

INSPECTION REPORT

EPINAY SCHOOL

Jarrow, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: South Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108741

Headteacher: Mrs. Hilary Harrison

Reporting inspector: Mrs. Sue Aldridge

Dates of inspection: 26 – 29 March 2001

Inspection number: 191873

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Type of school: | Special |
| School category: | Community special |
| Age range of pupils: | 4 – 17 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| School address: | Clervaux Terrace Jarrow Tyne and Wear |
| Postcode: | NE32 5UP |
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| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Mrs. Dawn Miller |
| Date of previous inspection: | June 1998 |

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|
| 8810 | Sue Aldridge | <i>Registered inspector</i> | Information and communication technology; Music; French. | The school's results and pupils' achievements; How well are pupils and students taught? How well is the school led and managed? |
| 9883 | Brian Silvester | <i>Lay inspector</i> | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 20055 | Sheila Entwistle | <i>Team inspector</i> | Mathematics; Religious education. | |
| 23300 | Lily Evans | <i>Team inspector</i> | Art and design; Design and technology; Geography; History. | |
| 17855 | Gordon Gentry | <i>Team inspector</i> | Science; Physical education. | How well does the school care for its pupils and students? |
| 27409 | Sue Hunt | <i>Team inspector</i> | English; Personal, social and health education. | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils and students? |

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Epinay is a mixed, community, special school for day pupils between the ages of 4 and 17 with moderate learning difficulties. There are 104 pupils on roll, and all have statements of special educational need. The school has recently established provision for students over 16, in partnership with a local college of further education, businesses and training providers. When compared with similar schools nationally, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals is very high, and there are very few pupils whose home language is not English.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Epinay is a good school, with several very good features. Pupils of compulsory school age achieve high standards, especially in English. Standards achieved by students over 16 are satisfactory. Teaching is good, and the school is very well led and managed. The cost of educating pupils and students is low when compared with similar schools nationally. The school provides good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- For pupils up to 16, standards of achievement are good, and in speaking and listening they are excellent. In some subjects, a few pupils achieve as well as pupils of a similar age nationally.
- Pupils' personal development is very good. They have positive attitudes to school, and their behaviour is very good. Relationships amongst all members of the school community are harmonious, which helps to create a pleasant learning environment.
- Teaching is good overall, with very good features, especially in English.
- Leadership is very good; staff work well together and are strongly committed to raising standards.
- The school provides an excellent range of extra curricular activities, and links with the community help to enrich the curriculum. There are excellent opportunities to help pupils develop socially.
- The school provides very good support and guidance for pupils and students, who are treated with respect, and know that they are valued.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Assessment, record keeping and reporting in some non-core subjects.
- Pupils' individual targets for personal and social development, which are not precise enough; teachers do not always refer to these in their planning, or record pupils' progress towards them.
- Provision of individual education plans (IEP) and balance of timetable for students over 16.
- The school's accommodation, which has several weaknesses.
- Planning in history and geography; some plans have too little detail to enable temporary teachers to provide suitable tasks for pupils of different abilities.
- Monitoring of teaching that takes place off the school site.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in July 1998, and this inspection took the school out of special measures considered necessary in the inspection of 1997. Since 1998, there has been considerable improvement. The school has extended from the primary classes to the secondary classes the good practice and strategies used to raise standards in literacy and numeracy. There are now more opportunities for the oldest pupils to gain nationally recognised accreditation. Curriculum planning has improved, and so has pupils' attendance. There have been some improvements to the accommodation, but the school has not been able to fund improvement in all the areas originally identified in the inspection of 1997.

STANDARDS

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

| Progress in: | by age 11 | by age 16 | by age 17 | Key | |
|---|----------------------|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|---|
| Speaking and listening | A | A | ** | <i>very good</i> | A |
| Reading | B | B | ** | <i>good</i> | B |
| Writing | B | B | ** | <i>satisfactory</i> | C |
| Mathematics | A | B | ** | <i>unsatisfactory</i> | D |
| Personal, social and health education | ** | ** | ** | <i>poor</i> | E |
| Other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEP* | N/A | N/A | N/A | | |

* *Individual education plans*

**Judgements cannot be made for students over 16 because they do not have IEPs. Personal and

social development targets are too broad for progress to be measured.

Standards of achievement are good overall; in speaking and listening they are excellent. Pupils have a wealth of opportunities to develop their speaking and listening skills in English, and in other subjects. High standards are achieved because pupils have a broad range of learning experiences, and teaching is good. Standards achieved by students over 16 are satisfactory. The school achieved the targets it set for improving standards in English, mathematics and science last year, and exceeded some of these. It exceeded the target it set for pupils leaving with certificates in vocational courses.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Attitudes to the school | Pupils and students have very good attitudes to their school work. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Behaviour is very good; this helps to create a purposeful learning environment. |
| Personal development and relationships | Personal development and relationships are very good. Pupils are always keen to take responsibility, which they do well. |
| Attendance | Good. Pupils enjoy coming to school, and attendance has improved. |

Pupils show great interest in activities, and are keen to become involved in the tasks set for them. They show respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others, and there is very little bullying. Pupils show a clear understanding of how their actions might affect others, and they help and care for one another. Through their involvement in the School Council, pupils develop an understanding of citizenship; they experience the personal responsibility of representing other pupils' interests.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 5-11 | aged 11-16 | aged over 16 |
|----------------------|-----------|------------|--------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Good | Satisfactory |

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

Teaching is good, with some very good features. Altogether 73 lessons were observed, and teaching was good in 31 (42 per cent), and very good or excellent in 22 (30 per cent). Four unsatisfactory lessons were seen (5.4 per cent). Teaching in English is very good; practices associated with the National Literacy Strategy are very well adapted to suit pupils' needs. Teaching of mathematics is good; the numeracy strategy is being implemented well. Science is taught well, with a good emphasis on investigative approaches. The planned programme of personal, social and health education is taught well, but where targets are set for personal and social development, these are too broad to be assessed.

A particular strength of teaching is the adoption, across the school, of the three-part lesson. Learning objectives and success criteria are shared with pupils at the start of the lesson, then reviewed at the end. This gives pupils a very good understanding of their own achievements. Most teachers are skilled in setting tasks that meet the needs of all pupils, although temporary teachers occasionally find this difficult because of a lack of detail in plans and records. The key skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, but there is room for improvement in the use of computers to support learning.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | The curriculum for pupils of compulsory school age is good. It is enriched by an excellent range of extra curricular opportunities, and links with the community. The curriculum for students over 16 is satisfactory. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | There are excellent opportunities for pupils and students to develop social skills. These include visits, visitors to school, residential experiences, activities at lunchtime and after school, and some having lessons in other schools or colleges. The arrangements to encourage pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural awareness are very good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | The school provides very good care, support and guidance for pupils and students. Staff treat pupils and students with respect and pupils and students feel valued. |

The school works well in partnership with parents, who appreciate the provision it makes for their children. Pupils are able to influence the quality of school life through the School Council, which has its own plans for development. Pupils have also been involved in designing aspects of the school grounds. There is a good programme of careers and work experience, and opportunities for pupils to follow vocational courses; these help to prepare pupils well for the next step. Most continue their education when they leave school.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. There is a clear view of how the school will develop in the future, and a strong, shared commitment to improving standards and provision. Teamwork is well developed. Further development of the roles of subject co-ordinators has strengthened leadership. |
| How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and committed. They have improved attendance at governors' meetings and developed a thorough understanding of the school's curriculum. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Evaluation of the school's work is carried out well by staff with management responsibilities. It could be further improved by ensuring that more measurable targets are included in the school development plan, and by involving governors in evaluation. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school uses its staff and financial resources well to improve standards and provision. Good staff development supports continued improvement. |

There are sufficient staff for the numbers of pupils and students, and learning resources are good. The accommodation is satisfactory.

Monitoring of teaching and learning on the school site is rigorous; the school has yet to extend this to lessons off the school site. The principles of best value are applied in a satisfactory manner.

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 teaching is good. • The school is well led and managed. • Children like school. • Parents are comfortable approaching the school with questions or a problem. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children do not get the right amount of homework. • A very small number would like more information about how well their children are getting on. |

Inspectors agree with all of parents' positive views of the school. They find that pupils are given homework regularly, and most do this well. They agree with parents that pupils' annual progress reports could be improved; these provide good information on English, mathematics and science, but are not detailed enough in the other subjects.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

The characteristics of the pupils and students for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge the standards they achieve against age related expectations or averages. In this report, therefore, judgements about standards of achievement take account of information contained in pupils' annual reviews and their progress towards the targets set for them. The report also gives examples of what pupils and students know, understand and can do, and it acknowledges where pupils are achieving at levels similar to national averages.

1. Standards of achievement are good for pupils of compulsory school age (Key Stages 1 to 4), and very good in English. Standards of achievement in speaking and listening are excellent. For students over 16, standards of achievement are satisfactory.
2. At the time of the inspection there was only one pupil in the age range 5 to 7 (Key Stage 1), and one pupil whose family does not speak English as their first language. Attainments of these pupils are therefore not reported here. There are no differences in the standards of achievement of different groups of pupils at any stage.
3. Since the school was last inspected, standards of achievement have improved in speaking and listening, writing, design and technology and music. No judgement could be made last time on standards of achievement in French and information and communication technology, as both of these were underdeveloped; pupils now achieve well in both of these subjects. In all other subjects, standards of achievement overall have remained as they were in 1998. Standards are good in mathematics, science, design and technology, art and design, music, physical education, personal, social and health education, and religious education. In history and geography, standards of achievement are satisfactory.
4. Parents are pleased with the progress that their children make at Epinay. Those who attended the meeting said that some had 'come on in leaps and bounds' since they started at the school, that homework had helped them to make better progress, and some gave example of progress being particularly good in certain subjects, such as mathematics.
5. Until two years ago, all pupils were disapplied from the national tests at seven, 11 and 14. In the last two years, test results have shown a steady increase in the numbers of pupils achieving higher levels of attainment. A few pupils at 11 have attained levels similar to national averages in English and mathematics, and older pupils who are working towards GCSE examinations in art, mathematics and science achieve standards close to national averages too. In physical education, some pupils achieve at levels close to national averages as well. Since the school has introduced externally recognised accreditation for older pupils, numbers achieving certificates have increased steadily. The school set targets for raising standards in English, mathematics and science, and it has

successfully achieved most of these. It has exceeded the target it set for pupils achieving certificates for vocational courses.

