

INSPECTION REPORT

MONKSEATON MIDDLE SCHOOL

Whitley Bay

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108637

Headteacher: Mrs Anne E Wilson

Reporting inspector: Mr Joseph Fitzpatrick
19874

Dates of inspection: 20 March – 24 March 2000

Inspection number: 190960

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: Middle deemed Secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Vernon Drive
Whitley Bay
Tyne & Wear

Postcode: NE25 9JN

Telephone number: 0191 2008715

Fax number: 0191 2008716

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr Michael Spicer

Date of previous inspection: 5 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team Members responsibilities	Subject	Aspect responsibilities
Joe Fitzpatrick Registered Inspector	English	The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Alan Rolfe – Lay Inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Henry Moreton – Team Inspector	Maths	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Roger Holmes – Team Inspector	Science & DT	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Brian Downes - Team Inspector	IT	
Geoffrey Kinder - Team Inspector	Art & Music	
Eileen Metcalf - Team Inspector	History & RE	
Paul Makin - Team Inspector	Geography & PE	
Dorothy Barraclough - Team Inspector	Modern Languages	

The inspection contractor was:

Peak Education Partnership
19 Huddersfield Road
BARNSELY
South Yorkshire
S70 2LT

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?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?	16
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	17
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	19
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	20
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Monkseaton is an average sized middle school for boys and girls in the 9 – 13 age range. It has 392 pupils on roll. There are 59 pupils on the register of special educational needs, equivalent to 15 per cent, above the national average of 13.2 per cent. Only two pupils speak English as an additional language; this is relatively low. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals – 18.8 per cent – is a little higher than the national average of 16.2 per cent and lower than last year's proportion of just over 20 per cent. The area in which the school is located comprises a large council estate and private housing; it is above average in socio-economic terms. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is very broad but overall in line with the national average.

The North Tyneside Education Authority is conducting a review of the three tier system of education and there is a possibility that the middle schools in the region may be closed as a result of reorganisation. Considerable improvements have been made to the school building since the last inspection in February 1996. Since the last inspection, the school roll has increased by about 31 pupils (8 per cent).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Monkseaton Middle is a caring school which provides a good quality education for its pupils. The curriculum is suitably broad, balanced and relevant to pupils' needs. Very good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. When organising pupils for learning, care is taken to cater for the needs of individuals. Good quality management helps to foster good teaching, with some very good and excellent teaching taking place in both key stages. There is a widely shared ambition to raise standards of attainment and the school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards in English are above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8.
- Standards in science are above average at the end of Key Stage 2.
- In comparison with the results in similar schools at the end of Key Stage 2, the standards in mathematics are above average and those in English and science are well above average.
- Standards are above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8 in information technology, history, art, music and religious education, and at the end of Year 8 in physical education.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
- The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively implemented.
- The school is well led and managed.
- The quality of teaching is generally good and there is a significant proportion of very good and excellent teaching in both key stages.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to the school and are well motivated to learn.

What could be improved

- The analysis of assessment data is not consistently used to set targets for individual pupils.
- Pupils' levels of attendance are below the national average.
- Parents do not receive sufficiently regular information on how well their children are doing.
- The system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is not sufficiently clear and secure.
- The school does not fully comply with the statutory requirement to provide a collective act of worship each day.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Since the last inspection in February 1996, there have been considerable improvements in the school building and the school's security is much better. There have been improvements in the gathering of assessment data and the use of data to track and measure pupils' attainment. Steps have been taken to link evaluation with development planning. The school does not yet fully meet the statutory requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests:

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	B	C	C	A
Mathematics	B	C	C	B
Science	B	D	B	A

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results in science are above the national average and well above the average in similar schools. Results in mathematics are in line with the national average and above the average in similar schools. Results in English are in line with the average results in national tests and well above the average achieved in similar schools. The trend in the school's average points score in all core subjects has been upwards, in line with the national trend.

Standards in religious education are above those in the local Agreed Syllabus and standards in information technology (IT) are above the national average. In no subject are standards below the national expectation.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are well motivated to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. Pupils show respect for each other and for their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are very well known individually and the quality of relationships is very good.
Attendance	Unsatisfactory. Standards of attendance are below the national average. The school works hard to improve levels of attendance but there is too

	much absence condoned by parents or guardians.
--	--

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 7-11 years	aged 12 – 13 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

The general quality of teaching is good. Outstanding teaching was seen in physical education, religious education and music and there was a high proportion of very good teaching in a range of subjects in both key stages. Teaching in English and mathematics has been assisted by the implementation of the national literacy and numeracy strategies.

Most lessons are carefully planned and executed; resources are well used and there is good management of time as well as of pupils' behaviour. The weaknesses in the two lessons that were unsatisfactory were weak subject knowledge and relatively poor control.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. All subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are taught. French is taught from Year 5 onwards, all pupils have access to two modern languages and the national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been effectively implemented. The literacy strategy has been introduced at Key Stage 3 and the numeracy strategy is being used with lower bands in Year 7.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. The needs of these pupils are well known and the quality of individual education plans is very good. A programme of classroom support and withdrawal helps them make very good progress.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The needs of these pupils are being effectively addressed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. Provision for pupils' moral development is excellent and that for their social development is very good. There is good provision for pupils' spiritual development through the curriculum, notably the arts, but the school does not fully comply with the statutory requirement to have a daily collective act of worship.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Well. There are very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and assessment information is well used to guide curricular planning. Targets are not yet consistently set to help individual pupils improve their standards of attainment.

Parents are kept well informed of forthcoming events and there is a regular newsletter from the school.

The provision of extra-curricular activities is very good and includes an unusually wide range of sports and sporting competitions as well as participation in dance competitions and musical festivals.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Steps have been taken to address the issues raised in the last inspection report, the school has a clear sense of direction and there is a widely shared commitment to raising standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Well. The governors know the school well. Each governor is responsible for a subject or aspect of the school's provision.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Assessment data IS carefully gathered and analysed and the progress of individual pupils is carefully measured over time. The school regularly reflects on the effectiveness of its own practice.
The strategic use of resources	The general quality of staffing is good and there are very good procedures for the induction and training of new teachers. Staff are well deployed in order to make the most effective use of their specialist strengths. Accommodation is generally suited to its purposes and the supply of book and IT resources is adequate. There is a good outdoor grassed area suitable for football and other games. The school canteen, which stands apart from the main building, is very old and falls short of being of an acceptable standard.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school is approachable and friendly and responds well to their complaints or suggestions. • No bullying is allowed. • Booster classes are put on in the summer term to help "borderline" pupils raise their standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. • The school vigorously promotes good behaviour and has an effective system of sanctions and rewards. • This is an improving school, with recent improvements in its building and in subjects like science and IT. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The frequency of reports on pupils' progress and attainment. • Regular target setting for pupils to help them improve their standards.

The inspection team agrees with both the parents' positive and negative views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils achieving the nationally expected level (level 4) or better in English (76 per cent) was slightly above but close to the national average of 70 per cent; the percentage achieving level 5 or better (22 per cent) was exactly the same as the national average. In mathematics, the percentage achieving level 4 or better (67 per cent) was close to the national average (69 per cent); the percentage achieving level 5 or better (21 per cent) was just below the national percentage of 24 per cent. In science, the percentage achieving level 4 or better (94 per cent) was well above the national average of 78 per cent; the percentage achieving level 5 or better (33 per cent) was better than the national average of 27 per cent. In terms of point scores per pupil, results in English and mathematics were in line with the national averages and results in science were above the national average. Taking all the core subjects together, the performance of the pupils in 1999 was close to the national average. If all the core subjects are taken over the past four years, the school's results are close to the national average. The trend in the school's results is upwards, in line with the national trend. Over the years, girls have done better than boys in English and science, though their results have fluctuated between the average and slightly above the average for girls nationally. The school's results dipped a little in 1998 when the results of both boys and girls were a little lower than in other years. Over the past three years, results in English and science have been slightly better than results in mathematics. In comparison with the results in similar schools in 1999 (that is, in schools where the percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals was between 20 and 35 per cent), the school's results were well above average in English and science and above average in mathematics.

2 Pupils from the school take the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 3 in the high school a year after leaving the middle school. Nevertheless, the middle school has been responsible for two of the three years which make up Key Stage 3, and Monkseaton Middle has carried out an analysis of the results of its former pupils in the high school to which most of its pupils go, by estimating what the contribution of its former pupils ought to have been as a proportion of the total number of pupils in the high school taking the tests (the "theoretical proportion"), and comparing this with the actual results achieved by its former pupils (the "actual proportion"). On the basis of this analysis, it has been able to show that in 1999 the actual proportion of pupils achieving level 5 or better at the end of Key Stage 3 exceeded the theoretical proportion in each of the three core subjects of English, mathematics and science.

3 Judgments based on the inspection broadly confirm the results of national tests. In English, standards are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8. In mathematics, standards are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8. In science, standards are above the national average at the end of Key Stage 2 and in line with the average at the end of Year 8. At the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8, standards are above those indicated in the Agreed Syllabus in religious education and above national expectations in Information Technology (IT), art, history and music. In physical education, standards are in line with the national expectation at the end of Key Stage 2 and above this level at the end of Year 8. In all other subjects, standards are in line with the national expectation and in no subject are standards below that level.

