

INSPECTION REPORT

CLEASWELL HILL SCHOOL

Guide Post

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122382

Headteacher: Mr. R. Hope

Reporting inspector: Ms. V. Wilkinson
18461

Dates of inspection: 14.2.2000 – 18.2.2000

Inspection number: 190169

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

© Crown copyright 2000

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	5 - 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	School Avenue Guide Post Choppington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE 62 5DJ
Telephone number:	01670 823182
Fax number:	01670 823182
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. M. Garnett
Date of previous inspection:	28.10.1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject Responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
V. Wilkinson	Registered inspector	English. Modern Foreign Language.	How high are standards? How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular opportunities offered to pupils? Equal opportunities.
S. Walsh	Lay inspector		Attendance. How well does the school work in partnership with parents? The quality of links with the community.
A. Tattersall	Team inspector	Science. Music. Personal and social education.	How well does the school look after pupils?
J. Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics. Physical education.	How well is the school led and managed?
G. Davies	Team inspector	Art. History. Religious education.	* How well is the school led and managed?
T. Watts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology. Design and technology. Geography	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. * How well does the school look after pupils?

The inspection contractor was:

Q.I.C.S
 "Ibsley"
 4, West Cliff Road.
 Dawlish.
 Devon.
 EX7 9EB

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints that are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
 Inspection Quality Division
 The Office for Standards in Education
 Alexandra House
 33 Kingsway
 London WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	6
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	11
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?	13
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?	14
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	16
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	22
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Cleaswell Hill School provides education for 110 pupils the majority of whom have moderate learning difficulties. However, a significant percentage (25%) of the pupils placed at the school have behavioural needs and there is a large number of pupils with speech and language difficulties. Pupils are aged 5 to 16 years. Currently there are only two pupils in Key Stage 1 and it is inappropriate to make a separate judgement about their achievements and progress. They are taught alongside pupils from Key Stage 2 sharing the same learning opportunities and experiences. The curriculum and teaching enables these pupils to acquire appropriate knowledge and understanding. The number of pupils on roll is similar to that at the time of the last inspection. All pupils have statements of special educational need. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. The majority of pupils live within the local and neighbouring districts of Ashington, Bedlington, Morpeth, Long Framlington and Cramlington. Most pupils come into school by local education authority transport although a significant number of older pupils travel independently to school using public transport. 50% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is above the national average.

The budget allocated to the school is significantly well below that received by schools of similar size and type nationally. This has had a severe impact on the resources available to the school. The pupil – teacher ratio is high and class sizes are large, averaging 10 pupils and with some classes of 16 pupils.

The school aims to:

- recognise the individual needs and talents of each pupil allowing for the development of their intellectual, moral, physical, social and creative abilities,
- provide a curriculum that is broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs,
- Ensure that the various curriculum areas reinforce and compliment one another so that the knowledge, concepts, skills and attitudes developed in one area can be put to use in another, increasing pupils' understanding, competence and confidence.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

When taking into consideration the school's derisory budget the school provides good value for money. Teaching is good and even though there are a number of subjects where the levels of resources are unsatisfactory, the school manages to promote satisfactory standards of achievement and effectively supports pupils' personal development, promoting positive attitudes to school.

What the school does well

- Pupils' achievements are good in information and communication technology because of the very good teaching and the good resources.
- Pupils' behaviour is good particularly towards the top of the school.
- Pupils' attitudes to school, their personal development and relationships are good.
- The curriculum is good and effectively promotes pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- The school provides a good level of care for pupils and effectively promotes their health and welfare.
- The National Literacy and National Numeracy strategies have been implemented well.
- The school's provision for careers education, careers guidance and work experience is good.

What could be improved

- Standards in science are unsatisfactory at all key stages.
- The future vision for the school is unclear. This hinders the identification of priorities for development and the effective strategic planning of limited resources.
- The school does not have enough teachers to meet the needs of the pupils on roll.

- Aspects of the accommodation are unsatisfactory and learning resources are unsatisfactory in a number of subjects, particularly in science at Key Stage 3.
- Assessment procedures are inconsistent and the targets set for individual pupils are not specific enough.
- Information provided for parents in the governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements and there is insufficient information about what pupils know and understand in their annual reports.

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 satisfactory progress since the last inspection. Sound improvements have been made to assessment and recording procedures but they require further development to make them fully effective. Individual education plans are now in place for all pupils. However, these need further improvement so that they can be used to guide teachers in planning work for individuals. The number of special support assistants has been increased and they are now more effectively involved in planning and in supporting learning. There has been satisfactory improvement in developing the roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators but their responsibilities for monitoring teaching and promoting high standards in their subjects have not been addressed. There are appropriate strategies for monitoring some aspects of the school's work; however, teaching is not monitored and the school does not evaluate its effectiveness in terms of standards or the quality of provision.

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	B	very good	A
Reading	B	C	Good	B
Writing	B	C	Satisfactory	C
Mathematics	C	C	Unsatisfactory	D
Personal, social and health education	B	B	Poor	E
Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	C	C		

- Pupils at all key stages do not make enough progress in science and their achievements are unsatisfactory. This is because the accommodation for science is unsatisfactory and there are insufficient resources to support teaching and learning. In English at Key Stage 4, pupils' progress in reading and writing are only satisfactory because English is often taught through other subjects. There is insufficient emphasis on teaching basic skills. No judgement has been made about pupils' achievements in physical education because too few lessons were seen.
- By the end of Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils achieve awards in literacy and numeracy that are accredited by a national examination board.
- The targets identified in pupils' individual education plans are too broad and they do not relate sufficiently to what they have already achieved. Because targets are not written in a way that clearly identifies what pupils will learn, they cannot be used effectively to inform the work planned for individuals or to measure the gains pupils have made in knowledge and understanding. There are examples of appropriate targets in mathematics.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils are keen, enthusiastic and interested in their lessons. Older pupils in particular are proud of the part they play in school life.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is good in the classroom and in the playground. It is also good when they go out of school on visits.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils are good and they generally demonstrate care and respect for each other. Pupils, particularly those in Key Stage 4, respond with a mature attitude to the responsibilities they are given.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Pupils enjoy coming to school.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	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.

Teaching is good. During the inspection it was good in five out of ten lessons and very good or better in almost two. Consistently very good and excellent teaching was seen in information and communication technology at all key stages. Very good teaching was seen in English at Key Stages 2 and 4, drama at Key Stage 3, mathematics at Key Stage 2, personal and social education at all key stages and citizenship at Key Stage 4. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a small number of lessons in design and technology at Key Stages 2 and 3 and geography at Key Stage 3. In the majority of lessons teachers plan work that meets the needs of the different ability groups in their class, however, they do not use the outcomes of their records and assessments to plan work or set targets for individual pupils. A judgement about the quality of teaching in physical education has not been made because too few lessons were seen and there is insufficient evidence.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad, balanced and relevant. It meets statutory requirements in all subjects and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy have been implemented well. However, schemes of work are not yet effective in ensuring that pupils' subject knowledge develops as they move through the school. The provision for careers education, guidance and work experience are particularly good and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education or work. The provision for information and communication technology is a strength of the school.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The school makes good provision for pupils' personal, spiritual, moral and social development. Staff are good role models and there are clear codes of behaviour that help pupils to become aware of their moral and social responsibilities. There are appropriate opportunities for pupils to appreciate their local culture and cultural traditions but there is insufficient focus on the

	development of pupils' awareness of the multi-cultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school makes good provision for the health and welfare of its pupils. There are satisfactory procedures for assessing pupils' achievements and monitoring their progress. However, they are inconsistent within subjects and across key stages and the targets set for individual pupils are not well focused on improving standards

The school works appropriately with parents to meet the needs of pupils. The majority of parents attend the annual review of their child's Statement of Special Educational Need and the school provides them with a copy of their child's individual education plan. Parents feel confident to ask questions of the teachers and to raise issues.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is effectively managed on a day to day basis and the leadership of the headteacher and key staff provides a good ethos. This has a positive effect on pupils' attitudes and personal development. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value by reviewing its service level agreements regularly. In some areas, appropriate arrangements have been made with alternative providers to ensure that the school gets value for money.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body is supportive and is beginning to take a more active role in monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. However, it has not established a clear vision for the school's future or established effective long-term planning to guide developments.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The school does not have sufficient information about teaching and learning or about the impact that developments have on standards to enable it to evaluate its effectiveness. The school has an appropriate overview of its work but has not clearly identified what works well and why or what needs to be the focus for improvement.
The strategic use of resources	Teachers and support staff are appropriately deployed to support learning. The school makes satisfactory use of limited and in some subjects unsatisfactory learning resources and unsatisfactory accommodation. Because the school does not have a long-term view of development needs, the very limited funds are not always used effectively to support priorities.

When taking into account the needs of pupils, particularly those with behavioural difficulties, the school does not have enough teachers. Staffing levels do not reflect those outlined in circular 11/90. The condition of the building is unsatisfactory. The school library is inadequate and the accommodation for science and physical education is unsatisfactory. Learning resources are unsatisfactory for science, music, physical education, religious education and the library.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions.• Problems are handled well.• They feel the school works closely with them.• The school expects children to work hard and achieve their best.• They feel well informed about how their child is getting on.• The school has strong links with the community.• There are good opportunities for careers guidance and work experience and parents feel that children are well prepared for the next stage of education.• The school's emphasis on building pupils self-esteem and self-respect.• The caring ethos of the school.• The good teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Homework is inconsistent between classes.• The targets set for children at the annual review are not specific enough and it is difficult to measure how much progress they have made.