6. In general, high standards are associated with the broad range of learning experiences offered to pupils, and the high quality of teaching and learning. Excellent speaking and listening skills are the result of a wealth of opportunities provided for pupils to speak and listen in all subject areas. These also result from the high expectations that teachers have of pupils, who are encouraged to understand and use language associated with different subjects, and answer questions at length. Pupils become confident communicators. For example, in an English lesson in a primary class, pupils were taking turns to read their own stories aloud, from the *author's chair*. On hearing one story, a pupil observed, 'I think her writing is super, and she has done extremely well. She deserves a star, miss!'

7. Older pupils can explain how they have carried out learning tasks; they begin to use subject-specific language well, take parts in role play and drama activities, and participate in debates. They express opinions, about how ideas and emotions are portrayed, for example. Students over 16 take on the role of a newsreader on the radio, and deliver a news bulletin.

8. Standards of reading and writing are good. The successful implementation of the literacy strategy has helped to promote progress in these key skills; so has the setting of individual targets for pupils. Improved planning and increased expertise amongst staff have played a part too. By the time they are 11, higher attaining pupils read fluently and accurately, with expression and a good understanding of meaning. They have developed reading preferences, such as biographies, and can use a thesaurus to find words with similar meanings. Lower attainers read aloud, rather than silently; they sound out unfamiliar words, use clues in pictures to help them decode words, and sometimes correct themselves when the context makes them realise they have read a word wrongly. Higher attainers write confidently using a neat print, and they begin to attempt cursive writing. They recognise verbs and compound words, and can add suffixes. These pupils use punctuation correctly, and can generate their own work, such as a set of written instructions. Lower attaining pupils cannot write their own instructions, but can copy them, placing them in the correct order.

9. By the time they are 14, higher attaining pupils read widely. They select books from the library to read for pleasure, and are confident when using reference materials. They enjoy more demanding literature, such as *Macbeth*, and can distinguish clearly between fact and fiction in texts. All pupils are able to produce a written review of a book they have read. Higher attaining pupils master the art of letter writing, and can turn a narrative into a script for a play. Lower attaining pupils at this stage have improved their punctuation, and are beginning to write in a cursive form. However, some of their writing is difficult to read, and there is little evidence of pupils improving the presentation of their work by word-processing it.

10. In the last two years of compulsory schooling, pupils make good progress in working towards externally accredited AQA (Assessment and Qualifications Alliance) units in speaking and listening, writing, and reading for pleasure. For example, they write letters of application, reviews, and scripts. All achieve some accreditation for their work. Students over 16 transfer their reading and writing skills to a variety of situations, including the workplace.

11. In mathematics, standards of achievement are good overall, and very good for pupils from seven to 11. Investigative methods help to develop mathematical understanding. Staff have worked hard since the last inspection to transfer the good practices associated with the numeracy strategy from the primary classes into those for secondary pupils. Good training has assisted them in this, and so has the good quality of monitoring and evaluation that has taken place. Action has been successful in raising standards amongst secondary pupils.

12. By the age of 11, all pupils know number bonds to ten, and tell the time to a quarter of an hour. Higher attainers recognise and name several three-dimensional shapes, and round up and down to the nearest ten. They also estimate lengths and understand the inverse relationship between multiplication and division. By the time they are 14, pupils understand place value to three digits, and can find the area of a rectangle, using squared paper. Higher attaining pupils add and subtract negative numbers, find a mean and an average, and can find the volume of a cube or cuboid. As pupils approach 16, they work towards accredited units for the Certificate of Achievement, achieving certificates for money management, number work and shape and space, for instance. Higher attaining pupils work towards a GCSE qualification; they solve equations with one unknown, including those with brackets, know the properties of a quadrilateral and can solve simple problems using Pythagoras' theorem.

13. Standards are satisfactory at post 16, where students achieve accredited units, and they have opportunities to reinforce their numeracy skills in other areas, such as business administration. However as numeracy does not appear on the timetable as a discrete subject every term, and as individual targets are not set, progress is limited.

14. In religious education, although standards of achievement are good overall, they are better for primary than for secondary pupils. This is because the scheme of work for secondary pupils contains some difficult concepts, and teachers need to plan more carefully to assist pupils' understanding of them.

15. Standards in geography and history are satisfactory. Because the school has experienced staffing difficulties, much of the teaching of older pupils in these subjects has been carried out by a series of temporary teachers. Although the planning has been made available to these teachers, it is not detailed enough to enable teachers to provide tasks matched to the different abilities of pupils. Temporary teachers find it difficult to do this themselves because they do not know the pupils well, and records are not available to give them this information. As a result, pupils' progress has been patchy.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

16. Pupils are keen to attend the school and play a full part in its life, including the excellent range of extra-curricular activities. They have a very good attitude to their work. Pupils listen attentively to their teachers and follow instructions. They concentrate well and persevere with the tasks given. Pupils generally work in a purposeful atmosphere. They are keen to respond to questions and many use their initiative in class. Some pupils lack confidence, but the teachers and support staff work hard to build up their self-esteem.

17. The behaviour of the pupils, in class and around the school, is very good. Parents are very happy with the standard of behaviour in the school. The pupils are very pleasant, welcoming and friendly. They show respect for the feelings and property of others. Incidents

of bullying do occur but they are dealt with immediately and properly in consultation with parents. In the last school year there were 42 fixed-term exclusions, 33 boys and 9 girls. There has been a significant reduction in exclusions in the current school year.

18. Relationships between pupils, and between pupils and adults, are very good. Pupils work and play together well. They co-operate and are willing to share and take turns. The more able pupils are willing to help and assist the less able pupils. A group from the Children's Society's 'In Line' comes in weekly to talk about relationships with a group of pupils. All the staff in the school treat the pupils with respect and courtesy. The school has a very caring, inclusive ethos.

19. The personal development of the pupils is very good. They have a wide range of opportunities to take responsibility. Year 6 pupils run the school bank, Year 11 pupils have been successfully involved in the Young Enterprise Scheme and Years 10 and 11 pupils produced a CD of their own music. Pupils act as librarians and participate in a litter patrol at lunchtime. The choir sings carols in the community and, in food technology, pupils make coffee and mince pies for senior citizens at Christmas. Older secondary pupils participate in a residential course. Pupils show initiative by fund raising for charity, like a non-uniform day for Comic Relief. In the School Council, pupils have formulated an action plan to bring about improvements. Pupils have also initiated ideas to improve the school grounds.

20. Attendance in 1999/2000 was 90.3 per cent, which is above the national average for special schools and is good. Unauthorised absence in 1999/2000 was 0.9 per cent. The main reasons for non-attendance are illness, term-time holidays and some absences condoned by parents. The breakfast club and extra-curricular activities are an encouragement for pupils to attend. Most pupils are punctual, with only a few arriving late. The good attendance and punctuality have a positive impact on the pupils' standards of achievement.

21. In the previous inspection report it stated that behaviour was very good, relationships, attitudes and pupils' responses were good, and attendance was sound. Most of these have improved since the last inspection.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS AND STUDENTS TAUGHT?

22. Teaching is good, with some very good features, particularly in English. During the inspection, 73 lessons, or parts of lessons, were seen. Of these, 69 were satisfactory or better (94.5 per cent), 31 were good (42 per cent), 21 were very good (29 per cent), and one was excellent. Four unsatisfactory lessons were seen. The high quality of teaching has been maintained since the school was inspected in 1998.

23. Teaching is now very good in English, satisfactory in geography and history and good in all other subjects. For pupils from seven to 16, teaching is good at each stage. Teaching is best in the primary classes, where there is a high proportion of very good teaching, and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. In geography and history, weaknesses in planning and recording have made it difficult for temporary teachers to plan suitable tasks for pupils, and planning provided is not always followed. At post 16, several good lessons were seen, but

there was evidence also that some of the sessions taught off the school site are not well planned, and that students are not challenged enough to deepen their understanding of topics. Post 16 students do not have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, and this reduces the effectiveness of provision in meeting individual needs. Teaching at this stage is satisfactory.

24. Since the last inspection, the school has adopted a three-part structure to all lessons, building on the success of this aspect of the literacy and numeracy strategies. Teachers now include an introduction, where the learning outcomes are shared with pupils, a middle session where tasks and activities are set, and a plenary session at the end, where pupils are encouraged to assess their performance and that of their peers. This is working very well, particularly where teachers set different learning objectives for pupils of different ability levels. Pupils are absolutely clear, in most lessons, about what is required of them, and they tackle tasks enthusiastically, maintaining concentration and a good pace throughout the hour long lessons. They finish the majority of lessons secure in the knowledge that they have succeeded in achieving the objectives set. This is a particular strength of teaching and learning.