4 Although there is a proportion of pupils in both key stages whose skills in reading are relatively weak, pupils of average and high attainment read demanding texts with good levels of accuracy, fluency and understanding. Standards of writing are generally better than average; the range of pupils' writing is considerable and includes extended narrative writing. The majority of pupils listen with good levels of attention and understanding and most can talk well to a purpose and give a clear account of their

ideas; however, some are inclined to talk too quietly or to mumble when taking part in whole class discussions. The literacy strategy is helping pupils improve their grasp of punctuation and spelling as well as to develop their knowledge about language. Standards in number work are generally good and there are some good applications of number to subjects like modern languages and science. By means of work done within the numeracy strategy in Key Stage 2, pupils are developing and consolidating sound procedures for carrying out mental calculations. The generally sound or good standards in the basic skills of English and mathematics reported at the time of the last inspection have been maintained, while standards in science have improved. Pupils make good progress in their scientific understanding in Key Stage 2 but progress is less secure in Key Stage 3. Work of the highest quality – said to be relatively rare in the last inspection report - is being produced in English, art, music, modern languages and physical education. Pupils with English as an additional language are making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress in both key stages on account of the careful assessments made of their needs and the care with which teachers and support staff work with them to achieve their individual targets.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

5 Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Children like school and enjoy coming to school and a significant number are involved in the wide range of extra curricular activities provided by the school, particularly music, art and sport. The majority of pupils show that they are keen to learn. In most lessons they are eager to respond to their teacher's questions and engage in extended classroom discussions. For example, in a Year 5 PSE lesson, pupils were keen to contribute to a discussion on the use of safe and unsafe drugs and were able to speak at length about members of their own families using "safe drugs" during periods of illness, and showed an awareness of the dangers of "unsafe drugs". The majority of pupils, including many with special educational needs, are able to concentrate for appropriate periods of time. Most are eager to show and discuss their work and most take an obvious pride in their work.

6 The overall standard of behaviour in the school is good. In most lessons the standard of behaviour is very good and sometimes excellent. For example, in a Year 6 music lesson, pupils demonstrated a good level of self discipline when changing rooms, reorganising furniture, and using musical instruments. Behaviour in the dining room is of a good standard, and pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They are trustworthy and courteous and on many occasions pupils hold doors open for adults. Generally behaviour in the playground is good, albeit, on occasions there is some boisterous behaviour.

7 The majority of pupils are aware of what is and is not acceptable behaviour and have a good knowledge of the school behaviour policy. Almost all pupils respond well to the school's system of rewards and sanctions. However, there is a minority of pupils, some with special needs in relation to behavioural difficulties, who engage in poor and challenging behaviour. Whilst teachers generally use the school's behavioural strategies well, the attitudes and behaviour of these pupils on occasions have a disruptive impact on lessons and other pupils' learning. This year there have been two fixed term exclusions due to poor behaviour. The school's procedures for exclusion meet statutory requirements and the use of exclusion has been appropriate in the circumstances. The majority of parents believe the school is successful in promoting good behaviour, whilst accepting that there are a small number of pupils who are difficult and on occasions behave poorly.

8 Bullying is an occasional problem. The school has a clear anti-bullying policy, and pupils interviewed during the inspection indicated that such incidents were dealt with quickly and effectively by the school. They were aware of the help available to them should they be subject to bullying and

would not hesitate to seek assistance in such circumstances. There is no evidence of any incidents motivated by racism or sexism.

9 Relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school are very good. In all year groups there is a wide acceptance of pupils with special educational needs, and on many occasions higher attaining pupils give help and support to lower attaining pupils. Pupils work and play well together, showing a willingness to listen to and consider the views of others. They listen to and discuss ideas, opinions and feelings different from their own in religious education and other subjects.

10 Pupils in all year groups show a willingness to take additional responsibilities, many acting as classroom monitors, putting out equipment before lessons and tidying up after lessons. The school has recently formed a School Council consisting of pupils from all classes elected by their peers. They meet on a regular basis with the headteacher to discuss areas of concern and improvement. These meetings have resulted in an anti-litter campaign and the provision of basket ball hoops in the playground. Older pupils are given the opportunity to use their initiative when researching information for class related topics.

11 The attendance of pupils is unsatisfactory, falling below national averages. There has been a steady decline in attendance levels since the last inspection. Whilst the poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils has a marked impact on the whole school attendance, more than 90% of pupils have been absent on at least one occasion.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

12 The general quality of teaching is good and there is a significant proportion of very good teaching in a range of subjects in both key stages. Of the 115 lessons observed, 98 per cent were satisfactory or better, 69 per cent were good or better and more than a quarter were very good or excellent. Some excellent teaching takes place in music, religious education and physical education. Teachers have good subject knowledge and suitable expectations. The best teaching was characterised by high expectations and painstaking explanations and feedback to pupils to help them raise their standards. Lessons are invariably planned with care, with resources to hand. They are often divided into a series of timed stages and teachers manage pupils' behaviour well, curbing potentially disruptive behaviour quickly and firmly. Teachers provide lively expositions and clear demonstrations to guide pupils' work; in subjects like English, religious education, history and modern languages there is often lively interaction between the teacher and the pupils and the teachers' questions tease out deeper responses and help to produce effective learning. In most subjects there is a good level of attention directed at the reinforcement of basic skills of reading, writing, talking and listening and number work. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are taken into account and the targets set out in their individual education plans are used to promote their standards of attainment. Where pupils with special educational needs receive additional support, it is effective and contributes to raising attainment. Good teaching provision is made for the pupils for whom English is an additional language. Pupils' response to teaching is usually positive; they take part willingly in activities and discussions and enjoy opportunities for solving problems or carrying out investigations. Most can use a dictionary or thesaurus competently and can effectively retrieve information from books or with the help of information technology.

13 Teachers' subject knowledge for the teaching of literacy is of a high standard. Their good knowledge of phonics and knowledge about language support their teaching in this area. Teachers make good use of the overhead projector and of the board to clarify points about language, reinforce

learning points and assist pupils' understanding. In many subjects, good attention is given to developing pupils' grasp of the appropriate technical terms; items of vocabulary are introduced with care and attention drawn to the appropriate terms by entering them on the board. There is some very good use by teachers of quick-fire question and answer routines to reinforce previous learning and to use it to promote further learning. On occasions, teachers overlook opportunities to elicit information or opinions from pupils, forcing them to think for themselves, and tend to tell them too much. In some subjects like modern languages and mathematics, the demands made of lower attaining pupils, in particular, are too low. Homework is regularly set in mathematics but in some other subjects homework is not consistently set in accordance with the homework diary. Marking of pupils' work is conscientiously carried out in most subjects, with the best making suggestions for improvement, but the school's policy of awarding grades for different aspects of the pupils' work is not consistently adhered to.

14 Systems for setting pupils by ability and arrangements for organising them for learning are highly flexible. On the evidence of past results, assessment data and teachers' perceptions, pupils are organized into teaching groups in a way that will ensure that their individual needs are attended to. The school takes pains to create "viable" teaching groups in which the pupils will stimulate each other to learn; care is taken to avoid the creation of "sink groups". Teachers' planning and the effectiveness of their teaching are assisted by means of the broad banding of pupils or the withdrawal of pupils with special educational needs for work in basic skills. Medium and short term planning are assisted by detailed subject schemes of work, which have been produced or improved since the last inspection by subject coordinators. Although the headteacher and the deputy headteacher visit lessons quite frequently for short periods of time, and although coordinators of some core subjects have been given time to work with teachers in Key Stage 2, there is no clear and reliable system in place for monitoring and assessing the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and for providing teachers with good quality feedback. The school is at present making arrangements for senior members of staff to receive training in lesson observation and the provision of feedback. Teachers gather their own assessment data and make good use of it in planning future teaching; they also work effectively in pairs or small teams, sharing ideas and approaches, and these factors contribute to the generally good quality of their teaching.

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

15 The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages fully meeting statutory requirements and the needs of the locally agreed religious education syllabus. At Key Stage 2 it has recently been revised to provide a much stronger emphasis on literacy and numeracy, following the national guidelines. This has been achieved successfully and the extra time provided is leading to improved standards in these areas. To gain this additional time there has had to be a reduction in the time for teaching other subjects and many now have only one period each week. All the subjects concerned have revised their plans in response to these changes and are reviewing its effect. Changes have been most successful in history, music and religious education. The curriculum for geography now has too little emphasis on enquiry skills; in design and technology pupils' existing skills are not built on sufficiently.

16 Information technology is planned into the curriculum as a separate subject and is also increasingly taking its place within the planning for other subjects - for example, collecting data in science and programming movement in design and technology. This provision is now good and represents a marked improvement from the last inspection. French is taught to all pupils from Year 5. This is an extra subject compared with most schools who have pupils of this age and gives them with a good start in the subject. This arrangement has been maintained despite pressure placed on time by

literacy and numeracy, partly as a result of agreements within the group of linked middle schools and partly as a response to commitments made to the high school.

17 At Key Stage 3 there continues to be an emphasis on literacy and numeracy, with some of the components of the national strategy being introduced into year 7. Less time is devoted to these subjects and this allows other subjects to develop appropriately, for example design and technology has a double period which is suitable for practical work, and more time is available for the humanities. Overall, curriculum arrangements at both key stages are good.

18 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very well planned, including a mixture of support in class and small groups withdrawn for special work. There is a comprehensive policy that covers arrangements for pupils with special educational needs, ensuring them equal access to the curriculum. There are very good contacts with the nearby Behaviour Support Unit and with a local special school; these supplement the good liaison for special educational needs with the first schools and high school.

19 The school maintains good records of pupils' achievement in English and mathematics. There are good procedures in place to assess pupils' attainment on entry and these are used with information from first schools to place pupils in classes and teaching sets where these are used. Very good Individual Education Plans are in place for pupils with special educational needs and these are used well by teachers. The school has an agreed assessment system and this is followed well in English and mathematics but not in science. Religious education, information technology and foundation subjects use their own assessment systems. There is good practice in modern languages, information technology, art, music and physical education. The data provided from assessment is used to develop teaching bands and sets in English and mathematics. There is good use of assessment in modern languages for forward planning of the work to be done. Assessment information is used to set targets for classes and subjects. It is used also to identify pupils who would benefit from "booster training." There is limited use of assessment to identify individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses or to discuss with them individual targets for improvement.

