and imaginative activities are used to illustrate points. In unsatisfactory lessons there is an over dependency on published schemes with limited challenge and opportunity for pupils to take initiative for their own learning. This results in limited concentration and a lack of effort. In all key stages, teachers demonstrate sound mathematical knowledge and use correct mathematical language. The quality of relationships across all key stages is positive and actively supports pupils' learning through effective praise and encouragement.
59. Subject leadership is under-developed. Priorities that have been identified in the curriculum policy are not adequately addressed, such as developing the impact of numeracy across the curriculum and the use of assessment information. The school does not enter pupils for the end of key stage tests or tasks, relying instead on teacher assessment. This limits the opportunity of the higher attainers to demonstrate and develop their capacity to take formal examinations later.
60. Inadequate professional development opportunities result in low expectations, which extend to the inadequate use and application of information and communication technology within the mathematics curriculum. Accommodation is adequate, but access to practical resources is very restricted.

SCIENCE

61. Pupils achieve well in science at all key stages. Achievement at the end of Key Stage 2 and 3 is good and at the end of Key Stage 4 it is very good. Overall, pupils' attainment in science is below the national average by the end of each key stage, but the highest attainers achieve standards that reflect their ability and compare very favourably with pupils in mainstream schools.
62. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can name and identify the different parts of a plant and understand that plants need water, light and food to live and grow. Higher attaining pupils use information presented in text books to work out that trees use a lot of water to grow and can calculate how much soil is used up during the period of growth. Lower attaining pupils complete worksheets to show that they understand how plants grow and why, under some circumstances, plants fail to thrive. Pupils' achievements are good across the subject and they are able to carry out investigations and experiments on friction and forces, recording their results and interpreting them accordingly. Overall, pupils make good progress in learning, they achieve well and make good gains in knowledge and understanding across the subject.

63. Pupils in Year 9 know the various parts of the heart and understand that it is a muscle that pumps blood around the body. Most pupils know that blood gathers oxygen when it moves through the lungs and that this is used up during exercise. They appreciate what this means when they carry out an experiment into the effect of exercise on their own pulse rate. Most pupils understand what is happening to them when they exercise and how the heart has to work harder. Younger pupils in Year 8 carry out experiments sensibly and safely when, for example, they investigate the energy contained in a peanut. They write out what they are going to do using a template provided by the teacher. This helps them appreciate what the experiment is about. Higher attaining pupils know what a fair test is and what effect this may have on results. One pupil infers from the results that the four different tests could not have been the same because the results were so different. Over time pupils cover a wide range of science including electrical circuits, floating and sinking, acids and alkalis and forces. Higher attaining pupils record and present their findings accurately and legibly. However, the presentation of pupils for whom writing is problematic is sometimes difficult to read and the amount of work recorded is quite small. All pupils make good progress, achieve well and develop their capacity to carry out experiments and interpret results.
64. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make very good progress and achieve well with the higher attaining pupils being entered for the GCSE. Lower attaining pupils also make good progress and achieve well and they are entered for CoA tests. Pupils in Year 10 have a sound grasp of issues such as the greenhouse effect. They use this knowledge to good effect when looking at what acid rain is and how it effects the environment. They deepen their understanding of the chemical processes involved through a simple experiment that they carry out very well. They show that they appreciate the health and safety issues when handling acids and also carry out the experiment with a genuine sense of scientific enquiry. Higher attaining pupils record their outcomes with little support from the teacher. Other Year 10 pupils following the CoA course carry out experiments into dirty water and show that they have a basic grasp of how to separate dirt from water through filtration or evaporation.
65. In all lessons, the vast majority of pupils work hard and concentrate well. They are enthusiastic about learning. They observe carefully and apply their previous knowledge in experiments and investigations. Pupils generally behave very well and this is a reflection of the high standard of teaching. A few pupils find it difficult to focus for the whole session but they do not disturb the learning of other pupils when this happens.
66. Teaching is good or very good in the vast majority of lessons and is never less than satisfactory. The teacher has a very secure knowledge and understanding of the subject and how to teach it effectively to pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The teaching enables the pupils to become increasingly independent as learners fostered through careful planning and organisation and a sense of trust for the pupils. In lessons pupils are interested in learning and this is developed and encouraged by brisk starts to lessons that demand that the pupils listen and pay attention from the start. There is a good blend of direct teaching, practical investigations and experiments, reading and recording and humour. Pupils respond well to the range of learning experiences offered and this results in good levels of concentration. Pupils are encouraged to read information and to write their findings. Higher attainers are encouraged to write their findings and results as they wish. Lower attainers are provided with templates to help them structure their ideas and answers. In this way the skills of literacy are promoted effectively. Pupils are also encouraged to read scales, measure and calculate their own answers, thus building on their numeracy knowledge. The key strengths of the teaching are good subject knowledge, effective planning and preparation, very good management of individuals and classes and the high expectations of all the pupils.