25. As teachers have further developed the planning of work for pupils, they have raised their expectations of what pupils might achieve. This has stemmed from a realisation that if pupils are to be included in some mainstream classes, they need to have covered the same programmes of study as pupils in mainstream. Teachers tackle some difficult concepts, and are mostly successful in helping pupils to understand these, because they are skilled in explaining new language. They set tasks and activities that bring pupils to an understanding, then review pupils' work carefully, drawing on their successes to reinforce knowledge, skills and understanding. An example of this was seen in a music lesson, where pupils in Year 8 composed a piece of music that 'challenged clichés and conventions' by composing a 'spooky lullaby'. Pupils were keen to tackle the task, and most worked independently. They were clear about what they had to do, and asked for help when necessary. When each performed their composition at the end of the lesson, the teacher skilfully drew out the strengths and areas for improvement, and pupils applauded one another's efforts.

26. The important skill of speaking and listening is taught very effectively. As part of their English lessons, pupils have a broad range of learning experiences that promote the development of speaking and listening. In addition, these skills are encouraged very effectively in other subjects. For example, in art, pupils are asked to describe the moods created by using different colours, and to make a critical analysis of works of art. In physical education, teachers ask pupils to explain the value of warm-up sessions, and they expect, and receive, much more detailed answers from older pupils. In science, geography and history, key vocabulary is explained, and pupils are expected to use this themselves, which they do increasingly; they are also expected to predict the outcomes of scientific investigations, and explain these. They are prompted to give clear, full answers to questions. In food technology, pupils evaluate their work, explain what they did and how this affected the quality of the product.

27. Reading and writing skills are reinforced well across the curriculum. All pupils have targets for writing, and these appear in their homework diaries, so that they are prompted to improve whatever they are writing about. There is a wealth of opportunities to read and write in subjects other than English. During the inspection, pupils were seen writing about the wives of Henry VIII in history, and researching the work of artists using reference books.

28. In mathematics, particular strengths include the good match of tasks to pupils' abilities, and the emphasis on oral and mental skills. Opportunities to reinforce numeracy skills are often shown in planning for other subjects, and teachers make good use of incidental opportunities for pupils to practise skills. During the inspection, pupils were seen in geography using graphs to find information and represent findings. In art, teachers made reference to squares, rectangles and right angles in work inspired by the artist Henri Matisse, and pupils were able to recognise some of these spontaneously. Measuring, and costing of foodstuffs are included in food technology, and pupils represent their findings in bar graphs and charts.

29. Teachers use information and communication technology well in several subjects, both as an aid to learning, and as a way of presenting pupils' work in a professional way. In music, pupils' compositions are often saved electronically, and pupils are keen to produce compact discs. In a worthwhile project with a comprehensive school, pupils' musical compositions have been recorded and enhanced to produce a CD for sale, to raise funds for people in Burma. This is a great source of pride to pupils at Epinay. During the inspection, pupils had downloaded information from the Internet in history, French and art, and used this in their lesson activities. In French, the teacher has produced a very professional piece of multi-media software to assist pupils, at different levels, in acquiring speaking, listening and reading skills. Good use is made of software in a mathematics club, but computers were not seen being used in maths lessons during the inspection, and there was little evidence of teachers encouraging pupils to word process their writing in English. Several subject co-ordinators recognise the need to further develop this aspect of their provision. When used well, information and communication technology is a powerful motivator, and pupils clearly enjoy using it. Several showed a well developed ability to work independently using ICT, and a growing confidence in using its applications.

30. Teachers have a good command of the subjects they teach, as well as a thorough understanding of how best to teach pupils with learning difficulties. Their expertise was demonstrated during the inspection in several subjects. For example, in science, there is a good emphasis on investigative approaches, and pupils learn well when they have carried out practical activities, and made discoveries themselves. In physical education, there is careful teaching of skills, and good attention paid to health and safety, so pupils develop a thorough understanding of why exercise is good for them. Teachers also encourage personal development by giving pupils responsibility. They are encouraged to clear away after practical sessions in art, science and technology, for example. As they become used to doing this, they begin to show initiative. Teachers also make good use of learning opportunities in the community. In art, pupils visit museums and galleries, and in music pupils have very good opportunities to perform and to be part of an audience, listening to other performers make music. Pupils particularly enjoy music and singing, and they try hard to perform well.

31. In most lessons, teachers provide a wide range of appealing tasks, and different tasks for pupils of different abilities, and this works well. Pupils are interested, they concentrate well, and in the majority of lessons achieve the learning outcomes. However, in art the accommodation restricts the scope of projects because the space in the art room is limited. During the inspection there were a few lessons when teachers were not successful in setting tasks that were well matched to pupils abilities, and as a result, not all pupils made sufficient progress during the lessons. In one lesson, the text provided was too difficult for a few of the pupils.

32. Resources are used well to support pupils' learning. This is a particular strength in ICT, where there are sufficient computers in the ICT room for pupils in most groups to work individually. However, in history there are not enough resources from the past to bring all aspects of the subject to life, and in one history lesson pupils struggled to understand past times.

33. Support staff are deployed well in lessons. They are thoroughly briefed, and know how best to challenge pupils. They question them well, and achieve a fine balance between supporting and letting pupils try things themselves. As a result, pupils are not over reliant on them for support. During discussions they are not idle, as teachers ask them to assess and record pupils' responses and contributions. They support individual pupils and groups during the middle section of lessons, and help to review pupils' work at the end.

34. The provision of homework is good, although a few parents were not satisfied with this. Homework is set regularly in English and mathematics, and pupils have homework diaries. The school also provides two homework clubs, one on the Epinay site, and another at a mainstream school. Pupils are happy to take work home, and they usually complete this well.

35. Teachers generally mark pupils' work well, implementing the positive marking policy effectively. Helpful comments assist pupils in correcting the work themselves. Questioning is used skilfully to involve pupils in discussion and to assess their understanding. Pupils are given good feedback, by teachers and other pupils, and this creates a positive atmosphere in which pupils know that their efforts are valued, yet they have useful pointers as to how to further improve their performance.

36. Teachers have good expertise in assessing pupils' levels of achievement. This has been well promoted by subject co-ordinators who have all compiled portfolios of annotated work, which teachers have discussed and agreed which National Curriculum level it fits best.

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

37. The quality and range of learning opportunities is good for all pupils of compulsory school age. The school offers all the subjects of the National Curriculum, as well as personal, social and health education (PSHE) and religious education. This is an improvement since the last inspection, when all pupils were disappled from a modern foreign language.

38. The curriculum for pupils from five to 16 (Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 4) is broad and balanced, teaching time is at the recommended level for pupils from 14 to 16, and above that for younger pupils. Policies and schemes of work for all four key stages are at least good in most subjects, and teachers have worked hard to further improve planning since the last inspection. In particular, the work planned is more challenging, reflecting higher expectations of pupils. Planning for history and geography is satisfactory; there has been a lack of continuity in the co-ordination of these subjects and planning is not as good as in other subjects. This should be resolved shortly with the appointment of a new co-ordinator.

39. The national literacy and numeracy strategies are both highly effective. They have been adapted very well to the needs of the pupils in the school. The content of lessons is well planned to match the different needs of pupils. Pupils experience a good range of high quality learning opportunities that reflect the schools' aims and values. Monitoring of teaching, and support for further development, has been effective in extending good practice in literacy and numeracy from the primary classes to the secondary ones.

40. All pupils have statements of special educational need and suitable individual education plans (IEP). However, whilst the English and mathematics targets are good, PSHE targets on some IEPs need to be more specific and measurable. The school provides very well for the needs that are broadly described in pupils' statements, and staff work hard to ensure that all pupils have the same opportunities to learn and succeed.

41. Post 16 provision is satisfactory. This has been set up for the first time this year, as a pilot project, largely in response to requests from parents who felt that pupils needed a bridge between school and the next stage. The content of the course is well selected to meet its aims, and students and their parents are pleased with the results so far. There are good opportunities for students to become more independent, to experience vocational areas, and to undertake work experience, for example. Students all have a clear idea of what they would like to do next, and many have quite well formed and realistic ideas of future employment. However, there is some imbalance in the provision, with much time spent on information technology (IT), and little on numeracy. Most of the teaching occurs off the school site and not all courses are well planned. As the pupils were expected to leave school, their statements of special educational need were discontinued, and so were their individual education plans. These students no longer have individual targets for literacy and numeracy, and so their individual needs are not met as well as they might be.

42. There is a very good programme of work related education, starting in the secondary classes and progressing through into post 16. Very good relationships with the community and partner institutions, such as the work experience providers, help to enrich the curriculum. Pupils in Years 11 and 12 participate in a wide range of college courses at a local college of further education including catering, care, health and beauty, hairdressing and industrial experiences. Some of these are linked to local businesses, giving added relevance. There are strong links too with the local careers service.

43. The school plans very effectively for work experience, and prepares the pupils and students for life after school very well. Pupils and students are also accredited through ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) for their work experience. For older pupils, there is a chance to experience running their own business. Their professionally made jewellery product is sold at a local cultural centre in Jarrow, at a very competitive price; the necklaces they produce are in great demand by the retailer.

44. Provision for inclusion is generally good. A good start has been made by the headteacher and other key staff to establish educational links with local primary and secondary schools, as part of the Local Education Authority's development strategy. Year 6 pupils attend a local primary school for mathematics, and Year 10 pupils visit a local

comprehensive school to study art, mathematics and science, with a view to taking General Certificate of Education (GCSE) examinations in these subjects. Pupils from other schools come into Epina y School, either to help younger pupils during a reading session, or to attend a vocational course leading to an accredited unit in health and social care.