20 Arrangements for pupils' personal and social education are good and arrangement for sex education and drugs awareness are also effective. The school provides a very good range of extra activities which involves many of the pupils, particularly in music, dance and sporting activities. Additional booster classes have been introduced to help pupils improve their performance in the national tests. These are proving successful and were partly responsible for the rise in the levels achieved last year.

21 Overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, with provision for moral development a significant strength of the school.

22 Provision for spiritual development is good. There is very good teaching in religious education where the spiritual aspects of all the major world religions are covered in good detail and depth. Pupils consider the nature of religious worship, pilgrimage and festivals. The school's aim is that provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development will pervade the whole curriculum and this is happening to a good extent. There is provision for spiritual development in art and music. In English the good focus on literature helps to develop pupils' spiritual and aesthetic awareness. Assemblies are planned to have a spiritual dimension. They finish with an act of collective worship. However, the school does not fully meet the requirement for a daily act of collective worship for all pupils on the days when they do not have an assembly.

23 Provision for moral development is excellent. In all areas of the school children have a clear understanding of right and wrong. Teachers have worked very hard and sensitively in devising the

school policy on behaviour. This is based firmly on the ideal of respect for everyone. This policy is operating very well in practice. Pupils have an understanding that poor behaviour and lack of attention in class interfere with the education and well being of others in the school. They are expected to respect others' rights and do so impressively in class and around the school. Teachers provide very good role models. They have good relationships with their pupils, based on mutual respect.

24 Provision for moral and social development is well integrated. Personal and social education (PSE) is taught in discrete lessons and covers all the relevant aspects of moral and social development, including all aspects of health education. Moral and social issues are considered in history when pupils study the working conditions of children in the mines during the Industrial Revolution.

25 Pupils' social development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to think of others at all times. They work well together in pairs and small groups in most lessons, allowing others to speak in turn. They are given opportunities to share ideas and develop social skills. Geography fieldwork gives opportunities for developing social skills. Physical Education lessons make a very good contribution to pupils' moral and social development. Pupils learn to work together, to compete as a group and to understand and value the concept of fairness. The excellent teaching in dance, and the high levels of enjoyment, promote self-esteem.

26 Provision for cultural development is good. The focus in religious education promotes understanding and respect for the cultures associated with the major world religions. This fosters a tolerant attitude towards other cultures. Pupils also gain a good understanding of the music and art of other cultures, including non-Western cultures. In design and technology pupils study the Japanese lifestyle in relation to design. French and German cultures are studied as part of the language courses and pupils have opportunities to visit France. Pupils visit museums and take part in local music festivals. All pupils have the opportunity to go on a residential trip at least once in their time in school.

27 The school has some good links with the community which have a positive effect on pupils' learning. For example, the art department has arranged for some of the pupils' work to be displayed in the local library and building societies and pupils have painted murals for a number of establishments, including a mural of a nativity scene in a local church. The music department enters pupils in a local music festival, the school orchestra plays at a number of local events and the choir is involved in a range of activities, including the annual Church Carol Service. The school has also benefited from the provision of matching funds to the value of £1000 from a local bank and the donation of computer equipment by local universities. The local newspaper has also provided pupils with the opportunity to be involved in designing and writing a full page article on the school. All of these links are having a positive impact on pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

28 The school effectively ensures pupils' welfare, health and safety. Good procedures are in place for handling child protection issues. Medical needs are well met. The site is well maintained. Procedures for the monitoring of academic performance and for pupils' support and guidance are good. There is a high level of care for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are very good, containing clear and realistic targets which teachers know well.

29 The pastoral system is well established. Parents praise pastoral care. Pupils have confidence in the arrangements. They know that they can seek help and that what they have to say will be listened to and valued. Teachers know their pupils well and they take appropriate remedial action when difficulties arise. Class teachers promote good attendance and behaviour. The school works hard to improve the standard of behaviour, eliminate oppressive behaviour and develop pupils' work ethos.

There is a clear code of conduct. Exclusions are made only in serious cases and implementation of the behaviour policy is consistent, with a good balance of rewards and sanctions. Pupils know what is expected, feel safe and support the policy. Inappropriate behaviour is quickly and effectively dealt with and parents are consulted if the need arises. Registration time is well used. The school carries out appropriate risk assessments and good procedures are in place for all out of school visits.

30 Pupils' educational performance and personal development are monitored, and procedures for this are good. Steps are taken to deal with individual problems, with a range of strategies that include formal assessment and the preparation of individual education plans for some pupils. These are well used in the classroom by the teachers. The level of academic support linked to raising achievement is good. The school deploys its resources effectively. For example, it arranges teaching groups in mathematics differently in each of the years. This means that pupils are placed in the groups best suited to their individual needs. Similarly, the school has in the recent past chosen to teach mathematics to single sex classes, again, to meet the particular needs of the pupils concerned. While the school carefully documents the academic progress of pupils in some subjects, including English and mathematics, this is not as well developed in others. Targets are not always set and those set are not sufficiently shared with the pupils or their parents.

31 The high level of welfare care provided for pupils has a positive impact on their learning and personal development because it helps them to feel secure and positive about themselves in school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

32 Overall the school has established a satisfactory partnership with parents. It recognises the important role parents play in the education of their children and encourages them to play an active part in the life of the school.

33 Generally speaking, the school provides good quality information about the school and its activities. The school brochure contains much useful information, there is a monthly newsletter which keeps parents aware of what is happening in school, and letters are sent to parents to advise them of specific events. The school provides parents with a termly curriculum overview which provides a good insight into what pupils are learning. It has introduced homework diaries, which are signed by parents and teachers to ensure work was completed. However, whilst most parents sign the diaries, some teachers do not do so on a consistent basis.

34 Parents are invited to two open evenings each year when they are able to discuss their children's progress with their teachers; these meetings are well attended. The school provides written pupils' reports once a year, which contain information on pupils' progress, knowledge and understanding in all subjects of the curriculum. Parents find them helpful and informative.

35 There is a suitable home-school agreement signed by most parents, pupils and the school. Parents are kept well informed of curricular and other developments in the school and are given good notice of visits and trips out of school; a regular newsletter supplements other information provided by the school. Parents spoke favourably of the approachability of the head and teachers and of the school's willingness to respond to complaints and suggestions. Parents appreciate the opportunity to learn about their children's progress at the two parents' meetings held each year and find the annual reports on their children's progress and attainment informative and reliable. However, an unusually large proportion of parents – some 34 per cent of those who responded to the questionnaire sent out in advance of the inspection – indicated that they were not sufficiently well informed about how their children were doing. Some parents rightly feel that an additional report, possibly in an abbreviated form, earlier in the school year would give them earlier notice of how well their children were doing and

enable them, where necessary, to take appropriate action. While expressing their appreciation of the “in depth” analysis of their children’s performance provided by teachers in the annual reports, some parents also expressed the wish for individual targets to be set for pupils. These suggestions from parents are well founded and, if acted upon, could well contribute to raising further the pupils’ standards of attainment.

36 Overall, the impact of parents’ involvement in school work is satisfactory. There is an active Parent Teachers Association which arranges social and fund raising events, and makes a significant contribution to the school funds. A small number of parents assist in school, listening to pupils read and helping with extra curricular activities, such as football. The majority of parents support the school and are satisfied with standards achieved by the school.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37 The headteacher is an energetic and highly visible presence around the school; she helps to give the school a clear sense of direction and shares with governors, staff and many parents a strong ambition to raise standards of attainment. An action plan based on the priorities identified in the last inspection report was drawn up with care and effective steps taken to ensure the plan’s implementation. The present school development plan sets out appropriate aims and the detailed means for achieving them; it is properly linked to the budget, sets out success criteria, time scales and the responsible members of staff, and it is an effective tool of school management. The school has a clear grasp of the targets it wishes to meet and of the means by which it can meet them.

38 The senior management team, comprising the head, deputy, the two key stage coordinators and the assessment coordinator, meets regularly to evaluate the school’s performance and draw up plans for continued improvement. The assessment coordinator produces high quality graphs charting the progress made over time by individual pupils within the three core subjects. Attendance at meetings of the senior management team is flexible and other teachers and subject coordinators are involved as necessary. The members of the school governing body know the school well and have a sound grasp of how its results in the National Curriculum tests compare with national averages and the results in other local schools. Each member of the governing body has responsibility for a subject or aspect of the school’s provision and governors regularly visit lessons in order to familiarise themselves with classroom realities. Governors have a sound overview of the school’s financial situation and receive regular breakdowns of expenditure against income. Governors share the commitment of the school’s staff to high standards and, together with the head and teachers, are making an effective contribution to the “success culture” which the school is striving to achieve.

39 The numbers and qualifications of teaching staff are appropriate and teachers are effectively deployed in order to make the best use of their specialisms and teaching strengths. This enables pupils in Key Stage 2 to receive more specialist teaching than is usually enjoyed by pupils of primary school age and contributes towards the good standards achieved in subjects like physical education, art and music as well as in science at Key Stage 2. A significant number of teachers have been appointed in recent years and procedures for the induction of new teachers are good, as is provision for student teachers. Staff development receives a high priority and the school is developing procedures for measuring the impact of training on the achievement of pupils. Subject coordinators generally provide good leadership in their departments but as yet they do not have an effective system for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and providing teachers of their subjects with good quality feedback. The coordinator for special educational needs, who has been in post for only a few months, works closely with the deputy head. Together they provide very good leadership and management which makes a significant contribution to pupils’ personal development and to raising the standards of pupils

with special educational needs. The school has responded wholeheartedly to national initiatives on literacy and numeracy and ensured their effective implementation.