Inspection findings support parents' positive views of the school although inspectors feel that children's annual reports do not contain enough information about what children know and understand. In the past there have been inconsistencies in the setting of homework and in the quality of the tasks given. The recently introduced homework policy and timetable should address this; however, it has not been in place long enough to make a judgement about its effectiveness. Inspectors feel that there is sufficient emphasis on teaching basic skills in English and mathematics at Key Stage 4. Inspectors support parent views that the targets set for children at the annual review and in their individual education plans are not specific enough. They do not enable the school or parents to effectively measure how much progress children have made.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

- 1 Inspection findings indicate that the school has maintained satisfactory standards of achievement in English at Key Stage 4, mathematics, geography, French and personal and social education. It has improved standards in English at Key Stages 2 and 3, information and communication technology, religious education, art, design and technology, history and music at all key stages. Standards in science have improved from poor to unsatisfactory. Pupils at all key stages and those with additional special needs make satisfactory progress in relation to the targets set for them at their annual review and in their individual education plans. However, targets are often too broad and work is not always planned effectively to meet individual needs. Pupils' achievements often depend on the levels of support they are given in lessons. By the age of 11 pupils achieve good standards in English because the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented effectively, they make sound progress and by the age of 16 their achievements are satisfactory. Pupils' achievements by the age of 11 and 16 are good in information and communication technology, art, design and technology, geography, history, music, religious education and personal and social development. Their achievements by age 11 and 16 are satisfactory in mathematics. Pupils of all ages do not make sufficient progress in science and their achievements are unsatisfactory.
- 2 Pupils are assessed at the end of Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 using teacher assessment and they are appropriately entered for the National Curriculum standard assessment tests. Data for the years 1997, 1998 and 1999 indicate that the levels of achievement for each cohort of pupils varies depending on the special needs and abilities of each group. There are no identifiable trends in achievement over the last three years. Teacher assessments indicate that in English, mathematics and science pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 generally achieve within Level 1 of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 2 pupils' achievement varies, with some achieving within Level 1 and the majority achieving between Levels 1 and 2. A small number of higher attaining pupils achieve Level 4 in English (reading). At Key Stage 3 teacher assessments indicate that pupils achieve between Level 1 and Level 4 of the National Curriculum. At Key Stage 4 pupils' learning is accredited by external examination and through accredited coursework. Standards over the last two years (1998 and 1999) in literacy and numeracy indicate improved accredited examination results for pupils in Years 9 and 10.
- 3 The school currently has no way to set targets for improving the achievements of individual pupils because the targets set at the annual review and those identified in pupils' individual education plans are not sufficiently related to subject knowledge, to the outcomes of assessment or to the work being done in the classroom. Procedures for assessment and record keeping provide appropriate information on pupils' achievements and progress and this is used effectively to inform teachers how to plan work to meet the needs of different ability groups. It is not being used by teachers to set targets for individual pupils or to set targets for improved performance in each subject. The school collects particularly good information about pupils' achievements and progress in reading and spelling but this is not being used to identify whole school targets for improved standards.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 4 Pupils are keen to come to school and they arrive in lessons eager to share their thoughts with staff and each other. They answer questions willingly and confidently and are keen to ask questions and make suggestions, pupils are generally confident to speak in front of the class.

- 5 Pupils are interested in school life particularly in practical lessons such as information technology, music and design and technology. They also concentrate well in lessons that involve speaking and listening such as English and French and they show enthusiasm and interest in mathematics and science lessons where they are required to give effort and thought. Pupils think carefully about abstract concepts in religious education and gain knowledge about the world around them and its past in geography and history. Through personal and social education, careers sessions and the school council meetings pupils demonstrate that they have a good attitude to their school, are proud of it, and the part they play in it.
- 6 Pupils' behaviour in lessons is generally good. It is also good when they go on trips into the community for geography and history field trips and trips to the leisure centre. On the whole pupils are polite and friendly to each other and to staff and visitors. Sometimes pupils are a little boisterous but staff usually handle these incidents very well. Pupils respond positively to teachers' consistent management of behaviour and their clear expectation of what is and is not acceptable. Pupils are generally trustworthy and demonstrate appropriate respect for property such as books and computers, there is little or no damage to property, and no graffiti. There have been no exclusions recently and this is a significant improvement on previous years.
- 7 Across the school there is an undercurrent of minor bullying and some sporadic incidents of harassment and sexism particularly among a small minority of older boys. Occasional incidents of boisterous behaviour, bickering and minor fighting occur and these demonstrate that a few pupils find it difficult to care about others, particularly when they are upset themselves. However, with good support from adults, the majority of pupils reflect on the impact their actions have on others and understand that they would be upset if they were interrupted or called names. The majority of pupils treat each other with respect and understand the central rule of the school council for pupils to have respect for each other. Older pupils take this forum seriously and their behaviour and attitudes in council meetings are good. During religious education lessons pupils demonstrate increasing respect, interest and empathy for other religions such as Judaism.
- 8 Pupils take responsibility well, especially as they grow older. Younger pupils take messages and registers and older pupils run the school forum meetings. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 respond positively to the privileges that they have negotiated with the school, for example to stay in at midday and use the computer room unsupervised. They choose sensible activities at the leisure centre and have a choice in their work experience placements, they make decisions after careful consideration of the facts and information they are given. Pupils are usually very sensible but on a small number of occasions their inappropriate behaviour lets them down.
- 9 Relationships among pupils are generally good, they form constructive friendships and look after classmates who are less able than them. For example, pupils help each other with spellings, or agree that two of them can have their drinks first every week because they can't manage as quickly as others. Pupils work well alongside each other particularly on joint projects such as making a banner of the school prayer in design and technology. Older pupils take joint decisions very well. In Year 11, for example, they decide in a democratic way how to spend their class funds. There is a good atmosphere at Key Stage 4, staff show how much they trust and respect pupils by the responsibilities they give them and pupils respond with a good degree of maturity.
- 10 Attendance rates are satisfactory and most pupils attend school on a very regular basis. The school has improved attendance since the previous inspection. Although the school has worked hard and has managed to reduce the levels of unauthorised absence they are still relatively high.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

- 11 Teaching is good. It was good in five out of ten lessons and very good or excellent in almost two. Very good teaching was seen in English at Key Stages 2 and 4, drama at Key Stage 3, mathematics at Key Stage 2, design and technology at Key Stage 3, history at Key Stage 2, French at Key Stage 3, music at Key Stage 3 and personal and social development and citizenship at Key Stage 4. Teaching was consistently very good or excellent in information and communication technology at Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. Inspection finding support the positive views of teaching expressed by parents in the questionnaire and the school has maintained the good standards of teaching identified at the time of the last inspection. Teaching was unsatisfactory in a very small number of lessons. In geography at Key Stage 3 teachers did not manage pupils' inappropriate behaviour effectively and in design and technology at Key Stages 2 and 3 the activities are not always focused effectively on the development of pupils' knowledge and skill.
- 12 Teachers have secure knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and of pupils' special needs. They plan interesting activities such as archaeological digs, effectively gaining pupils' attention and interest. Pupils are keen to participate and make good progress. In the majority of lessons pupils are well motivated and because they find lessons interesting they concentrate well and persevere when the work is challenging. Work is generally well planned to meet the different ability groups in the class. However, current assessment procedures do not enable teachers to match work sufficiently to the needs of individuals and in some lessons such as science works sheets are inappropriate for a significant number of pupils in the class. They are too easy for pupils capable of higher attainment and lower attainers need high levels of support to complete them. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to practise their skills particularly in English and mathematics. Teachers' planning is well supported by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and lessons enable pupils to build effectively on past learning.
- 13 Lessons are generally well organised and there is an appropriate balance between whole class teaching and group activities. There is insufficient focus on individual learning because the targets set for pupils at their annual reviews and in their individual education plans are not sufficiently focused to guide the planning of work. Teachers explain things well particularly new learning and new activities. Pupils understand what they are doing and work with a good degree of independence particularly in subjects such as design and technology where they listen carefully to instructions and organise themselves for tasks. Learning objectives are clearly indicated in lesson planning and teachers appropriately identify where they can reinforce basic skills. However, in lessons at Key Stage 4 where literacy is taught through other subjects pupils do not always make enough progress because skills are taught incidentally and there is insufficient emphasis on planning learning so that it builds on what pupils already know.
- 14 Teachers use questioning carefully to check pupils' understanding and to help them participate in activities more effectively. Questioning is used well to encourage pupils to develop their ideas. Because the teachers' interventions are positive pupils are confident to try new activities and ask questions about their work. This helps them to deepen their understanding. Lessons are usually paced well and teaching is matched to pupils abilities and their levels of concentration but in a small number of lessons teaching is slow and pupils' loose interest. Occasionally this results in inappropriate behaviour. Teachers know pupils well and have realistically high expectations of their learning and behaviour. Their expectations are understood by pupils who usually try hard to behave appropriately.
- 15 Relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are good and this contributes to the motivating atmosphere in the classroom. Pupils settle to work quickly, they are polite and courteous and often help each other without being prompted. The consistent approach to discipline helps pupils to develop a clear understanding of how their behaviour affects others and behaviour in the classroom is generally good

enabling pupils to concentrate effectively on their work. Teachers use praise and encouragement well and pupils are helped to identify their achievements and any errors they make. Because of this pupils are often able to identify their own mistakes and ask for help to correct them. This good practice has not been developed further and teachers do not provide pupils with sufficient opportunities for self-assessment or involve them in setting their own targets for improvement. Pupils do not have enough responsibility for their own learning.