45. There are very good links with the community, extending to a local artist decorating murals on the library walls and an environmental architect working with pupils on a project to improve the grounds surrounding the school. Pupils have close contact with the local Age Concern group, raising funds for them by holding coffee mornings, and a PSHE link has brought together pupils and staff from a local comprehensive school.

46. The school makes a good use of residential opportunities and visits, to extend pupils' experience outside school. Pupils have taken part in residential visits to Thurston and Dunkirk, thus promoting and supporting their personal development. A joint visit to the Millennium Dome with pupils from a local comprehensive school is well recorded, and illustrates the high quality planning that staff put into such events in order to ensure that maximum benefits are available for all.

47. Provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent. Pupils have a wide range of options at lunchtime and after school, many of which are run by support staff. The school funds a minibus to return pupils home after these clubs. Activities include football, gymnastics, dance, gardening, craft club, music, and two homework clubs, one shared with the local high school. Each morning the school cook and a nursery nurse run a breakfast club which caters for many pupils arriving early in school; here pupils have a healthy breakfast, and a range of games is provided. There is also 'In line', a group of counsellors from The Children's Society, who come into school each week to run a drop in centre. The school nurse holds a clinic each week advising pupils and students about health issues such as diet, skin care and personal relationships.

48. Provision for pupils' and students' moral development is very good. They are taught the differences between right and wrong very effectively, as well as the most appropriate behaviour in different settings. There are opportunities for pupils to develop an awareness of others less fortunate than themselves, and to act on this. For example, the proceeds from the sale of their CD, 'Links for Life', are going to the Karen people in Burma. Pupils regularly contribute time and money to several charities.

49. The school makes excellent provision for the social development of pupils and students, and this is very well supported by the range of extra-curricular activities, and opportunities for inclusion. Pupils and students share with each other in a most supportive way. They develop their ability to work with others, for example by taking charge of their own business enterprise. There are good opportunities for pupils to develop independence skills; they learn how to prepare meals safely, for example. The school council promotes understanding of citizenship well. The council gives pupils a voice; they decide on aspects of policy for the school, and have their own development plan, which is to become part of the overall school development plan.

50. Provision for spiritual development is very good and pupils and students learn to appreciate the worth and value of each person. The daily assembly is an inspiring act of collective Christian worship. Pupils sing joyfully, and pray in a very reverent manner. Certain lessons in art, physical

education and science are well planned to provide pupils with activities that generate awe and wonder. During a dance lesson, pupils expressed feelings through dance. In a primary assembly, pupils were engaged in role playing the events of Palm Sunday, very enthusiastically waving palm leaves and crying 'Hosanna, Hosanna to the Lord'. Pupils and students are taught to develop an awareness of their own thoughts, feelings and emotions. As a result they develop a sense of individual identity and self worth.

51. Overall provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school celebrates festivals such as Christmas and Easter, as well as those from non Christian groups such as Diwali and Hannukah. Through history, pupils are made aware of ancient civilisations such as the Greeks, and encouraged to value their own British heritage. Pupils and students are also made very much aware of their own local culture from Tyne and Wear, their music, art and literature. For example, artists and poets visit the school, and pupils participate in the Northumbria Book Festival. There is a yearly visit to France, and to the French theatre company 'Le Chat Noir,' and in food technology lessons pupils cook food from different cultures. In music, pupils listen to a variety of kinds of music from a range of cultures.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

52. The school is a very caring community that provides well for the support, welfare and guidance of the pupils. Parents particularly appreciate this aspect of the school's provision.

53. Procedures for child protection are very good. Teachers, support staff, visiting therapists and ancillary staff work extremely well together to provide the pupils with an environment in which they feel secure and valued. This is a significant strength of the school. The pupils are treated with respect and courtesy. They respond by treating staff and one another in a similar manner. All of this has a beneficial effect on learning.

54. Since the last inspection a School Council consisting solely of pupils has been set up. It has been given considerable responsibility. It is well organised and run, and gives pupils a real opportunity to affect their school lives. For example, the council recently purchased lockers for older pupils using a loan from school funds. The council is now raising money to repay the loan. Very good relationships add to the sense of security and play a vital part in building the confidence of pupils and students. The personal dignity of each pupil and student is well respected in the school environment. Parents recognise this and speak highly of the level of support in the school and the effectiveness of staff in creating this.

55. At all times, very good provision is made to ensure the pupils' and students' health, safety, well being and protection. The staff responsible for child protection are suitably trained, and have very good links with local agencies. Procedures are in accordance with those of the local Area Child Protection Committee (ACPC) and adapted to the circumstances of the school. All staff are fully aware of procedures to be followed and receive regular training and updating. Policies and guidelines are clear. Staff are conscientious in abiding by these and sensitive to the possible needs of those in their care.

56. Health and safety issues have a high priority, and arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils in class, at play, and on arrival and departure are good. Pupils understand the reasons for health and safety and can explain them. This is often observed in lessons such as science, physical education and design and technology. Risk assessments are undertaken by a designated member of staff. In a number of cases where activities are deemed unsafe at Epinay, a safe alternative site is identified, for example for rock-climbing training.

57. Relationships between the school and a range of support services are very good. The services are well and effectively used. However, there is a problem with accommodation in this respect. There is no medical room and therapists have to use the already overcrowded staff room for sessions. Of particular note is the quality of the contributions made by the speech therapist, the school nurse and the education welfare officer. They all work hard with the school in the best interests of pupils and students. It is very much a two way process and the youngsters often feel secure enough to make initial approaches about matters that worry them. One parent expressed concern about the adequacy of educational psychologist provision, and inspectors looked into this matter, but found that the concern was not justified.

58. School procedures for promoting and monitoring good behaviour are very good. Guidelines are very clear. High expectations are consistently reinforced by all staff during the school day. Pupils and students understand these expectations, and approve of them. Classes are encouraged to draw up their own codes of conduct. Effective behaviour plans are in place for some pupils with behaviour difficulties. Where possible, parents are involved in drawing up plans, and plans are reviewed and adjusted on a regular basis. In more serious cases, a home-school book is exchanged on a daily basis. The outcome of the behaviour policies is clearly seen in lessons and in the daily life in the school. A good example of this is the almost complete absence of disruption in class. There is a very harmonious learning environment, and staff manage any potential behaviour problem skillfully. A very good anti-bullying policy is in place. Pupils do not see bullying as a problem, and feel that if there is an occasional concern, they are able to talk to staff who will deal with it speedily and effectively.

59. The school's procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good. Attendance is monitored by class teachers, the headteacher, and the educational welfare officer (EWO), who visits weekly. The school secretary maintains an absence book. If any primary pupil, or a pupil who is causing concern, is not present without a known reason, their parent or guardian is telephoned. The EWO makes home visits where necessary.

60. The school has a system of class and individual rewards to encourage good attendance. In a few cases, greater care is required to ensure that every pupil is marked present or absent at the beginning of the morning session, so that lateness is identified.

61. The educational and personal guidance given to pupils and students is very good. It is effective in raising levels of achievement throughout the school. Class teachers are generally responsible for this, and are very well assisted by their support staff. Consultation with other professional colleagues and visiting specialists is always used where it is felt a pupil or student will benefit. The guidance is consistently good, and takes into account any extra needs a pupil or student may have, for example more complex learning difficulties. Good liaison and consultation results in a

consistent approach in the guidance given.

62. Baseline assessment is carried out shortly after a pupil joins the school. This is followed by regular testing using 'P' scales for English, mathematics and personal and social development, as well as other nationally recognised tests for mathematics and reading. Individual education plans (IEP) are well established for all pupils. There are none for the post-16 age students and this is a weakness. Whilst the IEP are generally good, targets set for personal and social development are too broad, and not measurable. Measurable targets would assist the school in demonstrating the value it adds, and in monitoring personal development.

63. There is a good whole school policy of assessment and recording. This is very well applied in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. In these subjects, assessment information is well used to monitor and evaluate progress. For all subjects, annotated collections of pupils' work have been used well to assist teachers in deciding which National Curriculum level pupils have attained, and 'P' scales are used in PSHE. Recording is still developing in several of the core subjects. Further development is needed in design and technology, geography and history. In music, assessment and recording are being revised in the light of the introduction of the new scheme of work, and some previously good practice has been abandoned.

64. In general, teachers know pupils well and are able to provide suitable tasks for pupils of different abilities by using this knowledge. However, where temporary teachers take classes, the fact that there are no records that show, at a glance, what pupils' achievements are, makes it difficult for teachers to plan suitable tasks, as they do not know pupils well enough. This results in some unsatisfactory teaching and learning.

65. Monitoring of pupils' progress is good. Annual reviews are held as required, and these are well attended by parents and professionals. An area for further development is the monitoring of the progress of pupils attending other schools for subjects at GCSE level, and that of students who are educated for much of the time off the school site.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

66. Parents are very supportive of the school, and the links between the school and parents have a positive impact on the pupils' learning. Parents have very positive views of the school. They particularly appreciate the quality of teaching, the way the school is led and managed and the fact that staff expect children to work hard and do their best.

67. The information supplied to parents is satisfactory overall. Regular reader-friendly newsletters and informative letters are sent out. Parents are involved in the annual review of their children's statements of special educational need, and the drawing up of individual education plans (IEP). There are termly opportunities for parents to discuss their children's progress with the teachers. The pupils' annual reports tell parents what their children know, understand and can do in English, mathematics and science but the information provided on other subjects is very brief. Levels achieved are not given, and very few targets for improvement are indicated.

68. Not all of the information required by law is supplied in the school prospectus and the annual governors' report to parents. The prospectus does not state that parents have a right to withdraw their children from religious education and collective worship, show the destinations of school leavers, or include information on the school's policy on providing for children with special educational needs. The most recent governors' annual report to parents did not report on the success of the school's policy for children with special educational needs, or give an account of student destinations.