40 The school enjoys a sound financial situation. The recent increase in the school roll has increased its income and the school has made use of this and of the grants available to improve learning resources, building up its stock of computers and improving its book stock, notably in the school library. The headteacher and the governors apply the principles of best value in their management of the school and subject coordinators are made aware of the need to achieve value for money when purchasing resources. There is now a good ratio of books and computers to pupils and sound financial planning means that further improvements will be possible in the coming years. The overall quality of the school's accommodation and learning resources is sound. The accommodation has been greatly improved since the last inspection with the introduction of indoor toilets, extensions to the building and a much improved security system. Most accommodation is suited to the purpose of teaching and learning and is enhanced by the attractive displays of suitable posters and pupils' work mounted in corridors and classrooms. However, the canteen where pupils take lunch, which stands apart from the main building, is old, noisy and unattractive and falls below an acceptable level. The music room, though of good size and bright, is difficult to heat and, constructed as it is mainly of wood, presents a fire risk; it needs to be assessed by a fire officer as a matter of some urgency. In view of the good quality of education that it provides and the efficient deployment of staff and teaching resources, the school gives good value for money.

41 The last inspection reported a number of concerns about the school's accommodation. The school's governors were aware of most of these and had been campaigning for improvements. Two key points were listed in the previous report, to control what was then the open access to the building, including the outside toilets and for the LEA and the school to produce an action plan for the site's development. In the intervening four years, these matters have been addressed.

42 Many classrooms were small and these have been extended to provide not only more working space but a much more pleasant environment including double glazing to conserve heating. Specialist teaching rooms are now better but where science is taught in form bases, the provision is inadequate. The PE changing rooms have been greatly improved and now have proper showering facilities. The outside toilets, used by all pupils except Year 5 and accessible to outsiders, have been done away with and replaced by indoor facilities within the main building. There is now a secure corridor to link the main building with the Year 5 base. These buildings are now properly protected by an effective entry system that limits access to those authorized to be on site. With the many improvements to the buildings came also the resurfacing of the main outside play area which is now good, although the second untreated area is barely satisfactory.

43 Improvements yet to be made are to the dining hall and the music room. The dining hall provides a very poor social environment. It looks dilapidated and is in poor decorative condition. It is very resonant so that reasonable levels of conversation between pupils are hugely amplified and the lack of an entrance lobby exacerbates the extreme coldness of the building due to its inadequate heating. The catering staff, who provide good quality meals and the pupils deserve something much better. The spacious music room is a separate and temporary wooden structure that has had some improvements made but it too is resonant and in the summer is reported to suffer from lack of sun blinds. There is only one exit and this presents a potential fire hazard about which the school should seek appropriate professional advice.

44 The administrative and clerical staff make a valuable contribution to the efficient running of the school on a day-to-day basis. In addition, the school building is very well maintained by the cleaning and caretaking staff who take great pride in the school's appearance. Classrooms and corridors are very clean and in the outside areas there is little graffiti or litter. Many minor building works have been

undertaken by the caretaker and this has improved several parts of the school - for example, sealing leaks in the roofs of the music room and kiln area and providing modern entrance doors. The public areas of the school benefit from well mounted displays of pupils' work and photographs of school activities. The general appearance of the school is now very attractive and contributes strongly to the school's positive ethos.

45 The previous report found the range of resources to support learning to be generally adequate for the requirements of the national curriculum despite a relatively small proportion of the school's budget being devoted to learning resources. The key point for action was to ensure continuing adequacy of provision generally whilst improving in particular the number of computers. This the school has done. In the last two years there has been a significant rise in expenditure on resources and this has improved levels so that in some subjects they are now good. The care with which resources are used and consequent reduction in replacement costs also contributes to the improved resource provision.

46 Resources in modern foreign languages and science, previously barely adequate at Key Stage 3 are now respectively good and adequate. They are adequate in most other subjects and good in history and RE. Only in geography are they inadequate, not allowing sufficiently for differentiation. The ratio of children to computers has been much improved from 19 to 1 before to 12 to 1 now. Much of this is due to the school's resourcefulness in acquiring computers from other establishments who were updating. This has not led to a reduction in quality, and in fact the school's machines are now better than at the time of the previous inspection. This kind of resourcefulness is evident in other areas, particularly in art and the school has also benefited from many local fundraising initiatives.

47 The school library has a good stock of fiction books appropriately grouped by age for the two key stages and pupils borrow them regularly. The non-fiction stock is less satisfactory and the quantity of books is very variable. The geography collection is very inadequate and the art section contains very little on two-dimensional art and artists. The last report praised the library as an environment that was conducive to work and study, but during the present inspection its use for research during the school day, apart from a few time-tabled lessons, appeared limited.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

48 In order to improve further the quality of its provision and raise standards, the headteacher, teachers and governors should:

- Use the analysis of assessment data to set targets for improvement for individual pupils (paragraphs 14, 19, 30, 66)
- Analyse the patterns and causes of pupils' absence in order to take further effective measures to improve pupils' attendance (paragraph 11)
- Provide parents with further information about their children's progress by introducing an additional report to parents earlier in the school year (paragraph 35)
- Introduce an effective and reliable system for monitoring teaching and learning throughout the school and ensuring good quality feedback to teachers (paragraphs 14, 54)
- Ensure that there is provision for a collective act of worship for every pupil each day (paragraph 22)

- In addition, the school should take action on safety matters drawn to their attention as well as on a number of less important issues referred to in this report (paragraphs 40, 42, 43, 72)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

115

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

25

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
4%	23%	39%	31%	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

	Y5 – Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	392	N/A
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	74	N/A

Special educational needs

	Y5– Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	6	N/A
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59	N/A

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	2

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	17
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	13

Attendance 92.4%

Authorised absence 8.6

	%
School data	8.6
National comparative data	6.0

Unauthorised absence 0.1

	%
School data	0.1
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	51	54	105

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	32	37	48
	Girls	48	33	51
	Total	80	70	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (67)	67 (57)	94 (55)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	33	39	40
	Girls	47	36	34
	Total	80	75	74
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (65)	71 (65)	70 (71)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (71)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	1
Black – other	
Indian	1
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	
White	388
Any other minority ethnic group	

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi		
Chinese		
White	2	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	20.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	19.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	13

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	89
---	----

Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	24.5
Key Stage 3	22.3
Key Stage 4	N/A

Financial information

Financial year	98/99
----------------	-------

	£
Total income	570288
Total expenditure	559786
Expenditure per pupil	1633
Balance brought forward from previous year	6627
Balance carried forward to next year	17129

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	392
Number of questionnaires returned	112

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	46	4	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	38	51	5	1	4
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	63	3	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	60	3	0	1
The teaching is good.	41	47	3	0	9
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	39	24	10	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	60	36	1	3	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	32	2	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	25	54	13	4	4
The school is well led and managed.	45	48	3	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	45	49	4	0	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	37	42	9	1	12

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

ENGLISH

49 In the 1999 national tests at the end of Key Stage 2, the proportion of pupils achieving level 4 or better – 76 per cent - was slightly higher than the national average of 70 per cent, and the proportion of those achieving level 5 or better – 22 per cent - was exactly the same as the national average. Based on the average points score per pupil, the school's results in English were close to the national average, exceeding the national average by 0.5 points. If the four years 1996-1999 are taken together, the performance of pupils is close to the national average, again exceeding the national average by 0.5 points. Compared with those in similar schools, the school's results are well above average. The trend in results has been similar to the national trend and over the years girls have done better than boys by a margin similar to that separating girls and boys nationally. In addition, the school's analysis of the results of former pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 indicates that the proportion achieving level 5 or above in 1999 was greater than the proportion estimated on the basis of the number of former pupils as a percentage of all those taking national tests at the end of this key stage.

50 Inspection evidence indicates that the standards achieved in English by the end of Key Stage 2 and Year 8 are above the national average. Standards of speaking and listening are about average. Pupils for the most part listen with good levels of attention and understanding to teachers and other pupils. They can talk reasonably well to a purpose and the higher attaining pupils can express their ideas clearly and make sustained contributions to discussions. Some pupils are inclined to mumble or talk too quietly in class discussions and some lower attaining pupils restrict their answers to single words or phrases. The general standard of reading is above average. Although there is a small minority of pupils with reading difficulties, most can decode print into sound competently and read with fluency, accuracy and good understanding. Higher attaining pupils tackle demanding texts with confidence and high levels of understanding. The standard of writing is above average. Pupils generally produce a good volume of writing in a variety of styles, including extended narratives, and higher attaining pupils can produce good quality prose which shows close attention to word choice and phrasing. Most pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 have handwriting styles that are fluent, joined and legible. Most use full stops and capital letters accurately and show an improving grasp of the spelling of common words and the use of paragraphs. Most can use a dictionary or thesaurus appropriately. By the end of Year 8, pupils show an increased control of complex sentences and higher attaining pupils reflect a good breadth of reading in their ability to organize their writing clearly and in their imaginative and precise use of vocabulary. The progress made by most pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.

51 The quality of most of the teaching is good. In Key Stage 2, much of the teaching is influenced by the literacy strategy and pupils develop a sound understanding of words like "setting", "plot" and "character" and have a secure grasp of the parts of speech. Teachers make good use of the overhead projector and the board to help pupils attend to particular features of the language or to focus closely on specific words or punctuation marks. Pupils in this key stage are beginning to understand that language is written for an audience and that the needs of the audience need to be kept in mind when writing. Teachers use questions well to elicit information from pupils and to ensure that their understanding is keeping pace with the lesson. On occasion, teachers fail to draw information or opinions from the pupils and tell them too much, thereby overlooking an opportunity to make pupils think for themselves. Good provision is made for pupils with special educational needs. In Year 5, a group of about fifteen pupils with special educational needs is withdrawn for intense work to assist their reading and spelling and in other year groups pupils with special needs receive a good deal of individual attention from the class teacher and the support teacher.