- 16 Resources, although limited in a number of subjects are generally well selected and teachers use them effectively to reinforce learning. Pupils are interested in the resources they use, handle them with care and use them with confidence. Teachers and classroom assistants work effectively together, assistants help with activities and support pupils. They understand their roles and often take a very active part in lessons making a positive contribution to the progress pupils make. However, in some lessons assistants are not sufficiently well briefed and teachers do not make good use of them to support activities or to help manage pupils' behaviour. In these lessons the contribution they make is restricted.
- 17 Teachers keep records of what has been taught during a module or a term but they often re-write what they have planned, rather than record how well pupils achieved particular aspects of the course. Information about what pupils have learned, and how much more they know is carried by teachers and support staff "in their heads", rather than being written down. This does not ensure that pupils make sufficient progress or that there is continuity for their learning as they change key stages. In very good lessons teachers alter their planning in response to the outcomes of assessment such as questioning and pupils are given tasks with different levels of difficulty so that lower attaining pupils can cope without too much extra help and higher attaining pupils are well challenged.

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

- 18 The curriculum is good, it is broad, balanced and relevant. It reflects the school's aims and meets all statutory requirements. Teachers plan appropriate learning opportunities and experiences guided by subject schemes of work. These ensure that pupils make progress in the majority of subjects. However, not all subject planning provides sufficient guidance on what pupils will learn during each year and by the end of each key stage. In some subjects such as personal and social education and religious education there is no clear overview of what pupils will learn during their time at the school and in history, planning for Key Stage 4 has not been incorporated into the school's scheme of work for the subject. Where subject planning is good, for example, in information and communication technology, the knowledge and skills pupils are expected to acquire are clearly indicated for all key stages. This enables pupils to make good progress because teachers plan so that pupils learn in a systematic and progressive way.
- 19 The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 4 prepares them appropriately for leaving school and going on to further education or work. Literacy is generally taught through other subjects such as personal and social education where it is used as a tool for learning. For example, using speaking and listening skills to take part in discussion, reading skills to find information and writing skills to record work. This provides suitable opportunities for pupils to practise basic skills and use them in a practical way. English and mathematics are taught effectively through focused lessons and as a skill through other subjects. The careers education and guidance provided for pupils at Key Stages 3 and 4 and the work experience provide for pupils at Key Stage 4 are good. Work experience is well planned and managed. Pupils are effectively supported and the opportunities and experiences they have help them to make informed choices for the future. There is very good use of information and communication technology to support pupils' learning in this area. The National Curriculum programmes of study and the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies are used flexibly, allowing pupils to learn in an age appropriate

way with key skills and concepts drawn from earlier key stages if necessary. Learning experiences make an appropriate contribution to pupils' personal development helping to promote their independence.

- 20 The National Literacy Strategy and the National Numeracy Strategy have been implemented appropriately at Key Stages 1 and 2 and are also being used effectively as a focus for planning pupils' learning at Key Stage 3. Teacher assessments indicate that the implementation of both strategies has had a positive impact on pupils' achievements. Indications are that pupils' basic skills in both literacy and numeracy have improved. The school is appropriately beginning to adapt the English curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 3 to ensure that they receive a broad range of learning experiences that include creative writing, drama and poetry while retaining the focus on teaching basic skills by using the National Literacy Strategy.
- 21 Extra curricular activities are limited because of transport arrangements but the school provides an appropriate range of visits outside school, which enhance pupils' opportunities to learn. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to take part in sporting activities and sporting fixtures with local mainstream schools. The school also organises an outdoor activities week once a year when pupils have good opportunities to take part in activities such as orienteering and camping. There is a regular residential trip to the Lake District for pupils at Key Stage 2 and older pupils have recently benefited from trips to France and Florida. These opportunities effectively enhance pupils' awareness of other cultures.
- 22 Teachers' planning of the curriculum provides equality of access and opportunity for all pupils and the curricular provision for pupils with additional special needs is satisfactory. There are no significant differences in the learning opportunities and experiences offered to pupils or in the attainment of different ability groups across the school.
- 23 There is good provision for spiritual, moral and social education and cultural education is satisfactory. There is insufficient emphasis on developing pupils' multi-cultural awareness although there are good opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of their own culture. Pupils have good opportunities to explore the values of others through stories, art, music, history and religious education. Through personal and social education and assemblies pupils are appropriately guided to think about their own and other people's lives and beliefs. Teachers provide good role models by valuing and acknowledging pupils' contributions across the curriculum. Spiritual development is appropriately planned and addressed through religious education, assemblies and collective worship and reinforced by teachers as opportunities arise during the school day. Collective worship is satisfactory and broadly Christian in character. Pupils are taught to understand the difference between right and wrong and the school effectively promotes honesty and respect for truth. Incidents which arise in school are appropriately addressed and, as they mature, pupils become increasingly able to make moral decisions.
- 24 The school provides good opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of their own culture by effectively promoting their knowledge of the local area through history and geography. There are also appropriate opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of culture in broader terms through art, literature and music and they have appropriate opportunities to look more closely at the cultures of the countries they study in geography. However, opportunities to develop pupils' awareness of the ethnic and cultural diversity of the wider community are limited. The school does not draw sufficiently on the art and music found in a multi-cultural society.
- 25 The school has good links with the local community and works hard to engage the support of local residents and local fund raising organisations. Substantial funds have been raised over the years and these have been used to help finance residential trips both at home and abroad. These have enriched pupils' experiences. The school uses the local community well as a resource. For example, in geography and history the

school uses the area's rich cultural heritage effectively to teach pupils about coal mining. They have good opportunities to look closely at the local landscape, traditions and museums. The school also has good links with other schools and colleges.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 26 The arrangements to support pupils throughout the day are good. The school is aware that some pupils miss breakfast and staff volunteer to operate a breakfast club. This is discrete and friendly, making a significant contribution to promoting pupils' health and well being. The headteacher and office manager know pupils and families well and effectively monitor the registers for absences, following up concerns to find out the reasons. Through this vigilance they found during the inspection week that school transport had left a pupil behind. Prompt and appropriate action was taken. The school knows why pupils are away from school and procedures help to ensure that pupils who are absent on a regular basis attend school more frequently.
- 27 Staff know pupils very well and this makes a significant contribution to the effectiveness of the personal support and guidance given to pupils. Form teachers support pupils well at the beginning of the morning, they find out if they have any concerns and make sure that they are prepared for the day. Younger pupils are reminded about the timetable for the day and check that they have the equipment they need for swimming or physical education. Teachers promote pupils' personal and social skills effectively, encouraging them to talk about current events and school initiatives such as work experience. These arrangements provide valuable opportunities for pupils to check they understand what they have to do. Pupils share their concerns and are well supported because the teacher explains carefully how adults conduct themselves in the workplace.
- 28 The school has implemented effective procedures to promote good behaviour and pupils respond well. They appreciate the school's merit system because this leads to valued outcomes such as extra-curricular school visits. Pupils understand class rules and subject codes of behaviour because they are involved in drawing them up. For example, there are appropriate rules in drama and pupils accept the need to behave as a team in developing a production. The school forum provides very good opportunities for pupils to negotiate acceptable rules for current issues, such as the use of mobile phones. Pupils' behaviour and personal development is well monitored through their individual education plans. However, some of the targets are not sufficiently precise and they do not enable teachers to effectively monitor progress. In the best plans targets are specific and teachers promote improved behaviour through planned activities. For example, when a pupil receives a reward because they have complied with the rules throughout the week. The school monitors incidents of unacceptable behaviour through effective recording systems. These provide good information on pupils' progress and indicate the effectiveness of actions. Pupils have good access to members of staff and are confident to register any concerns. Staff are particularly vigilant with respect to child protection issues. The school has clear and effective procedures and there is good contact with local support agencies.
- 29 The school ensures that pupils receive the support outlined in their statements. This is important since a significant number of pupils are admitted to the school with special educational needs that are defined as either behavioural or language needs. Pupils who have autism receive good support through personal support plans and individual teaching. The school and the local health authority's speech therapy team has developed an effective system of providing good, practical support to a large group of pupils with speech and language needs. This ensures the effective assessment of pupils' needs and provides a secure foundation from which to measure their progress. A practical range of tasks has been developed that encourages pupils to use speech in real life situations, for example, during a shopping trip. The arrangements for the annual review of pupils' educational needs, including arrangements for them to go onto further education or work, are good.

- 30 The school has identified a number of problems with the fabric of the buildings caused by age and deterioration and it has carried out appropriate action to remedy most of the major concerns identified in the previous inspection report. The condition of the temporary accommodation is unsatisfactory and access and evacuation from one of these buildings needs to be addressed. The school has an appropriate system for identifying health and safety concerns and a list of health and safety issues identified by the inspection team were passed to the school for further consideration.
- 31 Procedures to assess pupils' achievement have been improved since the last inspection but they require further development to make them fully effective. Annual reviews are now carried out well and individual education plans are drawn up for all pupils. However, many of the targets set at pupils' annual reviews are not sufficiently related to the targets in their individual education plans and they do not identify the small steps in learning required for pupils to achieve the long term target. There are some satisfactory examples of targets in mathematics but generally the targets identified in pupils' individual education plans are too broad and they do not relate sufficiently to what they have already achieved. Because targets are not written in a way that clearly identifies what pupils will learn they cannot be used effectively to inform the work planned for individuals or be used to accurately measure the gains pupils have made in knowledge and understanding.
- 32 Assessment procedures are generally effective but they are not consistent within each key stage or across subjects. Currently procedures change from one class or key stage to the next and within a subject. This means that teachers cannot effectively monitor how well pupils are making progress as they move through the school. It also hinders them from planning what they need to teach and how they need to teach skills to individual pupils. A notable exception to this is in information and communication technology where there is a good and consistent scheme throughout the school and in reading and spelling where standardised tests are used every six months. Pupils who start school in Key Stage 1 are appropriately assessed using the Local Education Authority's baseline assessment materials. Pupils who enter school in other key stages are appropriately assessed by teachers in each subject.
- 33 The outcomes of assessment do not result in effective individual education plans. Teachers generally draw up targets for pupils in English, mathematics and personal and social education and there are often targets for information and communication technology as well. The information and communication technology targets are usually specific, clear and achievable and mathematics targets are good. In other subjects, however, the targets are less effective. Some of the targets are far too broad: "To continue making progress in all aspects of English", for example. Others are far too numerous, for example, sixteen targets in maths, or eight in English. They do not form a useful basis for deciding what is to be taught. Targets are only reviewed once a year so they cannot be used to guide teachers' planning or to monitor progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 34 The school has satisfactory links with parents. A significant number of parents are supportive of their children's education and try hard to support the school. However, many parents find it difficult to make a sustained and positive contribution to their children's education. Only a small number of parents attended the pre-inspection parents' meeting and replied to the parents' questionnaire but they were generally very supportive of the school. They felt that the school was easy to approach with questions and problems and they were confident that the school expected their children to work hard and do their best. The vast majority of parents have returned their home school agreements.
- 35 The school has appropriately responded to criticism in the previous report about the lack of parental involvement in school life. Parents' evenings have been arranged to inform them about the new literacy and numeracy initiatives and more social events and school

performances have been introduced. The school works hard to involve parents and members of the local community in its daily life. The homework policy and timetable has only been introduced very recently and it is too early to tell if it has addressed parents' concerns about the inconsistencies in setting of homework and in the quality of homework tasks.