69. The school's links with its parents are effective and their involvement has a good impact on the work of the school. The contribution of parents to children's learning, at school and at home, is satisfactory. Parents and students jointly signed up to a learning agreement when the new post 16 provision was started, and this has worked well. Meetings are arranged for parents on curriculum areas like numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology, but these are not all well attended. However, the school has been successful in raising parental attendance at meetings, and exceeded its own targets for this.

70. Fund raising events are held. These are organised by the staff and are well supported by parents. The Summer Fair, for example, has been particularly successful. Also, a parent was sponsored to run in the Great North Run, and funds raised went to Epinay. Parents help on trips, on Sports Day and in Year 6.

71. A significant minority of parents, in the questionnaire prior to the inspection, was not satisfied with the work their children were expected to do at home. The inspection evidence does not support this view. Provision of homework is very good, but parental support at home is mixed. Pupils have homework diaries and parents are encouraged to contribute to them and support their children at home.

72. Parents are invited to special events like Sports Day, concerts, special assemblies and church services. They are encouraged to attend by combining formal events, like the governors' annual meeting for parents, with the Christmas concert. Transport is provided for parents where they have difficulty getting to the school.

73. No evaluation of the school's partnership with its parents was made in the 1998 inspection report, but it is clear that the school has successfully improved its partnerships with parents since then.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

74. Leadership by the headteacher and key staff is very good. Since the last inspection, a new headteacher, deputy headteacher and senior teacher have been appointed. They have secured further improvement in a relatively short period of time, and are well aware of the weaker aspects of the school's provision. Further development of the role of subject co-ordinators has strengthened leadership, and the headteacher's consultative style has encouraged teamwork, which is well developed.

75. Members of the senior management team and subject leaders have a very clear understanding

of their roles, and they contribute very well to the key task of keeping the school's work under review. The school's regular meetings ensure that information is shared effectively, and that staff have an opportunity to be involved in identifying areas for development, as well as helping to monitor the progress on development plans. All staff are proactive, and there is an openness and a willingness to share practice in the interests of improvement. For example, English teachers have worked closely with French teachers to ensure a common approach to the teaching of grammatical terms.

76. There is a strong, shared commitment to making the school a centre of excellence, supporting pupils' inclusion, and the school is gradually building up mutually beneficial links with mainstream schools. Teachers from other schools have visited Epinay to see its work, and Epinay staff have been invited to share their practice, by speaking at conferences, for example.

77. The school has set fairly challenging targets to improve standards of achievement, improve attendance, reduce exclusions and increase parental involvement. Most of these targets have been reached and some have been exceeded.

78. Monitoring of teaching is good, and has helped to secure further improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Lessons on the school site are monitored rigorously, with feedback given to staff, and targets set, then reviewed. External personnel, members of the senior management team, and subject co-ordinators all monitor teaching, so there are several perspectives on this. However, at present, there is no monitoring of lessons that some pupils have in mainstream schools, or at other venues where post 16 students are taught. Although both are recent projects, a small number of weaknesses have gone unnoticed.

79. Subject co-ordinators also monitor the quality and implementation of planning, and evaluate this. For example, they identify where pupils have found concepts difficult, and suggest different ways of approaching topics. They also identify resources, such as software, that would help pupils to learn particular concepts. The headteacher maintains an overview of all the monitoring activities, evidence of which is retained in a file. Because teaching staff are used to having their work monitored, and targets for improvement set, the school is well placed to implement performance management, and arrangements for this are proceeding well.

80. Governors are supportive and committed; they fulfil most of their responsibilities well. Since the school was last inspected, they have improved attendance at governors' meetings and developed a thorough understanding of the school's curriculum. They have a well-established committee structure, through which they successfully carry out their work. Their evaluation of the school's work has yet to begin, as few governors have yet had training in the role of governors in school self-evaluation, but they have a firm foundation on which to build.

81. The school has sufficient suitably qualified and experienced staff to meet the needs of pupils and the requirements of the curriculum. The well qualified support staff have a major impact on learning with their contribution to lesson planning and assessment of individual pupils' progress in lessons. Although the school has fewer support staff than in similar schools nationally, it is fortunate in having staff with such commitment, who make a strong contribution to all aspects of the school's provision. The school benefits from the part-time support of a technician, who trouble-shoots when difficulties with computers occur, but there is no similar technician to support science provision, and the teacher has to spend considerable time preparing for and clearing away after practical activities.

82. Arrangements for staff development are good. Recent emphasis on training in literacy and numeracy for teaching and support staff has helped to raise standards in these areas. Staff take good advantage of opportunities to further increase their knowledge and skills, and some have followed substantial courses in their own time. Both the headteacher and deputy headteacher have been trained in school self-evaluation, and this has been helpful in the identification of the school's

strengths and weaknesses. The headteacher has successfully completed the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) course, and the deputy head is currently pursuing this; both identify the positive impact this has had on their practice.

83. The premises are well maintained; the high quality of wall displays creates a stimulating working environment. Teaching areas are satisfactory in most subjects, and there are specialist rooms for design and technology, science, and information and communication technology (ICT).

84. There are several deficiencies in the accommodation, and the school does not have the resources to rectify all of them. The food technology room also serves as a class base and an art room, and this was a criticism at the last inspection. Whilst staff are aware of the potential risks, and take great care to minimise these, the arrangement is not suitable, and places unnecessary demands on staff time. There is no other room in the school that has sufficient natural light to make it suitable as an art room. There is no medical room for pupils when they are ill and need to be isolated or lie down. An example of this was seen during the inspection, when a pupil was taken ill and had nowhere to go other than the library. The staff room is too small to accommodate all staff at once, and although this is rarely necessary, it does mean that staff meetings have to be held elsewhere. Most of the staff are women, and there is only one toilet for them, which is not enough.

85. There are advanced plans to transform the school grounds through a project that has involved pupils in planning improvements. The site is also soon to be securely fenced in. At present, there are several very poorly drained areas of the field, and this makes games, such as football, very wet and muddy activities.

86. The school is well resourced to meet the demands of the curriculum. Learning resources are of good quality, except in science where they are satisfactory. Resources are readily accessible in all teaching areas. Significant improvements have been made in the provision for ICT, but there is insufficient use of these resources across the curriculum.

87. Good financial planning supports the school's educational development. The school development plan (SDP) covers a period of three years; the short-term plan covers the current year and contains costings, timescales, responsibilities, monitoring, success criteria and evaluation. Subject co-ordinators are fully involved in the formulation of the short-term SDP, and the governors, senior management team and staff are all involved in monitoring the implementation of the plan. The plan could be further improved by increasing the number of measurable success criteria, and this would provide governors with a means of evaluating school development.

88. The school makes good use of the financial grants it receives. For example, it has used funds to pay for pupils' transport home after extra-curricular activities have finished. Development has been well supported by staff training, and staff appreciate the increased opportunities that they have for attending courses.

89. The school's financial controls are good. The very recent audit report concluded that the school has established an appropriate and effective framework of controls with regard to the financial administration and management of the school. There was a clear commitment to follow good practice. Auditors identified a few minor weaknesses, and these are being addressed.

90. The school uses new technology well in its financial management. The headteacher and the governors receive regular financial reports so that they can ensure the budget is on target. The principles of best value are applied in a satisfactory manner. Value for money is ensured in purchases. The extent that comparisons are made to other schools, the use of resources is challenged and consultation is carried out, is satisfactory. The school has maintained the good quality of school administration noted in the last inspection report.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

91. The headteacher, governors and staff should:

- Further improve assessment, recording and reporting by:
(*Paragraphs 40, 62, 63, 64, 67*)
 - * developing assessment and records in design and technology, history, geography, music, and personal, social and health education;
 - * setting more precise personal and social development (PSD) targets in pupils' IEPs, and assessing and recording progress towards these;
 - * ensuring that reports on pupils' progress give parents a clear picture of the gains pupils have made and the levels they have attained.

- Further improve teaching and learning by:
(*Paragraphs 29, 31, 41, 64, 78*)
 - * ensuring that planning is detailed enough for temporary teachers to follow;
 - * ensuring that teachers always provide suitable activities for pupils of all abilities;
 - * monitoring the quality of teaching that Epinay pupils and students receive when they are off the school site;
 - * maintaining IEP for students over 16;
 - * ensuring that students over 16 have a balanced timetable;
 - * ensuring that ICT is used more widely to support pupils' learning.

- Liaise with the Local Education Authority to further improve the accommodation so that:
(*Paragraphs 57, 84, 85*)
 - * there is a suitable medical room;
 - * the food technology area is not used also as a classroom base and an area for teaching art;
 - * the grounds are better drained;
 - * there is a staff room which will accommodate the number of staff in the school;
 - * there are sufficient toilets for female staff.