52 In Key Stage 3, a good deal of the teaching is based on projects such as the sinking of the Titanic or “The Men in Black”. Teachers help pupils extend their understanding of the features of different types of writing, such as mystery writing or the writing in advertisements, by presenting them with a range of examples drawn from books, magazines or newspapers. Lessons are carefully planned, with resources to hand, and teachers make timely interventions to help to sustain pupils’ concentration and to maintain the pace of work. Teachers have good subject knowledge and the quality of work done under the auspices of the literacy strategy, which has now been introduced into Key Stage 3, is supported by teachers’ understanding of phonics and knowledge about language.

53 Pupils respond positively to the subject. They enjoy activities which help them gain increasing control of the conventions of spelling and punctuation as they move through the school and appreciate the conceptual tools which enable them to indicate the features of different styles of writing and to recognise how writing is made interesting. Teachers ensure that writing tasks in particular are carefully prepared in advance so that pupils come to these tasks with a planned structure and content and a range of vocabulary relevant to the topic. Pupils are used to writing up their finished products using a word processor but they make less use of computers for composition and the process of writing itself. Pupils’ writing is usually marked with care and teachers often make useful suggestions for improvement; the school’s system of grading different aspects of pupils’ work, however, is not consistently applied. Homework is assigned regularly but on some occasions no homework is set for English and the pupils – and their parents - are not sure why this is so. Pupils keep records of the books they have read but there is an absence diagnostic “running records” of pupils’ reading, which would help teachers to address the needs of weaker readers with more precision than at present. Teachers help to create an appropriate learning environment and an “English flavour” by mounting displays of pupils’ writing on the walls of all classrooms and adjacent corridor areas as well as suitable posters and prompts encouraging accurate spelling and punctuation. Teachers know pupils well, including those for whom English is an additional language, and make good use of this when planning lessons to ensure that the needs of individuals are catered for. Pupils for the most part concentrate well and stay on task till the end of the lesson; in the few lessons seen where pupils’ concentration lapsed and some were inclined to chatter and waste time, teachers were quick to intervene and ensure good standards of behaviour.

54 Teachers’ planning is assisted by a thoughtful and detailed scheme of work. Teachers often plan in pairs or small teams within year groups, sharing ideas and approaches; this contributes to the quality of teaching and helps to raise standards. The use of a group of “specialist” teachers after Year 5 also contributes to the good standards of teaching in the subject. The subject coordinator is knowledgeable and experienced and has been able to work supportively with teachers in Key Stage 2. However, there is no system for the regular monitoring of the quality of teaching and learning throughout the school and the provision of good quality feedback to teachers, which might help to raise standards further. Work in the department has been assisted by the recent purchase of new books, including a broad range of children’s fiction which is stored in the school library. There is a need for more of this type of fiction, including more “easy readers” for younger pupils and reluctant readers, and for some of the older books in the library to be discarded. The library has also gained some new computers linked to the Internet. The healthy focus of much of the work in the department on literature and poetry helps to ensure that the subject makes a valuable contribution to the pupils’ spiritual and moral as well as their cultural development.

MATHEMATICS

55 Standards are sound throughout the school. Pupils enter the school with standards in mathematics in line with those expected. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 2 their attainment is in line with the national average. Their attainment is above average for similar schools.

56 At the last inspection, attainment was significantly above the national average. The results in the 1999 National Curriculum test at the end of Key Stage 2 were a little below the national average. Standards have been consistent over the last three years. Standards are not as good as those in English and science. Standards have improved since the last inspection, but not as well as improvement nationally. There is no significant difference between the attainment of girls and boys.

57 Attainment by the time the pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 is in line with those expected, with some higher attaining pupils achieving standards above national expectations.

58 The work seen during the inspection in Key Stages 2 and 3 covers all the National Curriculum attainment targets and reflects the standards expected. Work with number is a good feature of pupils' learning, especially the 'mental maths' used in Key Stage 2. This work also contributes to the development of pupils' speaking and listening skills. Pupils in Year 5 add and subtract to three digits. In Year 6 they understand the alternative ways of working with three digits, and add decimal numbers. Pupils in Year 7 know how to use different methods to add and subtract, using all ten digits. In Year 8, pupils construct algebraic expressions, transform equations and find unknown values.

59 Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are good. They are very good in Key Stage 2. They are also very good for the higher attaining pupils in Key stage 3. In classes pupils are attentive, and respond well to established and clear classroom routines. Most behave well in lessons. They show interest in their work. Many are well motivated and work hard.

60 The quality of teaching is good. Some very good and excellent teaching was seen and this is in line with the quality of teaching seen at the last inspection. The positive qualities of most lessons outweigh the few negative aspects. About one in two lessons are good, or better. About one in four lessons are very good, or better. Good and very good teaching is shared across both key stages, but it is most effective in Key Stage 2. The most effective teaching was often seen with the higher attaining pupils. The least effective teaching was seen in both key stages.

61 Teachers have prepared for the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy well. Most teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and provide clear explanations, usually pitched at a suitable level for their classes. In the best lessons effective behaviour management helps to establish a classroom atmosphere that encourages learning, especially for the higher attaining pupils. Where control is less secure, as in a Year 8 lesson, the pace of the lesson falls, particularly for the lower attaining older pupils. Lesson planning is usually good, making effective use of the detailed subject plans for all classes. Opportunities to challenge the higher attaining pupils are taken. For example, one Year 5 teacher's effective introduction of a challenging task actually resulted in a gasp of excitement from the class. Pupils' work is usually marked well. Assessment is good and regular tests are used to check progress and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to carry out self-assessments. This is done particularly well by the older pupils, and now needs to include specific targets. Assessment is used well to place pupils into appropriate teaching groups. Activities are not always well chosen for pupils of differing attainments, especially for the lower attaining pupils. For example, a Year 5 teacher set number work which was too easy for many, and then had to hastily revise what she asked them to do. In the best lessons a very good pace is maintained, with effective questioning, employed to generate discussion and to check understanding before moving on to the next step. There is not a reliance on worksheets or textbooks, but when they are used they are of good quality and well chosen. Good attention is given to the way in which pupils of all attainments present their work. Homework is set regularly and helps reinforce learning. Relationships are good.

62 Learning is good overall. It is often good in Key Stage 2 and for the higher attaining pupils in Key Stage 3. Pupils of all levels of prior attainment, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress at the least. The higher attaining pupils make good progress. They respond well to the opportunities to show independence in the way in which they choose to present their work. All pupils acquire a secure foundation in all aspects of mathematics, and their skills in numeracy develop well, especially in Key Stage 2. They are therefore able to use their mathematical skills as required in other subjects. Most pupils come to lessons well prepared and expecting to work hard, and enjoy good relationships with their teachers.

63 Pupils use their skills soundly when required in other subjects. In their work in history they consider the number of years since times past. In physical education they measure performance, recording their results and best scores. In French they use exchange rates, and while role playing with partners, charge for a book and ask for the right change. In science pupils make accurate measurements at Key Stage 2, find average values to reflect varying results and represent these on charts and bar graphs. This develops at Key Stage 3, with pupils using line graphs appropriately.

64 The National Numeracy Strategy has been successfully introduced at Key Stage 2. The mathematics curriculum meets statutory requirements. There is a good balance between the different attainment targets, and practical and investigative methods are integrated well through the detailed planning. The provision of resources is satisfactory. Accommodation is good. The use of information technology is satisfactory overall, with some good work in some classes. For example, pupils use spreadsheets and word-processing in their work on measurements, and to construct weather databases, developing their knowledge and understanding about data handling. Classrooms and corridors have effective displays, which include the work of some famous mathematicians. The displays challenge pupils to solve problems and encourage the use of the Internet. The head of department continues to provide good leadership, as he has done since the last inspection. Support for teachers is good. The monitoring of teaching and pupils' work is good, though target setting is only satisfactory.

65 Although results have not improved since the last inspection in comparison with the national averages, the subject is moving forward at a good pace. It is a well-led department. Teaching is still sound or better, and it is still often very good or better. Assessment is still good, and it is getting better. Accommodation and resources have improved.

66 In order to raise standards, the school should develop the expertise of all staff, especially in Key Stage 2, to raise teaching standards to the best; review the methods used to motivate the lower attaining pupils to sustain their interest, especially in Key Stage 3; refine the way it places pupils into groups of different attainments to make the most of the expertise of the very good teachers of mathematics; set clear targets with each pupil which are then shared with their parents; and monitor the development of numeracy in all the subjects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

67 Attainment in the national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was above average in science. Almost all pupils achieved the expected level 4 and a third of the pupils taking the test went on to reach level 5, compared with just over a quarter nationally. These results are well above those achieved by schools with a similar proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals. Results at Key Stage 2 have risen over the last few years and are usually better than those most schools achieve, but there was a significant dip in 1998 when they were below average. Pupils do not complete Key Stage 3 at Monkseaton, so there are no test scores for comparison. In lessons, most of the Key Stage 3 pupils are working at the levels expected for their age.

68 Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in their understanding of science and in their ability to carry out investigations. By Year 6 they have a good understanding of how to make a test fair. They talk confidently about controlling variables and were able to demonstrate their grasp of the principle in their work on dissolving jelly; groups took great care to keep all relevant factors constant, for example timing the rate at which they stirred the solution. Pupils' knowledge of science is also good at this stage. They appreciate the need for a continuous path for electricity in a circuit and can explain the differences between series and parallel circuits. Most pupils explain food tests clearly and understand how the animals and plants involved depend upon each other. Many pupils at this stage are also able to apply their scientific knowledge in new areas - for example when discussing the water cycle they could offer good suggestions for rain water being relatively pure although it has come from the salty sea. Most pupils use correct scientific vocabulary and express their ideas clearly. They understand line graphs and bar charts and use them to show what they have found in investigations.