67. Provision in the subject has improved since the last inspection. The curriculum is very appropriate and supports the lower attainers whilst ensuring that the higher attainers achieve good results commensurate with their ability and effort. There is now a named co-ordinator who has identified areas for improvement and is actively promoting the development of the subject. A strength of the curriculum is the range of relevant accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 that support the inclusion of pupils into local opportunities when they leave school. Pupils are entered for the GCSE and CoA as appropriate. Because the school does not use the end of key stage tests, assessment at the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 is by teacher assessment. This limits the opportunity of the higher attainers to demonstrate and develop their capacity to take formal tests. Pupils' work is collected and collated to enable progress to be assessed. However, the samples kept are not leveled against the National Curriculum and the work is not annotated in order to ensure that the degree of adult support required or other relevant contextual factors are noted.
68. Science accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits the range of the subject that can be taught effectively at Key Stage 4. For example, the lack of a fume-cupboard restricts work in chemistry. There is no extractor fan and the room quickly becomes stuffy and hot when the Bunsen burners are used. There is very little storage space and this restricts the way in which the teacher can use the blackboard effectively. There is no opportunity to use computers to carry out data logging. The co-ordinator leads the subject well and standards have improved since the last inspection. Overall provision in the subject is one of the school's strengths

ART AND DESIGN

69. Pupils' achievement in all year groups is good. Pupils in Key Stage 2 develop good working practices and produce work that is close to that which is to be expected of pupils of their age. These generally good levels of achievement are reflected in those of pupils in Key Stage 3, who, by the time they reach the end of the key stage, are beginning to collate examples of their work that clearly reflect the requirements of their Key Stage 4 courses. Pupils in Key Stage 4 study GCSE and CoA courses and at 16 they achieve good results. Overall, pupils' attainment in art is below the national average at the end of each key stage, but the attainment of the highest achievers compares very well with average performance in mainstream schools. Pupils work in a variety of media, including pencil, inks and pastels. The quality of the work seen in folders, on display around the school and in lessons represents good achievement. The work of known artists is studied, and pupils recognise examples of artists' work, know biographical facts about them and produce paintings and drawings of a good standard based on their work. Clay and fabrics are also used. Work in clay and ceramics is imaginative, as is that in fabrics.
70. All pupils show enthusiasm for their work and enjoy the activities available. There are no significant behaviour problems in art lessons. Pupils are motivated and relationships between staff and pupils make a very positive contribution to pupils' achievement. This is the result of the expertise of the teacher and classroom support staff, and their very positive expectations of achievement and behaviour.
71. The quality of teaching is consistently good and the management of pupils' behaviour is very good. Lessons are well planned and time is used productively. The subject is always taught through 'double lessons' a feature of the teaching of the subject that might be thought of as problematic because of the need for pupils to concentrate on one subject for a long period of time. However, because of the quality of teaching, pupils remain on task throughout and concentrate well. The length of time could be particularly challenging for pupils in Key Stage 2, but, because of the variety of activities provided and the positive expectations demonstrated by staff, pupils experience few problems. The contribution of

classroom support staff is very good and enables a great deal of individual attention to be given. Another strong feature of the teaching is the way assessment is used to inform planning.