- 36 The school places great emphasis on telephone contact with parents but as identified in the previous inspection report, written contact with parents is less effective. Parents are invited to attend annual reviews and receive appropriate written information about their child's progress prior to the review meeting. However, this information varies greatly in quality between subject. English reports are often unsatisfactory because too much emphasis is placed on how pupils responded to the subject rather than clearly identifying for parents what their child knows and understands and the progress they have made. Mathematics reports are often better in quality but humanities reports are generally too brief. There is also a 'settling in report' written for each pupil during the first week in October but the annual report to parents is the only information they receive about their child's academic progress. Although parents of pupils in Key Stage 3 have been able to meet individual subject teachers at a formal parents' night this opportunity has not been extended to parents with children in other key stages.
- 37 The governors' annual report to parents does not meet statutory requirements. Information has been omitted and the document provides parents with very little information about the work of the school. Newsletters are brief and tend to inform parents about the dates of events rather than celebrating any aspects of the school's work.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 38 The headteacher and senior staff manage the school well on a day-to-day basis. Because staff are suitably deployed, have designated responsibilities and deliver curriculum subjects according to a well-planned timetable pupils have appropriate opportunities to learn and standards of achievement are generally good. There are good communications between staff, pupils, governors, other agencies and the local community and this has enabled the school to create a supportive ethos that promotes pupils' academic and personal development well.
- 39 The headteacher and governing body have made an effort to resolve the issues raised by the previous inspection and to improve the standard of education provided by the school. Despite the hard work and commitment of staff and governors, the success of the school's plans for improvement are limited because there is little accurate information about the quality of its work. The school lacks a clear vision of itself in the future and there are weaknesses in the procedures used to bring about change. The school's ability to improve its provision is also restricted by a serious lack of funds. The school has appropriate aims, but the school development plan does not provide adequate guidance for the actions that staff need to take in order to achieve them.
- 40 The senior management team and governors are aware that they would be able to plan more effectively for school improvement if they had detailed information about the quality of teaching and learning. They have taken good steps, through a programme of lesson observations and a governors' monitoring and evaluation programme, to remedy this situation for the future. These initiatives have been implemented very recently and have not yet provided sufficient information to inform development planning so that a clear direction for the school's future development can be established.
- 41 The governors and the senior management team are not able to carry out their responsibilities for school improvement effectively because subject development plans are not reviewed to establish whole school priorities. Subject co-ordinators prepare detailed plans that lead to improvements for their subjects but these plans do not always form part of or provide targets for whole-school development. Because staff tackle a

wide range of issues rather than focusing upon priorities their efforts do not effectively move the school forward. Teachers are currently overloaded with initiatives, reducing the school's capacity to improve. The role of the subject co-ordinator, a key issue from the previous inspection, still lacks clarity. Teachers' job descriptions now designate subject responsibilities but they do not describe in sufficient detail what specific tasks are involved in the role. Senior managers do not monitor the work of the subject co-ordinator and co-ordinators are not clear about how they are expected to contribute to whole school improvement. The lack of clearly stated and agreed whole school priorities and a vision for the school's future means that although teachers work hard, they are not always working towards the same priorities.

- 42 The governing body has a strong commitment to the school and performs most of its statutory responsibilities well. Meetings are properly conducted and recorded, with some areas of work appropriately delegated to committees. Governors have close contacts with the school. They each have responsibility for a specific area of work, and keep the governing body informed through a programme of well-planned visits to the school. The governing body does not, at the present time, use its knowledge of the school to formulate an overall vision of what it expects of the school and how it wants it to improve.
- 43 Effective financial and administrative procedures ensure that the school's budget, which is significantly lower than that of similar schools in the country, is managed well on a day-to-day basis. Uncertainties about funding discourage the school from planning its expenditure more than one year ahead and the governing body reduces the effectiveness of its financial planning by not having a separate committee to focus on financial matters. Good use has been made of specific grants to improve the school's provision for information and communication technology and this is having a very positive impact on pupils' achievements.
- 44 A good effort is made to obtain the best value for the supplies and services purchased. Tenders for services, such as ground maintenance, are considered before contracts are awarded. The head teacher very carefully monitors the value and effectiveness of supplies and resources purchased by curriculum co-ordinators. The school is aware of the limitations of its own provision and makes satisfactory efforts to make use of alternative facilities, for example leisure centres, sports halls and all weather pitches on long-term basis, and a range of short-term facilities such as residential activity centres. There is a good programme for providing pupils with lessons in mainstream schools, though currently none are doing so.
- 45 The number of teachers does not reflect the recommendations in Circular 11/90 and as such the pupil - teacher ratio is very high. In large classes the needs of pupils with behavioural difficulties and those with additional special needs are not always being met as effectively as they could be. The match of teachers' experience and qualifications to the responsibilities that they have and to the requirements of the curriculum is good. The number of support staff has been increased in response to the last inspection and there are now enough staff to effectively support the teachers. There are good working relationships between support staff and teachers and their involvement in lesson planning has a very positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make.
- 46 The school does not have a formal policy for the induction of new staff. Informal arrangements are good with new staff guided through the well-organised staff handbook and are appropriately supported by senior members of staff. There is currently no formal structure that can be used for the induction of volunteers or adults on professional placements at the school. Although there is no formal policy for staff development, training is appropriately linked to national initiatives and to the professional needs of individual teachers and support staff. Teachers value the in-house training in information and communication technology and support staff have benefited from a school based first-aid course. Although some progress has been made in developing systematic staff development since the last inspection there is a need for the school to formalise its

approach and to introduce procedures that record the training undertaken. Appraisal procedures are not in place but the school is currently considering the introduction of a monitoring and observation strategy that will be linked to appraisal and performance arrangements for the year 2000-2001.

- 47 Overall the accommodation is unsatisfactory. The science room is unsatisfactory particularly in terms of its fixtures and fittings; the hall is unsuitable for teaching physical education and the music room is too small and has poor acoustic qualities. The library is too small and does not provide a suitable environment for teaching library skills. Additionally, the three mobile classrooms are showing significant signs of deterioration. The specialist rooms for art, design and technology and food technology are satisfactory and the information and communication technology suite provides an excellent base for this area of the curriculum.
- 48 Overall learning resources are unsatisfactory. The resources for information and communication technology are very good and resources for design and technology are good. Resources for English, mathematics geography and art are satisfactory but there are significant shortfalls in the resources available for science, music, history and religious education. Resources are unsatisfactory in physical education particularly for pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2. They are satisfactory at Key Stages 3 and 4 because the school uses alternative facilities whenever possible.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve standards further and improve the provision made for pupils the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- Improve the long term planning for the school by:
 establishing a vision for the schools future and setting targets both for the whole school and in subjects;
 developing the skills of governors and senior staff in establishing the school development plan;
 incorporating in the school development plan aspects for development that are long term and reflect the vision that the school has established for its future;
 ensuring that all staff and governors have a shared commitment to the priorities identified for development;
 identifying and directing funding to support priorities;
 improving the co-ordinators role in monitoring teaching in their subjects.
 (paragraphs 39,40,41)
- Improve assessment so that teachers can more effectively plan work for individuals and co-ordinators can promote improved standards in their subjects by:
 developing whole school assessment and recording procedures for each subject;
 ensuring that the targets set for pupils at the annual review and in their individual education plans are related. (The targets in pupils' individual education plans should be small steps in the achievement of longer-term targets established at the annual review.);
 improving the way targets are written so that they clearly identify the progress to be made in terms of gains in knowledge, skill and understanding ensuring that targets in individual education plans reflect pupils' achievement and build on what they already know;
 reviewing the progress pupils make towards the targets in their individual education plans at least termly and more often if required.
 using assessment outcomes in each subject to set targets for the improvement in standards.
 (paragraphs 32,33,34)
- Raise standards in science at all key stages by:
 improving the accommodation and the level of learning resources available to support teaching. (paragraphs 47,63) *

**This issue has already been identified by the school as a priority. Plans to address this area of development are currently being drawn up.*

- Improve the accommodation and learning resources for the library and music. Improve the level of learning resources for physical education, religious education and music. (paragraphs 51,89,90,93)
- Increase the number of teachers to reflect the needs of the pupils in the school by:

Increasing staffing levels so that they at least match the levels outlined in circular 11/90 (taking account of the staffing levels recommended for schools with a significant number (25%) of pupils that have behavioural difficulties). (paragraph 45)