69 The teaching at Key Stage 2 is good. Pupils are taught in their classes in Year 5 and in broad ability groups at Year 6 so that several staff are involved, few of whom are science specialists. However, they plan very effectively together to ensure that all teachers have a good understanding of the science that is being taught and the activities the pupils will carry out. Lessons are carefully planned, although some stress what the pupils will learn, whereas others just say what they will do. In one Year 5, class this led to a less successful lesson than others in the year. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject and this encourages the pupils to find the work interesting and even exciting. They respond well and work hard in lessons. Teachers use questions effectively to stimulate the pupils in tests and to make sure that they understand the work. Pupils' replies are often thoughtful and they ask questions of their own. Discussion is encouraged in most classes and this helps pupils to develop their understanding of science as well as extending their own skills.

70 The picture is less positive at Key Stage 3. Pupils' understanding of science does not move as rapidly as during their first two years at the school, and many areas of knowledge are much the same as they were at the end of Key Stage 2 - for example pupils know about parallel and series circuits in electricity but even able pupils do not know how the flow of current could be changed or how the direction of flow would affect a motor. The pupils currently in Year 8 are the group whose performance was below average at the end of Key Stage 2 but they should have moved on more rapidly than they have and similar problems are also noticeable with Year 7.

71 All but one group in Key Stage 3 are taught by the science co-ordinator. Unfortunately, due to an injury, she was absent during the inspection and so none of her teaching was seen. Exercise books from her pupils contain a significant amount of unfinished work and the standard is often lower than that produced by the same pupils in other subjects. The laboratory, in which most of the Key Stage 3 science teaching takes place, has a considerable amount of graffiti on the back of benches, when there is virtually none elsewhere in the school. The lack of monitoring of pupils' work and management of their behaviour are likely to have a strong influence on the pupils' relatively slow progress in Key Stage 3. During the inspection, classes were taken successfully by a temporary teacher and teaching was satisfactory or good.

72 The subject is supported by documentation, produced in accordance with the school's agreed format. The Qualifications and Curriculum Authorities document has been adapted as the scheme of work but this has not been adjusted to reflect the different grouping of pupils through the school. Curriculum planning is most successful at Key Stage 2 where the teachers work well together, deciding how to interpret the scheme for their different classes. The laboratory is large enough but is cluttered. Unsuitable sinks have been installed which have reacted with some of the chemicals used in science and the benches are badly defaced. Overall, in its present condition it does not provide a good base for teaching science.

ART

73 The good standards noted in the previous report have been maintained. At the end of Key Stage 2 and of Year 8 the standards achieved by pupils overall are above average, with a significant amount of work being of high or very high quality. In lessons seen, three-dimensional work in Year 5 is average and that in Year 6 is above average. At Key Stage 3, two-dimensional work is above average overall. Two and three-dimensional work on display is very good, especially from Key Stage 3 pupils. Progress across the four years in the school is good. In lessons lower attaining pupils cope well with assigned tasks although usually at a lower level of skill in handling media. Higher attaining pupils produce very good work. Pupils' practical work shows that the understanding of the work of other artists, not well developed at the time of the last inspection, is now much improved.

74 Overall, pupils' attitudes to their lessons are good and in most lessons very good. Behaviour is usually very good and pupils' good self-discipline manifests itself particularly when handling messy materials and clearing up at the end of lesson. Pupils' personal development is well supported through the many individual and collaborative tasks they undertake.

75 The quality of teaching overall is very good. In all lessons it is at least good and there are many very good features. Demonstrations are expert and initial inputs setting out tasks are very clear with a good focus on technical language. Medium and short term planning are very good and the execution of these plans through the efficient organization of materials is very effective. Expectations of pupils are high and tasks set are both technically and imaginatively challenging. Teaching methods are varied and generally appropriate. The management of pupils is excellent. Time and resources are used well and there is good on-the-spot feedback to pupils as they work. Suitable homework is planned and appropriate time is given in lessons to setting it.

76 Pupils' learning benefits from the very good teaching. Pupils are enabled to master new skills quickly and all achieve success. They generally sustain their interest very well but a few in Year 8 were experiencing difficulty in comprehending the nature of an intellectually demanding task and so were less motivated. The pace of work in lessons is very good and well maintained by the teacher's frequent and appropriate interventions with the whole class. Pupils can talk clearly about what they are doing, showing interest and understanding.

77 The curriculum is generally broad and balanced and meets statutory requirements. There is a good balance of two and three-dimensional work and a good range of art media is used. Although more opportunities are now offered for pupils to study the work of other artists, the study of art from other, particularly non-Western, cultures is limited and should be extended. An effective system is used to record assessments of pupils which then influence curriculum planning. The department is well led and benefits from the head of department's membership of the senior management team. The accommodation is rather cramped. Partly due to the head of department's considerable resourcefulness, the stock of consumable materials is adequate. The department's attention was drawn to a potential health and safety issue over the large guillotine and it is important that this is constantly monitored. The department plays a powerful role in enhancing the ethos of the school through its many excellent displays in the public areas of the building and the way in which these promote the work of its pupils.

DESIGN & TECHNOLOGY

78 Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is broadly in line with that of pupils in most schools. The attainment of the oldest pupils in the school is close to the expectations for their age overall; their skills

in problem solving are good, but the accuracy with which they work and cut wood is of a lower standard than it should be. In previous years, some of the oldest pupils have produced very high quality design folders and the textiles work on display from last year is well designed and made. Overall standards at Key Stage 3 are much the same as they were at the last inspection.

79 The curriculum at Key Stage 2 has been re-organised, following national requirements to increase the time for literacy and numeracy. This has resulted in the time for design and technology being reduced from two to one period per week, with pupils in Year 5 being taught as a whole class rather than in smaller groups. The activities the pupils carry out have been revised in response to these changes. The department is aware of the need to review the success of the new programme and plans to introduce further revisions to match the introduction of the new National Curriculum orders in September 2000. At the moment much of the work being done at Year 5 is too simple to develop skills that the pupils already have in making things and does not develop their skills in technological design sufficiently. The current activity involves using scissors and card, re-enforcing skills such as scoring rather than introducing anything new. Planning has not identified what the pupils will learn from the activity and a significant proportion of the time available will be used for decorating the product. Work in Year 6 has a sharper focus on pupils' development in design and technology and pupils meet a good range of designing and making tasks, reaching appropriate levels of competence in using a range of materials. Pupils benefit from using the workshops in Year 6 and rapidly become confident in using the tools and machinery.

80 In Key Stage 3, pupils have a double period each week in design and technology and each class benefits from being taught by two specialist teachers. During the two years they spend in the key stage they meet a good range of materials and are constantly challenged with interesting design problems. Skills are often introduced through short, focussed practical tasks and then developed in more extended projects which include considerable elements of design. By the end of the key stage pupils base their designs on an understanding of the properties of materials and how they can be worked. Designs are imaginative and pupils draw well and describe their ideas clearly in their design folders. Pupils use hand tools and powered tools confidently. They overcome problems particularly well but when making joints in wood the pupils in Year 7 were inaccurate in marking out and cutting. This would not prevent the model futon that they are making from working, but would detract from its overall quality.

81 Teaching in design and technology is good overall and often very good at Key Stage 3. The two teachers involved at this stage work together very well as a team. Their enthusiasm and expertise make the subject special for the pupils. As a result, pupils show a very high level of commitment, behaviour in their lessons is excellent and there is a purposeful atmosphere in which pupils enjoy making progress. Teachers make use of excellent relationships to encourage pupils to design imaginatively. The strong emphasis on problem solving could be extended into high expectations of pupils' craft skills in woodwork. Teaching in Year 5 is more difficult because of the larger groups and less successful because the teacher is less focused on what the pupils need to learn.

82 The subject is conducted effectively although there is a need to review the arrangements at Key Stage 2. The two specialist rooms provide ample space for the subject, but storage is limited.

GEOGRAPHY

83 Since the last inspection there have been changes in the amount of time spent teaching Geography and this has had a negative impact on the breadth and balance within the subject, particularly at Key Stage 2. Scrutiny of pupils' work reveals an overemphasis on the imparting of knowledge in Key Stage 2, with insufficient emphasis on the development of an investigative approach. There was also evidence of unsatisfactory differentiation in Years 5 and 6.

84 In Key Stage 3 pupils' work there is a more appropriate balance between the development of knowledge and skills and by the end of Year 8 pupils have had an appropriate range of learning experiences.

85 Standards in the lessons observed were satisfactory in both key stages. In Key Stage 2, pupils are able to respond to questions by justifying their observations about the location of northern rivers on a map. Year 6 pupils demonstrate a satisfactory knowledge of key words relating to river features. However, their understanding of the process of a river developing meanders was less secure.

86 In Key Stage 3 pupils' understanding of the similarities and differences between Brazilian rainforest societies and those of urban environments is sound. They are able to find information from maps and recognise features of the landscape of Brazil. However opportunities to obtain information from a range of secondary sources are limited by a narrow range of resources in some lessons.

87 In Key Stage 2 pupils' learning is satisfactory overall and good in two out of five lessons. Pupils make good progress in paired and group activities where there are opportunities to clarify their thinking about the physical processes of river development through discussion. Their knowledge of the names and locations of local rivers is improved through whole class discussion followed by individual tasks. On occasions, undifferentiated resources hinder the progress of less able pupils in analysing evidence and communicating simple conclusions about the local area.

88 In Key Stage 3 pupils' learning is good in three out of five lessons and satisfactory in the other two. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of climate and weather. Learning in some lessons is aided by displays that provide a useful point of reference for teaching and learning. Pupils are able to talk with confidence about group research activities by referring to work on display. In Key Stage 3, pupils' library skills are underdeveloped and pupils have difficulty in accessing information.

89 In Years 5 to 7, time for the teaching of geography is limited to one lesson per week and at present the full range of the programmes of study is not being covered in appropriate depth.