72. The art curriculum reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum and it is one of the few subjects that makes a significant contribution to the spiritual and cultural development of the pupils. Pupil work is often framed and displayed in public areas such as the dining room, reception areas, classrooms and residential settings. The art room is popular with pupils after school and in the evenings when pupils willingly continue with work or use the facilities for other activities eg needlecraft and pottery. The kiln is in regular use. There are good supplies of relevant books, artefacts and works of art to support the teaching of art. These have recently been enhanced by the acquisition of a computer. It is used effectively as a reference resource and as a medium to produce notes accompanying pupils' art work and their displays. The subject is co-ordinated by an un-qualified teacher. This in no way constrains the quality of what is offered to the pupils. At the time of the last inspection standards and provision for art were judged to be good. These have been maintained.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

73. Achievements in design and technology for pupils in Key Stage 2 and 3 are satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 4 follow an ASDAN course in design and technology and continue to make sound progress and achieve satisfactorily.
74. During the inspection it was only possible to observe four lessons, three in food technology and one in resistant materials. From the evidence available, it would appear that pupils in Key Stage 2 make satisfactory progress in learning, mainly in the development of skills. Pupils in Key Stage 3 use kitchen equipment safely and sensibly, understand basic health and safety rules, follow hygiene regulations and generally show a sound understanding of how to work in a kitchen. They cut meat and vegetables for a kebab using different coloured chopping boards and wash the knife between cutting the meat and the vegetables. They also completed a simple evaluation sheet that asked them to highlight what they liked and how well they had achieved the tasks. Year 9 pupils work with wood and use simple equipment and tools appropriately, for example, the glue gun and a hand-drill. A few are prepared to write down their plan for the lesson, but most do not. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make chocolate truffles. Again pupils understand and follow basic hygiene and health and safety procedures, and they demonstrate responsibility in carrying out the tasks. Most pupils, however, find it difficult to design, plan and communicate their ideas and many find evaluating what they have done a challenge.
75. Examples of pupils' previous work shows that at Key Stage 4 they undertake a wide range of activities; designing patterns for garden pots, making a simple toy using an electric motor and designing a chair for their bedroom. The focus is clearly on making a product of which they can be proud. Pupils in Key Stage 3 have worked to simple design briefs, conducted simple surveys to find out people's views, analysed labels and examined the properties of different materials. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have made simple toys, studied healthy eating and carried out simple evaluations of games they have made.
76. Pupils enjoy design and technology a lot. They work hard, concentrate well and generally remain on task for most of each lesson. They use their knowledge of the subject effectively. For example, when preparing food they make sure they use the right equipment and follow hygiene principles.
77. The teaching is good overall with particular strengths at Key Stage 4 and in food technology. The co-ordinator is a specialist in food technology and textiles, and this subject expertise clearly shows in the quality of planning, organisation and technical

expertise. The management of pupils' behaviour is a strength of teaching and enables many of the pupils to become increasingly independent in their learning and more confident in using tools and equipment. Lessons are purposeful; the activities are well thought through; and the teachers and teaching assistants support the pupils very well. They know and understand the individual pupils very well and this helps them manage specific incidents effectively to enable the pupil to return to learning quickly. Very little time is lost through unsatisfactory behaviour. Teaching in the area of resistant materials is satisfactory. It is less good than in the other aspects of the subject because the teacher is not experienced or qualified in this area. Nevertheless, the quality of planning and organisation ensure that the lessons are well structured, are based on the National Curriculum and enable the pupils to develop simple skills in making and using different tools. More use could be made of learning outcomes for pupils in planning as an aid to assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do.

78. Overall, there have been significant improvements in key areas since the last inspection. Accommodation has been improved, although the kitchen is too small and its shape means that at one end the room is very cramped. Teachers manage this effectively, but it limits the opportunity for pupils to work independently. There is now a curriculum plan for Key Stages 2 and 3 and an accredited course for Key Stage 4. All aspects of the National Curriculum are taught with the exception of computer aided design. Schemes of work are being produced with associated assessment packages that will improve the way in which pupils' achievements are assessed. There is a subject development plan that identifies all the major priorities and staff development needs have been identified. The co-ordinator took up post only two years ago and has initiated and carried through necessary improvements in a short time. There is still a need for a specialist in resistant materials so that the improved accommodation, equipment and resources can be used. The co-ordinator knows that there is still some work to be done but the subject is well placed to improve further.