In addition to the above key issues the school should also consider for inclusion in the action plan: Improving the quality of information for parents by:

- meeting the statutory requirements for the content of the governors' annual report to parents; (paragraph 37)
- improving the quality of pupils' annual reports so that they give a clear indication of what pupils know understand and can do in each subject; (paragraph 36)
- improving arrangements for the induction of new staff and staff development. (paragraph 46)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	88
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	48

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1	17	51	17	2	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	110
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	55

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	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	5

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.08

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	2.9

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

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

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y 1 – Y 11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	11
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	10.5
Average class size	13.75

Education support staff: Y 1 – Y 11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	371

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/99
----------------	---------

	£
Total income	480,984:00
Total expenditure	465,261:00
Expenditure per pupil	4,308:00
Balance brought forward from previous year	16,250:00
Balance carried forward to next year	31,973:00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out

109

Number of questionnaires returned

20

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	65	25	5		5
My child is making good progress in school.	55	40			5
Behaviour in the school is good.	40	45			15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	40	45		5	10
The teaching is good.	70	25			5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	85	10			5
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	80	15			5
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	90	5			5
The school works closely with parents.	70	20		5	5
The school is well led and managed.	55	35			5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	65	35			5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	65	20		5	5

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

ENGLISH

- 49 By the end of Key Stages 2 and 3 pupils' achievements are good in speaking and listening, reading and writing. They make good progress in relation to their past learning. At Key Stage 4 pupils' achievements are good in speaking and listening and satisfactory in reading and writing. They work towards examinations accredited by a national board and by the end of the key stage a significant number achieve accredited passes in literacy.
- 50 Teachers plan good opportunities for pupils to become effective speakers and listeners and by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils talk confidently about things that interest them. They listen carefully and respond appropriately to questions. Teachers use questioning well to test pupils' understanding and to help them participate more effectively. Their use of questions helps pupils to clarify their thinking and rehearse what they have learned. The answers that pupils give enable teachers to pick up misconceptions quickly and correct them. Pupils take an active part in group discussions and they follow instructions accurately in subjects such as science and design and technology. Teachers' interactions with pupils are positive and by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils describe their ideas clearly, particularly during drama lessons and in their discussion about the poetry they are studying. Teachers ask good questions that enable pupils to provide detailed information about what they have learned. Pupils are confident to share their views in lessons such as religious education. They listen with concentration during discussions and respect the contributions that others make, allowing them to talk without interruption. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils talk confidently in a range of contexts including formal situations such as the school forum. They listen well and ask questions that help them to understand others' views, demonstrating sensitivity to the opinions of their peers and adults. Pupils effectively develop shared ideas and understanding through their discussion
- 51 Reading is taught effectively across the school. At Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 the National Literacy Strategy provides good guidance for teachers' planning and activities enable pupils to build effectively on their past learning. Regular assessment of pupils' skills enables teachers to match reading material closely to their needs and this helps them to make good progress. However, this assessment information is not being used effectively to establish learning targets for individual pupils or to set whole school targets for the improvement of standards. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils read simple texts accurately and talk with enthusiasm about characters such as the Jigaree. Teachers effectively use whole class time at the end of the lesson to encourage pupils to explain why they enjoy some stories more than others. They confidently express opinions and select characters and parts of the story that they have particularly enjoyed. These sessions are used effectively to reinforce pupils' understanding of the roles of the author and illustrator and teachers help pupils to clarify the difference between fiction and non-fiction. The majority of pupils use reading strategies effectively to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words. They confidently use phonics, letter blends and consonant cues and higher attaining pupils are beginning to read independently. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils are independent readers and have a good understanding of the main points in the fiction and non-fiction texts they read. However, their achievements in comprehension are not as secure as their achievements in reading. Higher attaining pupils in Year 9 recognise and explain the use of 'personification' in an example of poetry and accurately use phrases from the poem 'Dog in the playground' when answering questions about the content. Teachers are careful to select reading material that is age appropriate and they choose stories and poems that catch pupils' interest. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrate good understanding of the texts they read although their skills in comprehension are still not as well developed as their reading skills. They effectively locate the information they need in non-fiction texts and this helps them with their work in other subjects such as history and personal and social education.

Because the library accommodation and library resources are unsatisfactory, pupils at all key stages do not have appropriate opportunities to develop library skills.

- 52 Teachers monitor pupils' work constantly and usually mark it with them. This helps pupils to recognise their mistakes and gives them good opportunities to correct their work. This strategy is particularly effective in teaching punctuation and, by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils use capital letters and full stops accurately in their work. There is a good focus on teaching basic skills and by the end of Key Stage 3 pupils' writing is legible and letters are formed accurately. Pieces of written work are appropriately organised and pupils use interesting vocabulary particularly when writing poetry. Higher attaining pupils understand when to use commas, question marks and speech marks and respond appropriately to punctuation when they read. Pupils' spelling is usually correct because there is an appropriate emphasis on the use of dictionaries and wordbooks. Pupils demonstrate a good level of independence and will often get a dictionary to help with their work without the teacher having to remind them. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils effectively use their skills in writing to support their work in other subjects taking notes and recording their work in subjects such as geography.
- 53 Teaching is good. Teachers' planning indicates that they have clear objectives to support progress in reading and writing. They demonstrate confidence in the methods and organisation prescribed by the National Literacy Strategy and activities to support the development of speaking and listening, reading and writing are effectively linked. Teachers respond appropriately to pupils' interests and any spontaneous language that comes from it, they support and encourage discussion. Skills such as spelling and reading strategies are appropriately taught and teachers pay careful attention to technical language and terminology. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to read out loud, question and explain.
- 54 The subject is well led and managed on a day to day basis but the co-ordinator has not monitored teaching and learning. Because of this, information is not available to inform planning and a clear direction for development has not been established. The curriculum is satisfactory and the National Literacy Strategy has been implemented appropriately. Its implementation at Key Stage 3 is effective but the school has already recognised that the curriculum needs to include more opportunities for pupils to experience drama and creative writing. At Key Stage 4 English is appropriately used as a tool for learning and pupils are frequently taught English skills through other subjects, for example, class discussions, finding information from a given text and answering questions about it and the recording of work by taking notes. This emphasis provides appropriate opportunities for pupils to practise and reinforce their skills and provides sufficient focus on teaching basic skills that have not been achieved in the past. There are sufficient suitable resources to support learning but the accommodation and resources for the library are unsatisfactory.

MATHEMATICS

- 55 By the end of all key stages pupils' achievements are satisfactory and they make satisfactory progress over time although in some lessons their progress is good. At Key Stage 4 pupils work towards, and achieve, awards accredited by a national examination board.
- 56 By the end of Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils' achievements are improving due to the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy. During mental mathematics sessions, pupils order numbers, count and name the days of the week, add and subtract numbers, look for number patterns of increasing complexity, and recognise common shapes, at a range of ability levels. At the end of Key Stage 2, during group work, pupils add and subtract numbers up to 10 and coins up to 10p. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract tens and units and use simple division of numbers up to 20. Some pupils can add and subtract numbers up to a total of 100 and money up to £1. All pupils identify, match and name common shapes and have made their own project books about shapes. By the

end of Key Stage 3, pupils carry out and record simple investigations and record their findings by tallying scores and by drawing bar charts. Higher attaining pupils work out the scale and size of chart that will fit their data. One class, for example, researches the distribution of flavours and colours in packets of their favourite sweets. Records and wall displays show that pupils also achieve an understanding of various shapes and can associate decimal values with the correct fractions. Pupils make steady progress in number work and their achievements are appropriate to their individual ability. At the end of Key Stage 4, pupils carry out independent research about each other's likes and dislikes as part of a project on data handling, and record their results on charts created on a computer. Other pupils are working on a shape, space and measures project, which reinforces their ability to estimate measures. One group of pupils, for example, weighs out ingredients from a recipe book. Higher attaining pupils work out ways of calculating numbers in a series by applying a simple formula.

- 57 The teaching of mathematics is good at all key stages. The use of clear, lively and well-paced oral sessions as part of the National Numeracy Strategy at Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 gain and hold pupils' attention and provide a level of challenge which motivates them to succeed. Good use of praise and encouragement enables pupils to gain confidence and attempt new skills. Teachers use good questioning techniques that involve pupils in lessons and link their work to previous learning. Teachers record what pupils have experienced and learned and they use this information well to assess pupils' achievements and plan individual targets. This enables pupils to learn at their own pace. In their daily plans, teachers appropriately group pupils to work with others of similar ability. During mathematics lessons, pupils are well behaved. They remain focused on their tasks and persevere with their work because it provides them with an appropriate level of challenge. The emphasis on paired and group work encourages pupils to help and co-operate with each other. Relationships between pupils and with teachers are good and pupils have the confidence to suggest ideas without fear of failure.
- 58 Mathematics is well managed by the co-ordinator, who has successfully promoted the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy in Key Stages 2 and 3. The subject benefits from a good recording and a target setting document that provides a framework for teachers' planning within and below National Curriculum levels. Teachers appropriately identify opportunities to reinforce numeracy when they are teaching other subjects, for example, during lessons in design and technology, science and art. Pupils' achievements are enhanced in these subjects because teachers help them to understand that the skills they are using to measure in design and technology are the same as those used during mathematics lessons. Pupils use their skills with confidence and the strong emphasis on encouraging them to think for themselves has enabled pupils to develop a positive approach to investigative activities. The achievements of pupils in mathematics have been maintained since the previous inspection. The quality of teaching is now more consistently good.