92. Minor points for governors to consider including in their action plan:

- * latecomers to school should be marked in the registers as having arrived late;
- * the governors' annual report to parents, and the prospectus should meet requirements;
- * governors should further develop their evaluation of the school's work.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of lessons observed | 73 |
| Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils | 34 |

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| 1.3 | 29 | 42 | 22 | 5.4 | 0 | 0 |

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

Information about the school's pupils

| Pupils on the school's roll | Y1- Y12 |
|---|----------------|
| Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils) | 104 |
| Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals | 65 |

| Special educational needs | Y1 – Y12 |
|---|-----------------|
| Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs | 104 |
| Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register | 104 |

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

| Pupil mobility in the last school year | No of pupils |
|--|---------------------|
| Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission | 9 |
| Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving | 3 |

Attendance

| Authorised absence | % |
|---------------------------|----------|
| School data | 8.8 |
| National comparative data | 10.6 |

| Unauthorised absence | % |
|-----------------------------|----------|
| School data | 0.9 |
| National comparative data | 2.6 |

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

Attainments of pupils and students

At **Key Stage 1**, there were no pupils eligible for tests

Key Stage 2 National Tests Summer 2000

15 pupils were eligible

| | Test Results | | | Teacher assessment | | |
|------------------|--------------|-------------|---------|--------------------|-------------|---------|
| | English | Mathematics | Science | English | Mathematics | Science |
| Below L 2 | 9 | 10 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 3 |
| Level 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Level 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| Level 4 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 |

At **Key Stage 3**, only 10 pupils were eligible, so the results are not reported here

Key Stage 4 Attainments

12 pupils were eligible

9 pupils achieved Level 3 CoA Science (6 Units)

1 pupil achieved Level 2 CoA Science (6 Units)

1 pupil achieved 2 Units in Health and Social Care

10 pupils achieved Health and Safety at Work certificates

3 pupils achieved Knife Safety (National Skills Profile)

1 pupils achieved Safety in Workplace (National Skills Profile)

1 pupils achieved Business Administration Level 2 (National Skills Profile)

Ethnic background of pupils

| | No of pupils |
|---------------------------------|--------------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 |
| Indian | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 |
| Chinese | 0 |
| White | 103 |
| Any other minority ethnic group | 0 |

Exclusions in the last school year

| | Fixed period | Permanent |
|------------------------------|--------------|-----------|
| Black – Caribbean heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – African heritage | 0 | 0 |
| Black – other | 0 | 0 |
| Indian | 0 | 0 |
| Pakistani | 0 | 0 |
| Bangladeshi | 1 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 |
| White | 41 | 0 |
| Other minority ethnic groups | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

Y1– Y12

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 11.5 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 9 |
| Average class size | 10.3 |

Education support staff:

Y1 – Y12

| | |
|---|----|
| Total number of education support staff | 8 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 88 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|------------------|
| Financial year | 1999/2000 |
|----------------|------------------|

| | |
|--|-----------|
| | £ |
| Total income | 484217.00 |
| Total expenditure | 506206.00 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 5502.00 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 35176.00 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 13187.00 |

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 104 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 41 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|-----------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-------------------|
| My child likes school. | 78 | 20 | 2 | 0 | 0 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 61 | 32 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 56 | 32 | 7 | 0 | 5 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 44 | 24 | 27 | 5 | 0 |
| The teaching is good. | 86 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 76 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 78 | 17 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 81 | 17 | 0 | 0 | 2 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 76 | 17 | 7 | 0 | 0 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 80 | 15 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 63 | 32 | 2 | 2 | 0 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 76 | 24 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

ENGLISH

93. English is a strength of the school and standards have improved since the last inspection. Standards of achievement in English are very good at Key Stages 2 and 4, and good at Key Stage 3 and Post 16 level. Standards of achievement in speaking and listening are excellent for pupils from five to 16. The implementation of the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stages 1 and 2 has been very successful, and has had a positive impact on standards. The extension of successful practice to Key Stage 3 has also been beneficial.

94. Speaking and listening skills are now excellent across the Key Stages, and good at Post 16 level. High standards are very well promoted by the wealth of opportunities that pupils have to develop their speaking and listening skills, and the high quality of teaching. Pupils hold debates and critically examine their work and that of others; they are encouraged to discuss a variety of topics in many subjects, to explain their work, and describe what they have done and how this has affected the product they are making. There are high expectations of what pupils might achieve. For example, in a primary class, pupils read out their work while sitting in an author's chair and the teacher invited others in the class to be critical friends, and comment on the stories. Pupils did this with vigour and clear insight.

95. Reading and writing skills are good across the Key Stages. The results of national tests, and of teachers' assessment, show that standards achieved by primary and lower secondary pupils have improved since 1999. This year there are more pupils of 11 and 14 being entered for national tests, and a higher proportion of these is expected to reach Level 4. In addition, eight 16 year olds, and seven Post 16 students have been entered for the Certificate of Achievement this summer. Pupils and students also gain accreditation in English as part of their ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network) programme. The schools' target for 25 per cent to reach Level 4 in English by the time they are 11 is likely to be achieved.

96. Primary pupils make excellent progress in communication. There is very good input from a visiting speech therapist and her assistant on two half days per week. Pupils are carefully assessed and suitable programmes devised. The work on Makaton symbols is successful in supporting those pupils who have more pronounced difficulties in communication. By the age of 11, pupils are well accustomed to listening carefully to learning objectives at the start of lessons. They are confident enough to make spontaneous observations too. For example, a Year 6 pupil in a lesson on adjectives described an orange as being orange, and pointed out that here was a noun and an adjective! Pupils are encouraged to respond at some length, and they do this well. Whilst watching a video on *The Secret Garden*, a Year 5 pupil was asked what he thought of the relationship between the main character Mary and the servant girl Martha. He replied, 'Because Mary is getting something from Martha, she is nice to her, and the reason for this is that Mary is a spoilt girl'. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to evaluate their work and that of others. During one such session with a Year 5 class, a girl read her story to the class, and one pupil observed, 'I think her writing is super and she has done extremely well. She deserves a star, miss!'

97. By the age of 14, pupils' communication skills have developed very well. Pupils can explain clearly how they achieve specific objectives; one pupil explained in great detail how he used the Internet to find out about endangered species of birds. In another session, Year 9 pupils were talking about Macbeth and explaining how rhyming works, using the words in the play as examples. By the age of 16, and at Post 16 level, pupils and students are using communication very efficiently as part of their Certificate of Achievement, reading news bulletins and recording them, for instance.

98. Pupils and students are encouraged to use their literacy skills, especially speaking and listening, across the curriculum. This occurs particularly in history, geography, mathematics, food technology, music, and religious education. There is a strong emphasis placed on encouraging pupils to use and understand language that is specific to subjects. During a mathematics lesson, primary pupils were able to substitute the term *work out* for *calculate*.

99. Standards in reading are good. A few higher attaining, older primary pupils can read fluently and with meaning, achieving standards similar to national averages. By the age of 11, pupils make good progress when using a range of reading strategies, looking words up in a thesaurus and writing on their 'mood' adjective boards words such as *evil*, *lonely*, *angry* and *shy*. Amongst secondary pupils, standards of achievement in reading continue to be good, and standards have been improved by extending the good practices of the literacy strategy into secondary classes. By the age of 14, high and low attaining pupils are choosing library books for pleasure, and their confidence in their own abilities and skills increases. In a Year 9 class, pupils were reading prose from *Macbeth*, comparing rhyming words. By Year 10, pupils are contributing well to discussions and are able to express their opinions about how ideas and emotions are explored and portrayed. During one such lesson, pupils role-played *The Phantom Hitchhiker*; one boy took the part of the distressed mother, to the great amusement of his peers. As part of their Certificate of Achievement, Year 12 students are reading news bulletins, editing them and recording them on tape.

100. Standards of achievement in writing are good. Year 5 pupils draft their own writing plans, and by the age of 11, pupils can write a new verse based on the poem *The Hairy Toe*. By the age of 14, lower attaining pupils can sequence sentences and draft an outline of the story of the Trojan Horse. Older secondary pupils use IT to reproduce their work for the Certificate of Achievement, and can complete letters of application. Year 12 students are able to write reviews and prepare media scripts. From Year 10 to Year 12, pupils and students study English as part of their Certificate of Achievement and ASDAN accreditation. Across the school, pupils' and students' written work is well annotated and marked, with suitable praise and helpful comments that support them in improving the quality of their writing.

101. Teaching is very good overall. Altogether 10 lessons were seen. Teaching was excellent in one, very good in three, good in five and satisfactory in one. Teachers and support assistants all have high expectations; they use a wide range of methods to engage pupils' interest and they convey their enthusiasm well. As a result, pupils and students are well motivated, and they respond by working hard and showing high levels of enjoyment. Teachers and assistants manage pupils and students well; relationships are very good and contribute to the quality of learning in English. Teachers and support assistants use questions very well while working on pupils' and students' speaking and listening skills, and they encourage participation. Through sheer enthusiasm with a

Year 12 group, the teacher managed to motivate the students to pretend they worked for Tyneside Radio, and were broadcasting the 6 O'clock News. Pupils and students respond very well to each other; they often share information and praise each other if they do well in class. For example, one Year 6 pupil helped another to find words to describe his feelings, from a thesaurus.

102. The school has concentrated hard on assessment in English. Assessment practice is good, and helps teachers to plan tasks that are well matched to ability. The targets in the pupils' IEP are reviewed termly. All pupils evaluate their work, and older pupils contribute to their own termly targets, which helps them to develop an awareness of their own learning. During a session of team teaching at Key Stage 2, the teacher playing the supporting role took assessment notes on two particular pupils and linked the assessment to their social targets, (one of which was to listen without interrupting).

103. Leadership in the subject is very good. The co-ordinator is keen and knowledgeable, and she monitors the subject very well. She has provided training for the staff of the school, and also for staff in the local primary and secondary schools. She has organised and set up an attractive library, which is well resourced, and although small, is central to the school. There are pupils working as librarians, cataloguing and organising books, and there is a local library service that provides additional books.

104. The quality of English displays throughout the school is very good, and makes an impact on pupils' and students' learning. A wide range of work is attractively displayed, including displays of 'Dancing Yellow Daffodils', Spring poems written by Year 7 pupils, poems about the 'Hairy Toe,' work on Macbeth, myths and legends, and a newspaper display by Year 8 pupils on 'Britain in crisis at the pumps.'