GEOGRAPHY

79. No judgements about standards achieved and the teaching of the subject to pupils at Key Stage 2 are reported as the inspection period provided insufficient opportunity to assess provision in this key stage. Overall, pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 attain at a level below that which is expected for pupils of their age, but taking into account their starting points, the majority demonstrate satisfactory standards of achievement.
80. In Key Stage 3 younger pupils show they know terminology used to describe the weather and that they can describe the climate of different parts of the world about which they have previously been taught. Older pupils show they understand processes related to beach and land formation, such as erosion and deposition of soil to form new landmasses. In Key Stage 4 pupils understand issues relating to migration, their impact on life in the UK and on government policy on refugees. In another class pupils demonstrate a good understanding of the issues raised through a traffic census in Kendal and apply this generally to the towns and cities across the UK. The satisfactory standards achieved reflect those achieved at the time of the previous inspection.
81. Teaching in geography is generally satisfactory and occasionally good, particularly during Key Stage 4. Lessons are carefully planned to reflect the needs of the pupils and the content is based on well thought through medium and long term plans. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and the relevant expertise to set meaningful work. Where teaching is good, expectations in terms of the knowledge to be acquired and pupil behaviour are high and the work set is closely linked to pupils' experience. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are given tasks that are

too easy and which do not encourage intellectual effort, such as worksheets and colouring. This usually results in unsatisfactory behaviour as pupils are occupied but not motivated. Day to day assessments of pupils' responses are used to modify teaching, but assessments are not recorded and used to inform planning. The teachers record what the pupils have studied, not what has been learned.

82. As at the time of the previous inspection, the curriculum is still restricted by insufficient access to fieldwork and use of local resources is minimal, though, where such work is undertaken, pupils respond well. Such activities have been difficult in recent months because of foot and mouth outbreaks in the area, but there is little evidence of planned visits in subject documentation. The use of information and communication technology within the subject has improved recently, but staff expertise and commitment to its use are variable. There is a curriculum co-ordinator for the subject and adequate schemes of work are now produced. These represent an improvement since the last inspection.

HISTORY

83. The inspection period provided limited opportunities to observe the subject and it is not taught to pupils in Key Stage 4. Pupils generally attain at a level below that which is expected for pupils of their age. However, the understanding and ability of the higher achieving pupils reflects expectations and overall, achievement in the subject is satisfactory. This represents an improvement since the last inspection.
84. Pupils in Key Stage 2 were asked to compare their situation with that of evacuees as described through a video and novel about the Second World War. They demonstrated the ability to discuss how it felt to be sent away from home and learned facts about what sort of clothes the children wore. They were able to write sentences about what it was like to be an evacuee, but most required considerable encouragement and support. Pupils in Key Stage 3 were learning about life in Germany between the wars. The majority were able to understand and contribute to a discussion of the inflation and poverty, its impact on everyday life and on Adolf Hitler. When asked to read a text and answer questions, some were able to work independently whilst others needed encouragement and support in terms of their understanding.
85. Pupils' attitudes to history are positive and they behave well when asked to watch a video, listen to their teacher or join in discussions. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 are very reluctant to write about history and require considerable support to carry out tasks that are within their intellectual capacity. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are more willing to work on written tasks, and the higher attainers do so without the need for support.
86. The quality of teaching for pupils in Key Stage 2 is good. The lessons are well planned and the teacher draws on a wide range of resources and provides frequent changes of activity to ensure pupils do not lose interest. She asks meaningful questions and, when tasks are set, works very hard with the support of the teaching assistant to ensure pupils are able to succeed. Relationships between the staff and pupils are good and this supports their learning. The staff's management of pupils to promote good behaviour is excellent. The teaching of pupils in Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. It shares similar strengths, but is less effective because it is not delivered with the same level of energy and pace. In part this is due to interruptions caused by attendance at keyworker sessions.
87. The content of the curriculum as set out in adequate long and medium term plans reflects the requirements of the National Curriculum. Teachers assess pupils' learning in lessons and then modify their teaching appropriately. However, though

work is stored in folders and commented on, it is not graded, and teachers tend not to use the information derived to inform the planning of future lessons. The availability and quality of books and other resources is adequate to support the effective teaching of the subject, but there was until recently little use of information and communication technology. At the time of the last inspection there was no subject co-ordinator and no schemes of work. These have now been introduced and this represents an improvement since the last inspection.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