SCIENCE

- 59 Standards in science are unsatisfactory. Pupils achieve appropriately in lessons but this is not maintained over time. However, the school has recently employed a science co-ordinator and this is enabling pupils to make better progress.
- 60 At the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils learn how they can change the colour of cut flowers by mixing food dyes in the water. They make less progress in predicting what will happen and testing their ideas. Throughout the key stage they begin to understand that they can follow a scientific approach, for instance in separating mixtures of sand and pebbles. Higher attaining pupils understand that they can separate the materials more efficiently by systematically using sieves of decreasing sizes. Pupils enjoy science lessons and are keen to use equipment. They listen carefully and follow instructions well. Towards the end of the key stage pupils begin to listen to each other and solve problems through team work, they effectively work out how to separate materials. Pupils make less progress than they should because the work planned for each year group is

not sufficiently different to the work they have done before. Pupils have appropriate opportunities to revisit topics to reinforce their understanding but the work does not always build on what they already know. Often pupils go over the same work again at a very similar level.

- 61 Pupils at Key Stage 3, show interest in the function of the body's major organs, suggesting how they can measure the capacity of the lungs. They are keen to handle science equipment but have insufficient opportunities to deepen their understanding. Although pupils co-operate well sharing equipment, the science room does not have adequate facilities or sufficient resources. Pupils have limited opportunities to undertake further research because there are insufficient textbooks. At Key Stage 4, pupils make satisfactory progress during lessons and they suggest how to separate mixtures of sand, salt and water. Pupils have limited experience of science and consequently have gaps in their knowledge. This means that the science teacher must continually explain terms such as distillation as the lesson progresses. Pupils' learning is further restricted because resources for investigative science are poor and pupils have limited opportunities to undertake experiments themselves.
- 62 Teaching is satisfactory and this represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. In spite of the poor facilities, teachers have high expectations for pupils to attain but pupils have achieved less than they should in the past and there is significant ground to make up. The specialist science teacher has secure subject knowledge and provides a good role model for pupils to follow. Effective demonstrations show pupils how they should set up their experiments and questions are effectively directed to challenge them. Pupils are encouraged to predict the outcomes of tests. Teachers have good relationships with pupils and gain their interest through their own enthusiasm for the subject. They effectively maintain good behaviour through carefully planned lessons that ensure pupils understand each step and enable them to proceed with a degree of independence. This is most successful when pupils have the opportunity to design their own investigation and test their predictions. There has not been enough monitoring or support for teaching and high standards have not been effectively promoted. In the past pupils have not made as much progress as they should because planning did not take account of their achievement. This has still not been fully addressed and the teacher does not yet have a clear picture of what pupils understand or how work needs to be planned to meet their individual needs. This is most evident when all pupils are given the same worksheets.
- 63 The co-ordinator has improved standards significantly in a short time and there is a school commitment to improving provision. The subject co-ordinator has drawn up a development plan that clearly identifies priorities to raise standards and an appropriate feature of this is establishing lesson plans that takes into account the individual targets set for pupils in English and mathematics. This, together with the systematic monitoring of pupils' progress, will support teachers to plan work that is better matched to pupils' achievement. The accommodation and learning resources have not improved since the previous inspection and remain unsatisfactory.

ART

- 64 Overall, pupils' achievements in art are good. During Key Stage 2 they handle paint brushes, pencils, and crayons effectively. They use a variety of printing tools including sponges sticks and rollers and they tear, cut and stick with accuracy. Younger pupils make choices about preferred printing techniques and give good reasons for their choice of a second colour. They create images using paint, crayons and pencils and collages using a range of natural and man-made materials. Pupils use straw and cloth to create a scarecrow. Older pupils use paper and tissue mosaics when exploring hot and cold colours, responding to pictures of Ayrs Rock and images of the Arctic wastes. By the end of the key stage pupils use a wide range of colours, they use lines to enhance their print patterns and are more confident in their use of secondary colours. The work of well-known artists such as Michelangelo are studied with interest and video of a carnival is

effectively used to stimulate work on three dimensional masks. During Key Stage 3 pupils handle basic tools with control, using tubes of glue and dyes effectively. They use a wide range of colours with confidence and consistently reach a desired effect when mixing colours. Paint and other marks are placed more effectively and pupils are confident in their use of appropriate terminology. Their work on the Impressionists stimulated the production of good landscapes and supported their understanding and use of paint, colour and tone. Pupils create appropriate foreground, middle distance and background effects. The creation of large friezes such as the "Penguin Frieze" in the hall provided pupils with the opportunity to work together using their skills to create depth in a painting.

- 65 During Key Stage 4 pupils handle paint, drawing, printing and three dimensional work with confidence. They are adventurous in their use of techniques and they use art terminology accurately. Pupils show confidence when discussing and evaluating their work and show marked interest when discussing the work of famous artists. New techniques are tackled with confidence. The quality of the silk painting done by higher attaining pupils is in line with that expected for pupils of similar age nationally. Bass relief work, stimulated by a study of a copy of Leonardo da Vinci's work was also of a very good standard with lower attaining pupils showing enjoyment in the activity and real pleasure in the outcomes. Earlier work on the creation of depth in landscape painting is developed further as pupils incorporate perspective into buildings and use shading either with pencil, crayon or paint to convey depth.
- 66 Teaching in art is consistently good. Lessons are well planned and have clear aims and objectives. The challenges set for the pupils match their varied abilities, the needs of the topic and they are capable of being achieved in the time available. Good lesson planning and a good balance between the consolidation of existing and the introduction of new skills means that pupils maintain interest and concentration for the bulk of the lesson. The teachers' knowledge and understanding of the pupils' learning styles results in the use of class organisation and teaching methods that have a positive effect upon the pupils' learning and the progress that they make. The careful composition of groups, the sensitive deployment of support staff and the teachers' constant movement between the groups ensures that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve success. In addition the careful grouping of pupils encourages collaboration and the support provided encourages pupils to make choices, effectively developing their self-esteem. The relationships between pupils and staff are very good and result in good behaviour in all lessons. Since the last inspection both the teaching of art and the progress that pupils make have improved and there is a greater degree of coherence in the co-ordination of the subject.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 67 By the end of all key stages pupils' achievements are good. However, achievement in lessons varies between unsatisfactory and very good depending on which aspects of the subject are being taught and the quality of teaching. This situation is a satisfactory improvement on the last report, when teaching and progress were identified as ranging from poor to satisfactory. Since the last inspection the subject has been linked to the National Curriculum well and there is some accreditation being offered to pupils in Key Stage 4. Assessment of pupils' progress is still not consistent or fully effective. The assessment procedures at Key Stages 3 and 4 are sufficient to help teachers develop the curriculum further but are not yet used for that purpose.
- 68 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have gained basic skills in using a range of tools in a safe and proper way, and they have learned how to work with a range of materials, including card, paper, food and textiles. Pupils make models of different kinds - mechanical, static and battery-operated, and have used computer-aided design and several different construction kits. They design and make increasingly complex structures, with some thought to the design aspects such as health, hygiene, safety, price and choice of suitable materials. Pupils make food items such as salads and

sandwiches. In Key Stage 3 pupils develop their skills through a widening range of materials and particular tasks such as designing and making model bridges, and cooking for events such as Christmas and a "summer fare". By the end of the key stage they have become competent in using a good selection of materials and tools to design and make a good range of items. These include models, mechanisms, food items that are sold in the tuck shop, tabletop games, decorations and, at the moment, a large banner with the school prayer on it. They have used clay in a series of projects, which are designed to increase pupils' skills in both the design work and the actual making.

- 69 In Key Stage 4 pupils begin to have some choice, and there are several modules that are accredited locally within craft, child development, health and safety, and food technology. Recent projects have included the design of a public event (a coffee afternoon) and a learning toy for a young child. By the end of the key stage pupils have gained good skills in sewing with machines and by hand, and have used a wider range of materials, including plastics, textiles and food materials. Pupils make some very appetising and attractive snacks for themselves or for the tuck shop.
- 70 Overall teaching is good despite two lessons being unsatisfactory. In the unsatisfactory lessons, planning was a series of steps rather than a statement of what pupils were expected to learn pupils were over-helped, especially by support assistants and the making task did not refer back to the design. Generally; however, teachers plan and prepare their lessons well, based on a good knowledge of the subject and pupils' abilities and aptitudes. Classroom support staff usually provide good support to pupils who need extra help with the designing and the practical sides of lessons. Some projects are long term, and pupils get on without fuss because they have been taught to listen carefully and to follow instructions, particularly with regard to safety or hygiene matters. Sometimes, however, these lessons become slow-paced because changes of activity are not built into the lessons. Teachers and support staff have a positive and friendly relationship with their pupils, and this helps to keep lessons moving and to keep pupils' attention and concentration. Behaviour is well managed. Lessons are often arranged to develop pupils' social skills by encouraging them to work together on joint projects, or to share tools and materials. Lessons include good use of a wide range of materials and tools which pupils are taught to use safely. Pupils enjoy their design and technology lessons, including the design parts. They often spend several lessons preparing and trying out different ways of doing things before actually beginning to make them. In lessons, they respond well to the challenges that teachers set them, become very absorbed in their work, and concentrate well. They get on with each other well, and often work very well together on a single joint project.
- 71 Termly planning is well monitored by the subject co-ordinator to make sure that plans are appropriate to both the National Curriculum and to the developmental needs of the pupils. Pupils' progress is assessed by individual teachers at the end of each termly project. The detail of this varies through the school, and sometimes is a record of what pupils have done, rather than how well they have done. The resources for design and technology are good and the accommodation is satisfactory. It is well equipped with large items of machinery and kitchen appliances, as well as small tools and a range of materials. This good resourcing helps to keep pupils motivated and enthusiastic, despite the temperamental nature of many of the older sewing machines. Whilst staff are aware of many safety and hygiene issues, few of the support staff have undertaken the Basic Food Hygiene Course.