90 Teaching in geography is good in four out of five lessons in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory in the other one. Lessons have appropriate structure and introductions are lively and interactive. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and the use of appropriate vocabulary, which enhances learning. Teachers often make links to pupils' own experiences and this helps to put this learning into a meaningful context. Marking is variable and on occasions unsatisfactory, as it does not provide guidance to pupils about the next steps of learning. In Year 5, pupils benefit from fieldwork but this is not a feature of teaching in Year 6.

91 In Key Stage 3 teaching is good or very good in four out of five lessons. Teachers make good use of introductions to share learning intentions and of plenary sessions to review learning. Teachers use a good range of open and closed questions. A number of lessons make good use of the school's weather station and this enables IT to be integrated into learning within the geography curriculum. Local studies provide a good stimulus for the teaching of mapwork skills and provide real contexts to develop research skills. In two lessons the teacher made good use of an opportunity to discuss moral issues relating to male and female roles in Amerindian societies.

92 Links with the local high school have greatly enhanced the resources available for teaching in Year 8. In one lesson the teacher made very good use of IT to demonstrate the annotation of photographs.

93 The flow of assessment information between Year 8 and 9 facilitates the transition to the local High School and there is some joint moderation of pupil's work. In Key Stage 2 the use of assessment information to inform teaching is satisfactory and although short term planning is often good there are inconsistencies in the clarity of learning objectives.

94 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good in all lessons. They are well behaved, attentive and work co-operatively in group and paired work. Pupils contribute positively in question and answer sessions at the beginning and end of lessons. Pupils concentrate well and there are high levels of on-task activities. When pupils are given opportunities to work independently, they demonstrate a good work ethic and respond well to deadlines.

95 The geography co-ordinator provides good overall leadership for the work of the department. Monitoring of teaching and regular meetings within Key Stage 3 are good features of the work of the department and the co-ordinator has a good understanding of strengths and weaknesses. However there are weaknesses in the co-ordination of geography at Key Stage 2. A lack of monitoring and joint moderation of work has contributed to some inconsistencies in teaching and learning. Key Stage 2 teachers are no longer able to rely on an integrated humanities approach to provide the breadth and balance of learning and the range of activities should be audited to ensure compliance with the relevant programmes of study.

96 The range of resources in geography is unsatisfactory. There is an insufficient range of materials at Key Stage 2 to allow for differentiation to meet the needs of less able pupils. In Key Stage 3 the range of non-fiction library materials is insufficient to allow pupils to develop research skills at higher levels.

HISTORY

97 Standards in history are good at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 8. Pupils in Year 5 study the basic elements of archaeology in preparation for the study of ancient Egypt. This is followed by a solid foundation in the study of how history is made by using primary and secondary sources. Pupils learn where and how to get evidence to gain an understanding of ancient cultures. In Year 6, pupils examine sources such as portraits to gain a knowledge of the Tudor period.

98 Research methods and investigation are used further in Key Stage 3 to find out what life was like in the Roman Empire and to look at what working conditions for children were like during the Industrial Revolution. In studying the Industrial Revolution good links are made with local history. There is a good emphasis on learning facts as well as learning the skills of research and analysis in all lessons. Pupils are expected to learn the names of the Tudor kings and queens in the correct chronological order and to remember facts about the Roman Empire and Ancient Egypt. They are given opportunities to look at the subject in depth. They know that first hand sources are more reliable than secondary sources, and why this is so. They begin their history studies with a correct understanding of the nature of the subject. They can analyse source material in some depth and see the significance of particular sources such as writings in hieroglyphs, as early as Year 5. They can use knowledge well to make creative and imaginative responses, speculating on areas that are not fully defined. Pupils write accurate accounts of past events with good reference to the sources given to them. Higher attaining pupils can gather evidence to assemble a narrative. They know that events can be interpreted in different ways. Once the teacher has given information and guidance, the majority of pupils can work independently and use initiative and imagination. The correct use of language is well promoted.

99 Pupils with special educational needs follow the same learning process and cope well with the demands of the lessons. They get individual help as appropriate and make good progress. They are given specific support to help with written answers.

100 The quality of teaching is good in both key stages, with approximately one in three lessons being very good. Teachers use interesting and well-illustrated resources to captivate and motivate their pupils. They explain work clearly. Pupils are taught to use a range of methods to record information such as creating a guide book or using diagrams or lists. Teachers have very good class-management skills, and discipline is maintained with apparent ease. Assessment is done on specific units of work. Close links are maintained with the upper schools to ensure that they have adequate information on pupils' standards. Information Technology is used for specific tasks such as newspaper reports and there are computer resources on ancient lands and local history. Pupils are taught how to research and think for themselves. There is a good range of teaching methods used. There are very good classroom displays associated with the work being done and these are used to good effect in promoting learning.

101 The subject is well co-ordinated by a specialist teacher who makes a good contribution to the planning and gives good support to class teachers. There were no weaknesses identified at the last inspection. Good standards have been maintained. There has been an improvement in teaching. In a few lessons high attaining pupils do not make enough use of the good range of high quality books in the teachers' library. This good provision for research and learning needs to be promoted and developed further.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY.

102 Information technology (IT) is taught as a discrete subject in both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 3. There are also elements of IT in the personal, social and health education programme and in subjects across the curriculum.

103 Compared to the standards achieved by pupils of the same age nationally, attainment is above average at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8. There are no significant differences in attainment between boys and girls. There are also no significant differences in attainment relevant to pupils' various levels of ability. Pupils with special educational needs achieve good standards and make good progress. Other subjects of the curriculum make a good contribution towards raising attainment in information technology. However, the use of information technology to support and enrich the curriculum in mathematics is inconsistent.

104 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils can use the keyboard and mouse competently and can word-process and edit their work using a range of fonts and sizes. Year 6 pupils, for example, produce interesting extended writing in English and in religious education lessons as part of the "Who Am I?" unit of work, using a range of fonts and sizes. Pupils in Year 5 are able to produce colourful menus of their favourite foods and to do project work on Ancient Egypt, creating pictures and text of different size, colour and style. Pupils are able to access information from compact discs and can produce directions for a programmable robot. Pupils make good use of computers in art lessons to produce basic shapes and patterns for painting and colouring. This provides a good base for the work to follow in Key Stage 3.

105 By the end of Year 8, pupils have a good knowledge of how computers work in the wider world. By using commercially designed programmes they can use computers to make predictions about what will happen in a given set of circumstances, but this is not a strength of the information technology curriculum. The school is aware of this and new programmes are being purchased to overcome any deficiencies. Pupils in Year 8 research and produce good biographies of famous people especially those who were born locally. In modern languages lessons pupils create descriptions of

“monsters” using programmes which allow them to add accents and pictures. Pupils are able to assemble data and present it in a variety of ways. Year 7 pupils, for instance, are able to create good graphs of weather statistics in their geography lessons, and of the results of studies into lung capacity in science.

106 Taken across all subjects, the quality of teaching in information technology is satisfactory. In taught lessons, the quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in half the lessons it is good. A feature of the good teaching is careful planning to develop pupils’ skills with computers and other equipment. A range of resources is well deployed to provide an interesting range of activities to challenge pupils at all levels of attainment. Good management of pupils is also a strength of the teaching. Teachers manage a minority of pupils whose behaviour is potentially challenging with a high level of skill and good humour. This is a strong contributory factor to the very good relationships between pupils and their teachers. Behaviour in lessons is very good and pupils use equipment with care. Teachers have good subject knowledge and are able to help pupils if they have difficulties. This increases pupils’ confidence in their teachers and enables them to get on with their work without any time being wasted. While teachers are always ready to help pupils in difficulties, they also achieve a good balance between help and allowing pupils to develop their independent learning skills. In other subjects, with the exception of mathematics, where insufficient use is made of information technology, the quality of teaching varies from teacher to teacher rather than from subject to subject. Some teachers are clearly less confident than others and there is a need for further staff development to bring the level of all teaching up to that of the best.

107 The previous inspection drew attention to under developed use of information technology in science and modern languages. This has been much improved. The scheme of work has been revised and provides a consistent and integrated programme for the pupils. The accommodation for information technology has been considerably improved and is now very good. The development of resources for the subject has kept pace with the development of the computer suites and is also very good. At present there are no written reports provided for parents about pupils’ attainment and progress. There are good assessment procedures in place and these are used to track pupils’ attainment, skills development and progress. At present the data provided is not used to discuss pupils’ strengths and weaknesses with them or to set individual targets for improvement. The subject fully meets the statutory requirements. The governors, the subject coordinator and the senior management of the school have shown very good leadership in developing the subject and in managing the changes necessary to bring the development about. The school has clear priorities for the future in order to continue the work done so far. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection.

MODERN LANGUAGES

108 At the end of Key Stage 2, the attainment of the pupils in French is average compared that of pupils of the same age nationally, but some pupils achieve above the average in speaking. At the end of year 8, pupils generally achieve the average level or above in French and German; a few high attaining pupils achieve well above the average in speaking and writing, but the standard of the lower attainers in French is lower than it ought to be. Good use of French and German during the lessons and frequent use of the cassette recorders have improved listening skills.

109 There has been much improvement since the last inspection. Many opportunities are now provided for the consolidation and personalised use of French and German and the provision of course books and reading material has enriched and supported greatly the pupils’ learning.