88. Since the previous inspection co-ordination, resources and schemes of work have improved. Many of these developments have only recently taken place and their impact is still emerging. However, the evidence indicates that pupils' ability to apply skills is now at a much higher standard than during the last inspection.
89. Overall, pupils' achievement in specifically time-tabled information and communication technology lessons is good. Many arrive at the school with only basic computer skills and experience, very few having access to computers at home. By the time they have been at the school a few months and by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to log on to the network, open applications and carry out basic word processing and publication processes, such as editing, text importing and manipulating graphics. Pupils' achievement is constrained because they have limited access to control and data handling software within the key stage at this time. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good and sometime very good progress in developing their skills in word processing, use of the internet and desk top publishing. Higher achieving pupils are able to import sound and graphic files from the internet and incorporate them into PowerPoint presentations with only limited support. Lower achieving pupils increase their confidence in a range of word processing and graphics applications including importing digital images from a recently purchased camera. They are able to produce their own newspaper with articles about the school and themselves. Information and communication technology is not time-tabled for pupils in Key Stage 4. However, it is taught as an integral part of the ASDAN accreditation in modular form, within which pupils are making good progress in using spreadsheets and investigating databases with increasing sophistication.
90. The quality of teaching and learning within information and communication technology lessons is good or very good. Lessons are characterised by clear planning, flexible but challenging objectives and good use of resources within the information technology suite. The co-ordinator is highly competent and knowledgeable about the subject and has set up a system that enable pupils to take increasing responsibility for their own learning and be creative in using and applying the technology they are using. The lessons are well structured with initial demonstration followed by pupils' work on individual terminals, receiving support, as they need it. The support is skilfully used to encourage pupils to work through difficulties in a logical sequence. A key positive feature of the teaching is the amount of choice being offered to pupils in deciding how to produce their presentation or newspaper. This helps them develop their confidence and feeling of achievement, as well as encouraging high standards by redrafting. All pupils enjoy the lessons; most are keen to talk about their work in a constructive way. They behave well and are generally respectful towards each other and staff.
91. Recently co-ordination of this subject has been good and a great deal has been achieved in a short period of time to improve the quality and range of hardware and software. Areas for development have already been identified such as, improved speed of access to the internet, inadequate assessment procedures and an inadequate range of educational software being used across the curriculum. Links with some subjects, such as history, geography, personal, social and health

education, design technology and generally in Key Stage 2, are now developing. However, there is currently an over dependency on the skills of the co-ordinator, with inadequate training, support and investment in extending the impact of information and communication technology across the curriculum. As a result pupils do not have sufficient opportunity to enhance their skills by applying what they are learning in time-tabled lessons. This issue was raised in the previous inspection report and it has not been properly addressed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

92. A modern foreign language was not taught at the time of the last inspection. Subsequently, the school funded the training of a specialist teacher who then left the school soon after the subject was introduced. The subject is not currently taught, but a specialist teacher has been appointed for September when it will be once again introduced into the timetable.

MUSIC

93. This is a successful area of the curriculum that sets the highest expectations for all pupils. As a result the standards of achievement of pupils in Key Stage 2 and in Key Stage 3 are good. Some pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 2, are attaining at a high level in relation to standards expected nationally. Pupils are able to evaluate their work, whilst developing appropriate skills in listening, appraising, composing and performing. The subject is not currently taught in Key Stage 4, but it will be introduced next academic year.
94. Pupils make very good progress in the subject as they build upon their previous knowledge and skills. Their work is closely structured, well supported and developed in an ordered atmosphere conducive to hard work. For example, pupils in Key Stage 3 speak with confidence about their compositions. Pupils in Key Stage 2 accurately sing responsive songs and add accompaniment with un-tuned instruments. They improvise and create accompanying rhythms and are beginning to be aware of how music is structured. Information and communication technology is used to complement composing, listening and appraising strategies. For example, pupils in Key Stage 3 explore and develop their musical ideas using computer technology to create a dance track using different layers of sound (voices, instruments, effects and rhythms). Pupils regularly and appropriately use electronic keyboards in class. They are developing a good use of musical vocabulary that furthers their ability to express and justify their own opinions of music. Pupils are given the opportunity to hear and appreciate music from a variety of composers, times and cultures. For example, during the inspection pupils experienced classical, baroque, African, blues and popular music.
95. The quality of teaching overall is very good. The subject co-ordinator is a well-qualified specialist who promotes the very best learning and attitudes in pupils. At its very best teaching is pupil specific. Teaching is characterised by secure pupil knowledge and consistently high expectations. Planning is very good, expectation clear, and lesson objectives always shared. A music curriculum statement is in place and a scheme of work is used. Targets are set to meet the needs of individual pupils and those with specific learning difficulties are supported appropriately. As a result, although some poor behaviour was observed, pupils'