105. Homework is given out to pupils and students on a very regular basis, and homework diaries are used to convey information to parents.

106. The department has arranged for many poets and actors to visit the school, and pupils and students visit local theatres to see productions. Over the past year, they have visited local theatres to see the productions of Treasure Island and Great Expectations.

MATHEMATICS

107. The school has made marked improvements in its provision for mathematics since the last inspection. Good curriculum leadership, and the recent focus on numeracy training, has strengthened the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy across Key Stages. This initiative, as well as good planning, monitoring and evaluation, is having a positive impact on teaching and learning.

108. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. Overall, standards of achievement are good and very good at Key Stage 2. Students over 16 make satisfactory progress.

109. By the age of 11, all pupils know number bonds to 10, can give the time from an analogue

clock to quarter hours, practise estimation of length using longer or shorter and understand how data is displayed on a bar chart. Higher attaining pupils know how to round up or down to the nearest ten, and use estimation of actual length, (the size of one's wrist, for example). They can recognise a cube, cuboid and cylinder, and understand the inverse relationship between multiplication and division. All pupils are encouraged to use the process of investigation, an important basic skill in mathematics.

110. Pupils aged 14 understand place value to three digits, can find the area and perimeter of a rectangle (on squared paper), are able to interpret data from a pictogram and use and interpret first quadrant co-ordinates. Higher attaining pupils can add and subtract negative numbers, are able to find a mean average, can find the volume of a cube and cuboid and use and interpret data in all four quadrants.

111. By the age of 16, differences in attainment become more evident. Most pupils are working on units for a Certificate of Achievement. Average attaining pupils manage to complete the units they work on, which include Number Work, Money Management, Space and Shape, Handling Data and Time. Lower attaining pupils mostly work on the same units but do not always complete them. Higher attaining pupils attend the local comprehensive school to study for the foundation level of GCSE. They know how to solve equations with one unknown, including those with brackets, know the properties of different types of quadrilateral, are able to find mean, median, mode and range, and understand transformations - translations, reflections, rotations and enlargements. They can apply Pythagoras' theorem to simple problem-solving.

112. Post-16 level students are also working towards a Certificate of Achievement. Most have completed the units on Money Management and Using a Calculator. Higher attaining students have also almost completed Time, Handling Data, Space and Shape.

113. At all Key Stages, great emphasis is placed on the correct use of mathematical language, and key words are clearly displayed and identified for a particular lesson. Pupils are also encouraged in the efficient use of calculators, except in those aspects of the Key Stage 4 curriculum that do not allow the use of a calculator.

114. Overall, the quality of teaching is good, and very good at Key Stage 2. At Key Stage 2, three lessons were seen; two were very good and one was satisfactory. At Key Stage 3, six lessons were seen; three were good, and three were satisfactory. At Key Stage 4, two lessons were seen; one was good and one was satisfactory. No lessons were timetabled at Post-16 level during the inspection period.

115. Staff show commitment to the subject, and use a variety of methods to arouse and retain pupils' interest. Expectations of achievement and behaviour are high, and pupils are regularly encouraged to discuss their work. At Key Stages 2 and 3, lessons are planned according to the National Numeracy Strategy, which allows time for development of mental and oral skills. Work is carefully planned, not only to match ability, but also to offer sufficient challenge. Resources are used well to ensure maximum understanding. For example, in a Key Stage 2 lesson about money, pupils were given bags containing marked items of shopping which they were to add, and then calculate the appropriate change. The prices (and the money originally given) varied according to the ability of

the pupil. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are good, and very good at Key Stage 2. They mostly answer with enthusiasm in the oral part of lessons, and settle quietly to written tasks. Minor off-task

behaviour is quietly dealt with, and school procedures are called into use with more challenging behaviour. For example, one teacher in a secondary class suggested to a boy that he needed a 'time out'. He went, without fuss, escorted by a support assistant to the 'time out' room. There was minimal disruption to the lesson.

116. Numeracy skills are reinforced well in other curricular areas and are included in the subject planning. In food technology, pupils displayed data in pie charts and bar graphs, measured the height and weight of a scone and costed the food, with a total, in a lunchbox. In information communication and technology and in geography, grid references were used and interpreted. In art, references were made to shapes, squares, rectangles and right angles.

117. The subject is very well organised and managed by the co-ordinator, who has led in-service training on the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. With the senior management team, the co-ordinator monitors teaching and evaluates the targets set for the subject. Accommodation for the subject is good, and resources are varied, of good quality and readily accessible to staff. Each classroom is equipped with several computers, and RM mathematics is being introduced to raise standards. However, during the inspection, no computer work was seen in the subject. Procedures for assessment and recording are very good.

118. In mathematics, the school policy on inclusion is working well. Several pupils at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 attend local mainstream schools to participate in lessons. In the two lessons observed, one at each Key Stage, the standard of teaching was good, and pupils are making good academic progress in addition to the social benefits of learning alongside their mainstream peers.

SCIENCE

119. Since the last inspection, provision for teaching science has made great strides in the school. Standards of achievement at all Key Stages are now good. Much of this is due to the fact that nearly all work is based on investigative skills. Pupils thoroughly enjoy finding out things for themselves. This creates a positive learning environment. The previous inspection discovered a lack of a whole school curriculum and a fragmented delivery of the subject. Now a broad and balanced curriculum is in place, which is well planned so that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Precise targets are set to meet the needs of individual pupils, and progress is effectively monitored.

120. From the outset, younger pupils begin to acquire scientific knowledge and understanding. They build on this by pursuing a range of practical investigations. For example, a group of primary pupils were observed investigating the effects of mixing a range of liquids. They were beginning to understand what is meant by a fair test. They discussed how they might best record their results, and showed considerable interest when they discovered how their work related to their own experiences in life. By the time the pupils are 11, they have gained a sound grasp of simple scientific concepts and can use scientific terms to describe them. By this age they have firmly established links between practical investigation and the outcomes obtained from these. They display enthusiasm for the subject and look forward to lessons.

121. As they progress through the lower secondary stage, pupils continue to base their work on their developing investigative skills. One group was finding out that some solids dissolve in liquids and others do not. They looked at the effect of temperature on this process. They also discovered that breaking the solids into smaller pieces enhances the process. They moved on to see if the solids could be separated from the liquids again. Their enthusiasm for the practical work was almost tangible. Their ability to think of suitable recording methods develops well, and this often includes using mathematical methods, such as graphs. In another lesson, a group set about the task of how to find out what living organisms exist in local habitats. They approached this experimentally, and again employed sound ways of recording their findings. They discussed environmental issues sensibly. Throughout their lessons, relevance of subject material to pupils' own life experiences brought the topics alive. Another group carried out a thorough investigation of the effect of friction on the speed of moving objects. By the age of 14, the pupils are showing even greater enthusiasm for the subject. They tackle more demanding investigations with confidence, and make good predictions based on what they already know and understand of science.

122. By the time pupils approach 16, they are becoming skilful in mapping out a course of investigation. They make sound predictions, and consider carefully what is a fair test. Their suggestions of recording methods are more sophisticated, and there is a good feel for the concepts involved. For example, in a lesson where pupils were finding out what affects the speed of chemical reactions, they were able to suggest a whole range of conditions, such as the size of the particles, concentration of the reactants and the temperature. A small number of higher attaining pupils attend a local comprehensive school to follow a GCSE Science course, and they make satisfactory progress in end of module tests in this course. However, there is evidence to suggest that they might do even better if they received better support in lessons, were included more in discussions, and spent less time copying written material from the board.

123. Teaching is good overall. Of the seven lessons seen on the Epinau site, three were very good, two were good and two satisfactory. Teachers have a very good knowledge of the subject. They plan very carefully and all lessons commence with an excellent discussion about previous work, followed by the objectives for the day. The individual needs of pupils are considered, and tasks are usually well matched to pupils' abilities. Scientific language is used well, and where words are not readily understood by some, the teacher asks other pupils to explain them. This helps to develop pupils' speaking and listening skills. Support staff, where available, are well deployed. Discussion is impressive, and all pupils are drawn into this. Excellent use of praise from staff and peers is an integral part of the learning process. Health and safety is central to all that takes place, and pupils can explain why this is necessary. The need for good behaviour is very clearly defined and fully accepted by pupils. Learning outcomes match the enthusiastic and skilled teaching, which brings high motivation and enjoyment of the subject. Teachers use the whole school system of recording and reporting well.

124. In science, all staff take every opportunity to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills, and the subject is very supportive of all basic learning. It is common to see scientific terms displayed, and associated with words found in everyday life. Relevance of the subject to pupils' everyday lives is communicated well. A serious omission currently comes in the infrequent use of IT. This is an area for development. Pupils see that science makes sense, is relevant and that it has useful applications. They enjoy the work and there is marked success in enabling them to absorb the wonder of science.

A spiritual dimension is felt in many lessons.

125. There has been considerable improvement since the last inspection. Resources are now good. There has been a considerable injection of money to improve these, and planned developments will improve them further. The laboratory is adequate but the shape does make some practical work difficult. The subject is very well led and managed by the coordinator; however, provision of technician support would increase her efficiency, as much of her time is spent in preparation for and clearing up after investigative work. In some lessons, where older pupils tackle demanding investigations, the presence of a support assistant would enhance learning.

ART AND DESIGN

126. Standards of achievement in art and design are good. Pupils make good progress in art, and older higher attainers reach national standards. They work towards General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) in a local comprehensive school, whilst others gain an award through the Accreditation Qualification Authority (AQA) within school. It is clear from the colourful and very well presented displays of art, that pupils enjoy the subject. Spurred by praise and encouragement they work hard to produce good quality work, particularly in drawing and painting. Year 7 pupils are enthusiastic and well informed about their involvement in planning the landscaping of the school grounds, in co-operation with a landscape artist.