110 Teaching at both key stages is generally satisfactory or good, with one lesson judged to be good and one lesson unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3. Generally teachers use French and German well during

the lessons; they have high expectations, challenge pupils well and use varied teaching methods appropriate to the age and ability of the pupils, with consistent personal or written support for the less able. Occasionally there is a need for the most able pupils to work more independently. Teachers manage the pupils very sensitively and use time and resources well. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is insufficient use of French by the teacher and the pupils and the pace is too slow. Learning at Key Stage 2 is satisfactory but for a few pupils it is good in all language skills. At Key Stage 3, learning in German and French is generally sound because of the planned continuity of the course and of the teaching. The most linguistically able pupils make very good progress in writing because of the intensive practice with vocabulary and structures. Speaking could be further improved in certain instances if pupils relied less heavily on written prompts. The learning of the least able pupils in Year 8 in French is unsatisfactory because the pupils are under-challenged, answer only in single words and tediously repeat too few items of vocabulary and structure. However in other classes, pupils with special educational needs make appropriate progress because of the good match of the activities to their learning; they often make good progress in speaking.

111 Pupils' attitudes are good at Key Stage 2 and satisfactory or very good at Key Stage 3. All pupils show interest in their work, behave well, respect each other and collaborate well when working in pairs. Concentration is usually sustained, although there were occasional lapses during the closing minutes of the lesson.

112 The subject is well led. The introduction of German for all pupils, the annual visit to France and the occasional use of video-conferencing with the high school pupils enrich the pupils' learning. Monitoring and evaluating pupils' performance is very effective and liaison with the high schools is very good.

MUSIC

113 The good achievement reported in the previous inspection has been maintained. Standards achieved by pupils at Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8 are above average overall, with some work, especially in performing, of a high or very high standard. The previous report noted a lack of enthusiasm for singing especially at Key Stage 3. Singing is a regular feature of lessons and assemblies in all years and is now consistently good. There is good progress in performing and appraising and there are some good notated pupils' compositions in their folders. Computer composition is restricted in quality by the limitations of the currently installed programme. Of the pupils with special educational needs, the less able musicians are enabled to experience success in music whilst the talented and gifted achieve good standards in both class and instrumental lessons. Very good standards are reached in the many extra-curricular performing groups.

114 Pupils' attitudes are now uniformly positive in all activities, ranging from good to excellent. Their commitment in extra-curricular activities is excellent. Behaviour is usually very good and pupils' self-discipline enables unsupervised small group work to be successful. Pupils' personal development is very well supported in all aspects of music provision.

115 The quality of teaching overall is very good with some outstanding features. High expectations lead to challenging tasks being set in the well-planned lessons. Methods are usually appropriate but the department has not fully adjusted to the reduced teaching time and occasionally too much lesson content is attempted. Pupils are very well managed and relationships between teacher and pupils are excellent. Very good use is made of the spacious accommodation. Day-to-day assessment is very good, there is good feedback to pupils and many extra-curricular groups are well coached. Instrumental teaching is variable in quality, ranging from unsatisfactory to good. The best makes positive use of the group

teaching possibilities whereas the least good is ineffective, offering each pupil very limited individual teaching time.

116 Pupils' learning is similarly very good overall. Pupils are enabled to acquire knowledge and understanding through practical activities, and they can use computer technology with confidence to develop composing skills. In class music, pupils are well motivated and put a lot into their work. The previous inspection noted insufficient time given to pupils' discussion of music heard. This has been rectified and they appraise what they hear confidently. It also reported that older pupils found concentration difficult. Again this is no longer the case, Year 8 boys as well as girls sustaining their interest and involvement. The pace of work in lessons, aided by the teaching approach, is brisk. In instrumental lessons pupils are well motivated and, even in the least effective, pupils' commitment ensures that they practise well and make progress.

117 The curriculum offers a wide range of activities that fully meets statutory requirements and is of good quality. Assessments are well recorded and used effectively to influence curriculum planning. The subject is well led but the department, despite its successes, is somewhat isolated and the school needs to take more steps to counter this. The accommodation was the subject of criticism in the last report but some of its defects have since been remedied. It is very resonant and should, when possible, be carpeted. Resources are generally adequate but the acquisition of CDs, song-books with bass parts and more keyboards with full-size keys would be beneficial. Music continues to play an important role in the school and has considerable impact on the lives of its pupils.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

118 By the end of Key Stage 2, standards are at least satisfactory and are good in two out of five lessons. High levels of achievement are evident in all lessons. High levels of achievement are particularly evident in athletics, where pupils are involved in assessment and evaluation of performance and demonstrate very good understanding of the importance of the warm up and cool down phases of exercise. The teaching of sending and receiving skills within small-sided games of hockey is good and pupils' have a healthy attitude to competition.

119 By the end of Year 8, levels of attainment are above national expectations. In dance, pupils are able to recall previously learned sequences and are able to express feelings through gesture. Pupils demonstrate high levels of performance in jumping activities and make very good progress in standing triple jump, high jump and relay changeover technique. Pupils' learning is always good and is very good in eight out of ten lessons.

120 Teachers' commitment to extra-curricular activities is outstanding and teaching and learning within extra-curricular activities contribute to the overall high achievement in physical education across the school. There is an excellent range of activities at lunchtime and before and after school. Standards achieved in these activities is very high. In basketball, pupils' passing, ball control and use of space are very good. Awareness of tactics and support for the ball carrier are very highly developed. In gymnastics, body tension and smooth linking of movements exceed expectations across the age ranges.

121 Teaching is very good overall and is excellent in twenty per cent of lessons. Teachers demonstrate very good subject knowledge and have high expectations. Group activities are well organised and levels of differentiation are very good. Support for less able pupils through individual intervention, focused observation and feedback is very good.

122 Teachers' use of high quality demonstrations enhances learning, enabling pupils to discuss features of effective performance in games, dance and athletics. A very positive feature of all lessons

was the quality of dialogue during the warm up phase where pupils' knowledge of muscle groups was good. Within teaching references are made to local sports clubs and pupils are encouraged to pursue a physically active lifestyle outside of school. Short term planning is good and contributes to the clarity of objectives and pace of lessons. In a small number of lessons pupils' skills in evaluation could have been developed further.

123 Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good. Levels of participation are high and provision for non-participants' learning is good. Non-participants are engaged in guided observation and take part by recording and evaluating outcomes. Pupils enjoy physical education and are enthusiastic when talking about the subject. They co-operate well together in games and athletics and persevere with challenging tasks, for example in athletics and dance.

124 Leadership in physical education is very good. Schemes of Work are of good quality and overall planning is good. Informal monitoring by the subject co-ordinator is effective and team-teaching contributes to high standards. Assessment within the subject is good with pupils' self-assessment in athletics being a positive feature. Professional development within the department is given a very high priority and there is evidence of training having a positive impact on the quality of teaching.

125 Physical education contributes to the moral, social, cultural and spiritual development of pupils through healthy competition, group interaction, awareness of sport in the wider community and by pupils' self esteem being raised through positive feedback from teachers and peers. Resources are satisfactory and the changing facilities have improved considerably since the last inspection. The ethos within the department is excellent and the subject makes a very positive contribution to the life of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

126 Standards in religious education are above average in comparison with the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 8.

127 In Year 5 pupils have a good basic knowledge of the main features of Buddhism and have a good understanding of how a Buddhist festival is celebrated. In Year 6 pupils can consider the fact of death and their own emotional responses to loss, as at the death of a pet. This is well linked to preparation for a study of Easter and the concept of soul and life after death.

128 In Year 7 pupils gain a basic knowledge of Islam and understand the importance of the Qur'an and other holy books of Islam in guiding people on how to live their lives. They can examine the similarities and differences between Christianity and Islam. In Year 8 pupils have a basic knowledge of Hinduism and some understanding of how the festivals are celebrated. They know the story of the Ramayana and can enact passages so that they have practical experience of how this story is told and enacted during the Buddhist festival.

129 Pupils' work throughout the year shows an appropriate breadth and balance of knowledge of the main elements of the major world faiths. They are able to make personal comments and evaluate moral and social issues when discussing topics such as caring for each other, coping with loss and war.

130 Pupils with special educational needs are given individual attention and support as appropriate and can cope well with the demands of the lessons. They make good progress. Many are keen to answer in class and often make well considered comments. In some cases they need more support in presenting written answers.

131 Good standards are directly related to teaching. Teaching is good at both key stages with over half of the lessons being very good; there was one example of excellent teaching. The subject is taught in good depth with some delightful personal touches. Lessons are well planned and matched to pupils' abilities. Some very good teaching methods are used, particularly where music is used very effectively in studies of religious festivals.

132 There is a strong commitment to teaching the subject in the spirit as well as the letter of the law. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subject and present work in an interesting way. Pupils are tested orally at the beginning of all lessons to ensure that they can recall what was learned in the previous lesson and so build on that knowledge. They are expected to learn the key words and terms associated with all the major world religions and do so to a good level. Teachers have very good class-management skills and employ a range of teaching strategies. Lessons are lively and interesting and pupils enjoy the subject. There is good use of visual aids and artefacts to bring the subject to life and make it more meaningful to the pupils. Pupils are given good strategies for presenting work using diagrams, illustrations, analytical layouts and lists. There is a good range of different types of writing: description, explanation and personal response. Assessment is well employed so that the pupils know what is expected of them and how well they are making progress. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils, warm, friendly and cheerful. Pupils respond very well, working with effort and concentration. They are interested in the subject as shown by their keenness to answer questions and read aloud in class. They show confidence in reading and in their contributions to class discussion.

133 The subject is well managed. The co-ordinator has worked hard to plan lessons to meet the requirements of the new locally agreed syllabus. There has been a significant improvement in planning and practice in widening the range of activities since the last inspection. There is also an improvement in pupils' concentration in Key Stage 3. There is sufficient time for reflection and consideration of the issues studied. There is now a good emphasis on understanding and a wide range of work for pupils in both key stages. Teaching has improved significantly. Some teaching is exemplary. The subject is taught with commitment and very good vision.

134 There are a few occasions when high attaining pupils could cope with more demanding resources and so extend their learning further.

135 Religious education makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. It is taught with sincerity and in a way that enables pupils to reflect on the spiritual aspects of life. Pupils gain a good awareness of the traditions of different faith communities.