pace of working, creative effort, knowledge and understanding, concentration and independence is good.

96. There is currently limited peripatetic instrumental work provided by the school, though a few pupils are taught basic keyboard skills. This provision should be further enhanced to support individuals' skill and development. Cross-curricular music is limited. Some opportunities, such as visits from a local school's saxophone quartet and percussion group have taken place, but pupils need wider experience of such performances to promote their social and musical development. Very little music is used around the school to encourage overall learning, and there is limited evidence of pupils performing for their peers through choir and other activities. At the last inspection music was not offered to pupils. Progress since the last inspection has been excellent.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

97. There has been considerable improvement in the quality of physical education provided by the school since the last inspection, though standards are still hindered by inadequate accommodation and, during the period of inspection, by restrictions relating to foot and mouth disease. Pupils of all abilities make good and often very good progress in learning throughout the school. Pupils in Key Stage 2 and in the early part of Key Stage 3 have swimming lessons at a local community school. Pupils make good progress in developing basic skills in the water, and many who could not swim at all six months ago are now confident swimmers who achieve basic awards. These skills are then applied to good effect when practising basic survival routines associated with the outdoor education programme. At end of Key Stage 3 pupils are participating in co-operative team sports such as hockey, where they make good use of stick handling skills in passing and receiving the ball, as well as developing their awareness of space and positioning on the pitch during a game. During the inspection it was not possible to observe Key Stage 4 lessons, but there was clear evidence of a wide range of achievements, especially in running, softball and football, including success in inter-school competitions.
98. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in the majority of lessons with high expectations being set by all staff with regards to behaviour and individual performance. The exceptionally high quality of relationships between staff and pupils enable well-planned lessons to lead to very good learning outcomes. Teaching and support staff work exceptionally well together in modelling positive relationships and their rapport enables pupils to cope better with challenging situations. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject. Lessons are carefully structured, for example warm up and stretching exercises, followed by skills practice that is then applied to a game context. Pupils who find the competitive game situation difficult to cope with are offered alternative activities such as bowls. In outdoor education the quality of teaching is very good, with an imaginative balance of challenge, variety and skills training. In a canoeing lesson on running water most pupils maintained a high degree of concentration and enthusiasm whilst demonstrating paddle strokes. Clear consideration is given to health and safety at all times and this is supported by comprehensive risk assessments. Opportunities are created to support pupils' personal and social development and these make a positive contribution towards the pupils' self esteem. The extent to which assessments of what pupils have learned inform subsequent teaching is currently under-developed, but systems are being introduced which will enable pupils to become more involved in reflecting on their performance. Pupils enjoy the subject and talk readily about their achievements.
99. The co-ordination of the subject is particularly challenging due to inadequate facilities available at the school. Despite this, the complementary areas of physical education and outdoor education contribute well to the overall aims of the school

and offer a wide range of activities and learning opportunities. Excellent use is made of the local community and environment that enable pupils to experience activities such as golf, caving, climbing, skiing, orienteering and sailing. However, pupils are still restricted in their access to aspects of the national curriculum such as gymnastics and dance that were highlighted in the last report. The lack of changing facilities at the school and appropriate accommodation for wet weather activities seriously restricts the range of learning opportunities available to the pupils who currently lose a considerable amount of lesson time travelling between locations.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