GEOGRAPHY

- 72 At the end of all key stages pupils' achievements and their progress in geography are good. This is an improvement on the last inspection report. However, there has been little improvement to assessment procedures and work is still not sufficiently matched to the needs of individual pupils. The co-ordination of the subject between key stages remains under-developed.

- 73 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have gained a good grounding in geographical skills and awareness of geographical concepts. They have undertaken good practical investigations that concentrate on the local area. Pupils are developing an appropriate vocabulary, especially during their fieldwork and by looking at features on maps and in the landscape. A good understanding of maps is developed by looking at the layout of the school and then at the local area. Pupils study three contrasting places, they identify many ways in which these places differ, they identify some of the different features within them, and some of the things they have in common. Their fieldwork trips to local villages, the coast and rivers are valuable experiences through which they develop their skills in observing, recording and investigating. These trips are often combined well with learning in history. A recent major event was a trip to Florida by a party from Year 6. The pupils learned much from this, and have produced some good reports of their activities there.
- 74 Through Key Stage 3 pupils concentrate on map work such as compass directions, contours, settlements and land use, and give reasons why the land is shaped and used as it is. They look at physical and human features in the landscape, and can say how people affect the environment. They also learn about France and their learning is enhanced by a school trip there. They gain good knowledge about the weather and climate; about different kinds of human settlements from villages to cities; and about problems of water supply and pollution. By the end of the key stage pupils have learned more detail about a greater variety of maps, and understand how some physical processes work, such as earthquakes, volcanoes and erosion by rivers and the sea. Pupils understand some of the factors that affect human populations, and the growth of cities and industries. They also look at particular countries such as Bangladesh, and at areas such as the rainforests. From these studies, pupils begin to understand how very different some places are to where they live themselves. It is a good curriculum, and pupils learn at a good rate. Geography is not taught at Key Stage 4.
- 75 The teaching is generally good although one unsatisfactory lesson was seen in Key Stage 3, when the teacher's lesson aims were unclear and pupils' inappropriate behaviour was not managed effectively. Teaching time was lost through unnecessary diversions. Teaching generally shows sound preparation and planning that is based on very good subject knowledge. Teaching is enthusiastic and well organised, and makes good use of a range of maps, worksheets and the local environment. The success of practical teaching is seen in the good level of knowledge and skill that pupils develop. Staff have positive relationships with the pupils; pupils enjoy their geography lessons, and many are developing a good level of interest in the subject.
- 76 The subject co-ordinator effectively plans the scheme of work for all key stages providing appropriate guidance for teachers who then plan their own lessons on a termly basis. Teachers in Key Stage 2 often link their geography plans with the termly topics and other subjects in good cross-curricular links. The co-ordinator monitors these termly plans but does not monitor teaching in the subject to see that planning is actually carried out. The resources are barely satisfactory. There is a good selection of maps and aerial photographs, but few atlases with which secondary pupils could improve their knowledge of the world, and few artefacts from other countries to enliven lessons. Very good use is made of the local environment as a resource.

HISTORY

- 77 Teaching is enthusiastic and this enables pupils at all key stages to achieve well. Pupils in Key Stage 2 understand that events, people and buildings change over time and that there are reasons why such changes take place. From an early understanding of how the days of the week and months of the year represent a sequence, they progress to the study of changes in photographs of themselves and their peers. They visit a Victorian kitchen to see how the tools of daily living have changed and on their "walks through history" in Ashington and Morpeth they develop a very real understanding of how changes have taken place in a mining community and market town. The teachers plan

good activities such as 'digs' in the school grounds. Pupils are given a good understanding of "archaeology" and have the opportunity to analyse "primary" evidence. This increases their understanding. Pupils use correct terminology consistently and are aware of the need to ask why, when, and what? They understand the idea of the near past and of times long ago.

- 78 During Key Stage 3 pupils study different periods such as Anglo Saxon Britain. They use secondary sources of information such as pictures of a medieval village effectively and show skill in interpreting what they see. Pupils make accurate judgements about how the buildings were constructed and higher attaining pupils make well thought out deductions. For example, they look at a woman handling a branch and suggest that she could use the stronger part to build a fence and use smaller branches and twigs to feed the oven. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils are searching in their questions and confident during discussions. During Key Stage 4 history is taught as part of a humanities programme and pupils relate the Second World War to the development of the current community in Europe. Teaching is good, lessons are well planned and the aims and objectives are shared with the pupils. This helps them to make appropriate links between the topics they study and see the connection between German cars made in the thirties during the period of National Socialism and cars today. Pupils understand that trade names often link goods to the country of origin.
- 79 Teachers' knowledge of the varied special needs of pupils is demonstrated in the care used when creating groups. Group work is a good feature of lessons and enhances pupils' opportunities to make progress and achieve success. Support assistants are very well deployed to support pupils and they have a very positive effect upon the effort and concentration that pupils show when working independently or collaboratively. The majority of pupils complete the tasks they are set and group work provides opportunities for pupils to help each other. The good progress that pupils make in history reflects the co-ordinator's vision for the subject. The policy for history reflects National Curriculum guidelines and is underpinned by a long-term plan, which is translated into detailed lesson plans. On-going assessment during lessons is good and there are appropriate progress records for recording pupils achievements. The medium term plan for Key Stage 4 work is not yet incorporated into the school's long term plan for the subject. The subject development plan recognises the need to address this issue and it also recognises the need to build up the level of resources available for the subject. Since the last inspection there have been significant improvements in the pupils' attitudes and behaviour in history. Teaching is good or better in the majority of lessons and support staff are very effectively deployed and take part in the planning of lessons.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY.

- 80 The provision for information and communication technology is very good. A combination of very good teaching and very good resources results in high standards of skill and knowledge among pupils throughout the school. The teaching and learning, the accommodation and resources for the subject are a strength.
- 81 There is a very good plan of work which ensures that pupils develop their skills in a logical and progressive way through the school. This plan is very well taught, mainly by the subject co-ordinator and usually in the dedicated information and communication technology suite. These lessons focus on teaching skills through other subjects, such as English, mathematics, science, art and design work and include very good coverage of careers and personal development towards the top of the school. The skills that are achieved are very wide ranging, and pupils learn them thoroughly.
- 82 In Key Stage 2 pupils learn to use CD RoMs to find information, they acquire the basics of word-processing, they use painting and drawing programs to design a room and put data onto simple spreadsheets for analysing information they have gathered in mathematics. Pupils are encouraged to build up a relationship with pupils at another school through the video conferencing link that is available on the computer network.

They speak over the microphone and camera link with increasing confidence. The lower attaining pupils learn basic keyboard and mouse skills through a range of well-chosen programs in different subjects. This good work continues through Key Stage 3, with an increased range of subjects being supported by information and communication technology, including careers, geography and home economics. Pupils begin to use more complex spreadsheets and learn to control robotic toys and models. Much of the work is on a project or theme basis, and pupils have a wide range of opportunities and experiences to use information technology. By the end of the key stage the majority of pupils have gained good skills and are confident in their use of the equipment and software. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils have learned to use computers in various ways, and they develop increasing skills with word processors. Lessons with a mathematics focus improve pupils' skills in using databases and those with a science focus enable pupils to develop their skills in using control mechanisms, sensors and micro-switches. Pupils use a range of programs to gain information for their projects, they talk with other pupils in the school, and talk with pupils from other schools through the Internet system. Pupils have good all-round technological awareness.

- 83 The curriculum for the use information and communication technology in other subjects is very well organised and planned. It is also very well taught. Almost all the lessons observed during the inspection were either very good or excellent. The teacher has very positive relationships with pupils, very good behaviour management skills and excellent knowledge of the subject and the resources at his disposal. This results in very positive responses from pupils, most of whom are very keen and highly motivated. They put a great deal of thought and effort into their work. Lessons go at a very good pace and pupils are often given responsibility for organising their own learning, especially in the secondary part of the school.
- 84 Planned developments in information and communication technology include developing teachers' skills and using information and communication technology more consistently and effectively in the classrooms. Some teachers already use computers very well in support of lessons such as design and technology but often they are not used effectively to support learning. This is usually because teachers' skills are not secure or because equipment in the classrooms is not working properly. There has been very good improvement in this subject since the last inspection.
- 85 The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is very knowledgeable and enthusiastic, has developed very good resources, and has planned the teaching of this subject extremely well. The resources are very good, owing much to the effective use of specific grants. Resources are continually being developed as further funding becomes available. The range of equipment available in the information and communication technology suite and in many classrooms throughout the school is good and suitable to support all subject of the curriculum. There is also a good range of software that is used well during discrete teaching to develop pupils' understanding in other subjects as well as to improve their skills in information and communication technology.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH.

- 86 Pupils at Key Stage 3 make satisfactory progress overall although their achievements in speaking are particularly good. The good standards of speaking and listening identified in the last inspection report have been maintained. Pupils in Year 7 name familiar fruits and confidently sing French songs. They understand simple instructions such as 'are we ready' and 'let us start'. A limited range of resources such as flash cards and taped songs is used well to maintain pupils' interest. Pupils are enthusiastic about activities taking turns to name the fruit and demonstrating pleasure when they get the answer right. Pupils' learning is effective because the lesson is well paced and provides them with very good opportunities to use and reinforce the vocabulary they have learned. As a

class, pupils in Year 8 count up to 20. They correctly name numbers held up at random and several pupils are confident to count without the help of the teacher or other pupils. One pupil counts to 10 and another makes a very good attempt at counting to 20. Activities are 'fun' and encourage pupils to take part, they clearly enjoy their learning. One or two pupils set themselves challenges to count independently to 20 by the next lesson.