100. No judgements about standards achieved and the teaching of the subject to pupils at Key Stage 2 are reported here as the inspection period provided insufficient opportunity to assess provision in this key stage. Achievements of pupils in Key Stage 3 and 4 are unsatisfactory. Pupils enter the key stage with a basic and fragmented knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. The teaching they receive does help them acquire some of the knowledge they might have been expected to acquire during the primary phase, but it does little to significantly deepen and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills. Thus, pupils in Key Stage 3 know that certain symbols have meaning for Christian, Jewish and Sikh religions, but they do not necessarily know the derivation of the symbols, nor are they able to articulate their emotional and spiritual associations. Similarly, they know that the signs of the Zodiac are associated with the stars and their birthdays, but they do not understand their derivations nor can they understand how they too have emotional and spiritual dimensions. In Key Stage 4 pupils know that there are 'four noble truths' associated with the Buddhist religion and that there is suffering in the world. They do not understand that the concept of 'four noble truths' has anything meaningful to say about that suffering, and that it could be applied to their own lives. They know which deity Muslims worship, but they are unable to speculate on the meaning of a "creative God".
101. Pupils do not significantly deepen and extend their knowledge, understanding and skills because the teaching they receive is largely unsatisfactory. It is not underpinned by an adequate level of expertise in religious education and this demonstrates itself in a lack of clear learning objectives and in a failure to extend discussion into the spiritual dimension. Pupils spend far too much time copying, colouring and carrying out simple tasks that are well within their capability. Where they are faced with a challenging task, they are not given the right support and prompts to enable them to respond appropriately. Some attempt is made to assess pupils' learning, but little use is made of the information acquired to modify teaching within lessons or over time. Good features of the teaching include: the management of pupil behaviour, through a calm and patient response to pupils' diversionary activities; a brisk approach to teaching; and the planning of a variety of different activities within lessons which helps maintain pupil interest. A further strength is the good use of discussion about the social and moral dimensions of what is being taught. A noteworthy example of this was when the teacher explained that pupils should not un-sheath a Sikh dagger because to do so would be to show disrespect to the person who had lent them the artefact. Despite the opportunity as pupils passed the dagger around, and despite the temptation of the situation, the dagger remained sheathed.
102. The content of the schemes of work reflects the Cumbria Locally Agreed Syllabus. However, senior managers have not observed religious education lessons to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the teaching of the subject, and though schemes of work are routinely submitted for scrutiny, the fact that the learning outcomes specified are not always sufficiently clear has not been addressed. The co-ordinator for the subject is not a subject specialist, and though he has successfully implemented the introduction of the subject into the curriculum, his lack of expertise

now clearly limits his ability to teach the subject well and to develop the curriculum further. Although the co-ordinator has made arrangements to access resources via Cumbria Local Education Authority Resource Centre, the school has not yet acquired sufficient resources - books and artefacts - to support the successful teaching of the subject.

103. Religious education was not taught at the time of the last inspection, but its place in the curriculum is now secure with all classes having appropriate access to the subject. Despite the shortcomings identified this represents an improvement since the time of the last inspection.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

104. Personal, social and health education is a cross-curricular theme that runs through the day and residential curriculum on offer at the school. It is also taught as a discrete subject, though the inspection period only provided opportunity for inspectors to observe teaching for pupils in Key Stage 3.
105. Where personal, social and health education is taught as a discrete subject, pupils make good progress and achieve well. The higher achieving pupils achieve understandings commensurate with those that would be expected for pupils of their age in mainstream schools. In a series of lessons on fitness pupils in Years 7 and 8 show that they have learned how to take a pulse, that they understand the common mistakes that are made, and they understand how exercise affects the pulse rate. Pupils in Year 9 working on the same theme showed they understood the difference between strength, stamina and suppleness and how they might develop these. In a lesson on natural disasters, pupils showed that they could discuss the impact of such events, though the teacher frequently had to intervene to get pupils back on task. In a lesson on using the internet to collect background information pupils showed they were able to search and identify appropriate material with support.
106. Pupils display good attitudes to personal, social and health education and behave well in lessons. This is very much due to the good teaching offered. Good features of the teaching include: a frequent change of activities; a good balance between challenging and less demanding work; positive expectations conveyed through the setting of meaningful work, respect for the pupils' responses and a demand that pupils address the tasks set seriously; good use of question and answer through which content is related to the pupils' experiences; and good management of pupil behaviour.