- 87 Teaching is satisfactory. The teacher is enthusiastic although not a language specialist and is still developing subject knowledge and understanding. However, examples of good and very good teaching were seen during the inspection. There are clear aims for lessons and a good range of activities is planned to support pupils' learning. There are good opportunities for pupils to acquire new vocabulary and to practise using the words and phrases they know. There is an appropriate emphasis on developing pupils' skills in speaking and listening and the work sheets used during lessons provide satisfactory opportunities for them to record the vocabulary they learn.
- 88 The curriculum provides pupils with an appropriate introduction to a foreign language and good opportunities to develop basic conversation skills. The co-ordinator, the only person teaching French, is developing the subject appropriately as his own skills grow. A number of appropriate courses have been attended and these have already enhanced the co-ordinator's subject knowledge. Learning resources are very basic, they are suitable to support teaching but are limited in terms of range and number.

MUSIC

- 89 Pupils in Key Stages 2 and 3 make good progress during lessons and choir practice. Pupils sing with confidence because they have good opportunities including assemblies and school concerts. Pupils are highly motivated by their success and take a pride in their performance. They work hard and concentrate well for the whole lesson. Pupils accept the need to make changes to emphasis and expression when they sing and they understand the effect their performance has on the audience. The weekly choirs make a good contribution to promoting pupils' progress. The specialist music teacher provides an enthusiastic role model for pupils and there is good support from other teachers. This effectively encourages pupils to inject feeling and expression into their singing and their efforts complement the music well. The specialist teacher uses ingenuity to promote learning with very limited resources. This is particularly good in the clapping and tapping rhythm pupils produce using their hands and knees because there are insufficient percussion instruments. Pupils develop their performing skills effectively, they use their voices well and maintain the beat. Lower attaining pupils make an effective contribution because they are well supported. Teaching is effective because there are appropriate changes to the pace of lessons and a good range of activities that include whole class and group work. This keeps pupils interested and maintains good standards of behaviour. Pupils develop good co-operative skills, they learn when to come in and sing their part and they contribute well to group activities. However, they are less co-operative when playing musical instruments. Pupils have very limited opportunities to handle or play instruments because the number and range of resources available to support learning are unsatisfactory. Pupils enjoy using instruments when they are given the chance but they often get over-excited and continue to play when they should stop.
- 90 The music teacher has high expectations of pupils but the lack of resources prevents pupils from achieving as well as they could. Pupils do not make enough progress in developing their composition skills or in learning to play instruments. The scheme of work is new and pupils in all year groups begin at a similar point. There is little difference between the tasks and activities planned for the different year groups and progress over time is not secure. Pupils have made a good start in learning musical notation and higher attaining pupils show increasing awareness of the value of different notes. Pupils' progress in composition is not secure because resources are unsatisfactory there are not enough musical instruments and some of them are broken. There are no keyboards or recording equipment to support their learning. Pupils gain experience of performing to

an audience in school, and when they sing in the community. They receive limited, but good opportunities to understand music beyond the school by listening to and joining in with visiting music groups.

- 91 The co-ordinator has made small but important changes to music lessons and now provides a wider range of musical activities. Funding for music is inadequate and the deficiencies identified in the previous report remain. The condition of the music room has deteriorated significantly. The music teacher has improved the interior with high quality display but there are concerns about the access and evacuation of the building because the fire escape is in an unsatisfactory condition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 92 Too few lessons were observed during the inspection to make judgements about the level of pupils' achievements and the quality of teaching. There is a whole-school policy and a good, well-planned scheme of work for physical education. The subject is managed satisfactorily by the subject co-ordinator. All pupils receive physical education lessons, which engage them in a good range of activities, including games, dance, athletics, gymnastics and swimming. The curriculum for pupils in Key Stage 4 is enhanced by visits to a local leisure centre to take part in activities such as roller-blading, badminton and the use of a fitness suite.
- 93 Several teachers contribute to games sessions, which generally involve two or more classes. Girls tend to take part in different activities to boys. The school's accommodation for physical education is unsatisfactory. The gymnastics equipment is outdated for use by pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 and is inappropriate for use by younger pupils. The provision of small resources such as balls is satisfactory. Physical education is enhanced by a good outdoor activity programme that provides opportunities for pupils to engage in a range of challenging activities, some in residential settings. These activities are heavily subsidised by fund-raising activities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 94 Overall pupils' achievements are good. During Key Stage 2 they develop an understanding of the Christian faith in the United Kingdom and they begin to develop an awareness of the multi-faith society in which they live. Pupils understand that the key features of faith apply to every-day life. Looking at the life of Jesus leads to discussion about how his life influenced the Christian faith and provides an opportunity for pupils to consider the concept of love and forgiveness. Teachers effectively link these concepts to considerations of what is appropriate behaviour. Pupils understand that The Bible is the Christian holy book and that Harvest Festival, Christmas and Easter are Christian celebrations. Their study of the Jewish faith and Islam enables pupils to better understand other faiths and to understand similarities between them. They know that the Torah and Quran are also holy books and the Synagogue and Mosque are places of worship. By the end of the key stage pupils have an awareness of the distinctiveness of the faiths they have studied and understand that other faiths also contribute to family and community life.
- 95 During Key Stage 3 and 4 pupils study Christianity in greater depth. They look at and appreciate the concept of need in others, recognise others problems and show insight when applying the Ten Commandments to every-day life. The major Christian festivals are studied in greater detail and pupils develop their understanding of the Jewish faith and Islam further. Pupils begin to understand the role of the Torah and they consider its style and contents in depth. This work is used well as a preparation for the work they do on the Seven Pillars of Wisdom and the concept of fasting, prayer, alms and pilgrimage. Work on the Christian church enables older pupils to study the church in society and identify beliefs and attitudes to Christianity that influence behaviour.

- 96 Teaching is good. Pupils enjoy the subject and they quickly settle to work, are enthusiastic and confident when involved in discussion and work with concentration and effort. Pupils' responses to teaching are very positive because lesson planning is good and lesson organisation provides an effective balance between teaching, discussion and individual work. The teacher very effectively deploys support staff and their input to lessons enables groups of pupils and individuals to succeed. Lessons are well balanced with appropriate opportunities to consolidate previous learning and to present new challenges. This balance helps pupils to understand how the various elements of the subject fit together. Assessment during lessons is effective but is not linked to assessment procedures that help inform curriculum planning or the work planned for individual pupils. The teaching of religious education in the school makes a very positive contribution to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 97 The recently appointed co-ordinator provides good leadership for the subject. There is a coherent approach to planning and this is already raising the status of the subject within the curriculum. The policy for religious education reflects the aims of the school and its policy for spiritual, personal and moral education as well as the guidance provided by the Local Education Authority's agreed syllabus. There are good medium term plans for all key stages and they provide effective support for detailed lesson planning. However, the scheme of work is not complete and more units of work are required to ensure that over the longer term an appropriate balance is provided. There are insufficient resources for the subject. Since the last inspection significant improvements have been made to the provision. Pupils now make good progress, classroom activities are sharply focused on the needs of the subject and teaching is consistently good.

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION

- 98 Pupils achieve well during lessons. At the beginning of the day pupils at Key Stage 2 have appropriate opportunities to discuss their timetable and to carry out simple responsibilities such as taking the register back to the office. Older and higher attaining pupils develop a sense of responsibility. They look after their partner during paired activities and make good progress in working as a team. Pupils often look out for each other at playtimes and lunchtimes. A pupil spontaneously collected a school bag that a friend had left in the playground. Teachers promote pupils' personal and social development well in most lessons, for example in physical education pupils make good progress in developing independence in dressing and undressing. Pupils celebrate each other's achievements during awards ceremonies and they understand the importance of working hard and helping others. In personal and social education lessons concern for others is well promoted and pupils are encouraged to give a helping hand and to remember not to disturb others in class. Pupils confidently share their views about good and bad behaviour and make sensible suggestions for class rules. There is a strong sense of community and pupils develop collective responsibility by talking about the appropriateness of the rules they help to set.
- 99 At Key Stage 3 pupils discuss class rules that are relevant to lessons, for example they discuss team work and turn taking to support their work and the development of a performance in drama. Pupils ensure that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and take part. Teachers and support staff give appropriate help and support, guiding pupils to help them clarify their views. Lessons in health education provide good opportunities for teachers to promote learning in important topics such as sex education and drugs awareness. Pupils make good progress understanding the complexities of setting up home, they list the furnishings required and then begin to understand that they need to budget for running costs such as paying for gas. However, pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 do not understand the relevance of learning about child development and they make less progress than they should.
- 100 Very good teaching at Key Stage 4. enables pupils to understand the difference between deliberate rule breaking and unintentional transgression. Pupils are keen to share their views although they require much staff encouragement to listen to each other's

contributions. Pupils make very good progress preparing to debate issues at the school forum. They draw up suggested guidelines on current issues, for example, on what to do with pupils' mobile phones in school. They make very good progress, chairing the meeting and taking minutes. Pupils have good respect for each other's opinions, discussing issues sensibly, for example, improving the appearance of the school gardens and adding benches. Teachers support pupils well, reminding them of the rules of the forum. Pupils appropriately request permission to speak so that quieter members can give their views. Pupils in Year 10 follow an accredited course in personal development. They operate a food outlet (the school tuck shop) and from this enterprise they gain valuable training for life after school. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 share their views about work experience placements and the teacher provides them with very good guidance on how they should conduct themselves in the work place. Pupils are beginning to understand that their employers have requirements and rules.

- 101 Teachers plan lessons well to meet the needs of their classes. However, the subject does not have a co-ordinator to define a policy or to share and develop the good practice that is evident in lessons. The school is currently reviewing the provision and providing additional lessons in health education and citizenship. These lessons are beginning to promote a whole school approach to personal and social education and to complement the good provision that takes place during form periods and in other subject lessons.