127. Since the last inspection there has been marked improvements in art, and leadership in the subject is good. There is now a new policy and whole school scheme of work. However, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory as it continues to be shared with food technology. Although there is now some two and three- dimensional work, scope for large projects is restricted by the lack of art teaching space, and there is nowhere to leave unfinished work. There are now good links with Western art culture, and visits are made to local art galleries and museums such as the Hancock Sculpture Gallery and Shipley Art Gallery. Recent successful sessions with an artist in residence, linked with the work of Henri Rousseau, have inspired wonderful creativity from 12 year old pupils who have made large tropical rainforest ‘minibeasts’, from papier-mâché, and colourful parrots on perches made from sticks. The design of these beasts will become part of the playground redevelopment project. Provision of book and picture resources for the study of famous artists has improved, and there is now a range of media for work in collage, clay and papier-mâché.

128. Where teaching is most effective, pupils are encouraged to observe closely and to be creative using their own experience, whilst making good attempts at different paint techniques. For example in the study of the work of Seurat, pupils noticed a similarity in one of his paintings of a rock by the sea to a familiar landmark, nearby Marsden Rock. Younger pupils, after practice using large brushes, refined their technique by moving on to a finer brush during the course of the lesson. Teachers use the work of well-known European artists to inspire pupils in the use of colour and paint. Eight and nine year olds look at colour and mood in the work of Picasso. They describe blue as a calm colour and associate red with excitement. They look with care at the work of Seurat and describe his painting technique as ‘dabbing’. By the time they are 11, pupils create portraits and objects in clay inspired by the work of Barbara Hepworth and Clarice Cliffe.

129. By the age of 14, the most able pupils are producing fine pencil life drawings with good likeness to the subject, effective use of shading, hatching, and foreshortening technique. Younger pupils use their observational skills well to produce papier-découpage, inspired by the work of Henri Matisse, *The Snail*, which they have downloaded from the internet. Higher achievers measure and cut shapes, and within the lesson, pupils refine their gluing techniques and look critically at their work to 'see if it needs any changes'. By the age of 13, pupils are comparing the landscapes of Van Gogh and Constable, and mixing secondary colour to find the shades and tones that the masters used. Through study of the work of Van Gogh, they extend their paint technique by the use of strong primary colours in thick paint and bold brush strokes. In their work inspired by Rousseau, pupils try a critical analysis of *Tiger in The Storm* and comment 'I think it is real', 'the most important thing in the picture is the colour mixing' and 'makes me feel dull because there is no light'

130. By the age of 16, pupils are working with some confidence in three dimensional medium creating sketches and preparatory work for GCSE. They model and shape with skill and care using the illustrations from the *Lord of the Rings* as inspiration. They produce life sized, three-dimensional themed portrait models in modroc, and make preparatory sketches for their work. Pupils working towards AQA enjoy making complex and contrasting patterns of interlocking shapes inspired by African art. They make designs and use them to print on tee-shirts and go on to explore the techniques involved in batik work.

131. Teaching and learning in art and design are good. Five lessons were observed, one of which was very good, three good and one satisfactory. Strong teaching features good planning and knowledge of the subject, and skilful teaching which inspires pupils. Tasks are well directed and good support is given, so pupils learn quickly, and refine their observations and practical techniques. Another strong feature of teaching is the emphasis on observation and discussion. Pupils feel free to express ideas and reflect on the work of artists and their own work, heightening awareness of their own feelings and also the intentions of the artist. Where teaching is less successful and the planning has shortfalls, which become apparent during the lesson, pupils are then unsuccessful in producing the technique that is required. Learning support assistants give very good support, usually to groups of low achievers. They praise and encourage pupils and help them to be successful and to have confidence.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

132. Standards in design and technology have improved since the last inspection, and progress by the age of 11, 14 and 16 is good overall. This is because pupils now have regular timetabled lessons, taught by a subject specialist, in which they are steadily building skills and knowledge, and having a broad range of experiences. Progress of pupils who have chosen design or food technology at 14 is good, although the present group have not had the advantage of having studied either area prior to this. Common areas are recognised but unexploited, as design and technology is planned as a separate subject from food technology, which begins in Year 7. Pupils work towards Certificate of Achievement accreditation in design and technology as an option, but lack of prior learning for current pupils curtails the level of accreditation currently possible. Pupils opting for food technology make good progress and produce work of a high standard. At the age of 16, they gain

accreditation in the Northern Examination and Assessment Board (NEAB) Certificate of Achievement (CoA) or Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) units of accreditation.

133. Leadership in the subject is good. Major improvements since the last inspection are the new, well considered, whole school policy and the working draft, commercially based programme of work, linked to National Curriculum programmes of study. Scrutiny of the teachers' planning and pupils' work folders show that the subject is carefully planned to ensure pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding, and have good breadth of experience. At present, computer aided design (CAD) and electronics are excluded from the study units. This is because computers have very recently been made available, and the teacher requires training in electronics before its introduction. The food technology room continues to be shared with the specialist teaching of art, and although the room is cleaned thoroughly after each art or food session, the situation is unsatisfactory. Teachers know pupils well, and pupils build up a good picture of their own learning. However, apart from that associated with externally accredited work undertaken by older pupils, formal assessment and record keeping have yet to be developed.

134. The quality of work produced by pupils at the age of 11 reflects good teaching. Pupils explore moving parts such as clapper toys, wind up toys and movement involving gears. Starting with greetings cards, they use computer clip art to select an animal logo, and create a moving part using a slide insert, measuring, marking, and cutting parts as part of the process. For each product, pupils write independently or use a scribe to record how they made their design, the tools they used, and any safety aspects connected with use of tools. In each year group, pupils work with a critical friend, and present design sketches and drawings. Higher achievers produce three-dimensional drawings. Working in wood, they explore notches on cams, and discover that different notches produce different movements. Applying this knowledge and understanding, they make puppets in card and wood, and make joints using glue, split pins, and staples. They go on to create a three-dimensional model room, decorated to their own design and incorporating a battery-powered lighting light. As they find evaluation of their own designs challenging, they tend to comment on difficulties in the process rather than on the actual design they have used. Eleven year olds design and make straw structures and test them for strength.

135. By the age of 14, pupils experience a wider range of materials, such as plastic and metal, and in food technology they have experience of all the basic cooking skills in baking. Skills are reinforced and reapplied within projects. For example, pupils learn about the different sorts of vegetarians, and are eager to show that they know that lacto-vegetarians may eat milk products whilst vegans will not. They use their rubbing in skills, learned in scone making, to make pastry and create savoury flans. The same skills are transferred to bread making. They evaluate their pastry in the manner of, 'I put in too much water and it made it too soft and sticky', but find it difficult to taste different batches of pastry and say which tasted best. Higher achievers are beginning to diverge from a recipe to create an original product. In bread making, they select combinations of toppings such as sesame and poppy seed.

136. Portfolios of work thoroughly document pupils' achievements through digital photography and writing. It is clear that they thoroughly enjoy the work by the business-like manner in which they go about their tasks, the pride in their results, and the well presented written work. In design and technology, pupils work in acrylics, and examine the idea of batch production in designing and making badges. They use logos for badges and for kites, which they design and make, using

computer graphics. They enjoy testing their kites and discover why some fly better than others.

137. By the age of 16, pupils complete their units of work towards Certificate of Achievement in design and technology, one unit of which involves designing gift boxes and exploring nets. Higher achievers create more complex designs, such as a triangular prism, and a square based pyramid box. Other pupils successfully design and make presentation boxes, all of which have clear inserts into the card, and are designed for a specific function such as for holding sweets or a watch.

138. Teaching is good overall. In the two lessons observed, teaching and learning were very good. Common to both lessons, work is thoroughly planned each step of the way, with care taken to set tasks to meet the needs of pupils of all abilities. Safety is given high priority, and there is a high expectation of pupils to work independently and to take initiative. The result is that pupils work purposefully and responsibly, having a clear remit about what they must do and how it is to be done. Co-operation is important and when it is appropriate, pupils support each other. For example they help with weighing, fetching tools and implements, and clearing up. Learning support assistants provide valuable assistance for less confident pupils in design and technology; they ensure that written tasks are undertaken with care, and give pupils suitable help with discussing and evaluation of ideas and projects. This promotes pupils' speaking and listening skills.

139. Practice in number skills, the use of shape and space, measuring, and compiling graphs and charts permeate the schemes of work, giving pupils good opportunities to understand mathematical applications. There is also good use of information and communication technology, such as the use of databases and spreadsheets, in food technology.

GEOGRAPHY

140. Since the last inspection there have been several improvements. There is now an updated policy and a whole school scheme of work linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study. Medium term planning includes evaluation of units, but assessment of individuals' progress is at an early stage of development. Resources have been extended and are now adequate. However, there is insufficient focus on giving pupils multi-sensory experiences, for example using computer programmes to explain volcanoes and earthquakes, or roamers to help pupils' understanding of direction.

141. In the last inspection there was insufficient observation of teaching of the subject to judge progress; this is now considered satisfactory. There continues to be good quality displays, notably on rivers and the water cycle and volcanoes, all of which help to promote pupils' understanding of the topics. A programme of visits to link with units of work is now in place since the last inspection and helps pupils understanding by providing experience at first hand. There are visits to local places of geographical interest, including the river Tyne, the bus garage, the retail park and the Metro Centre, as well as a visit to the Cheviot Hills to see specific river features such as meanders. At present a geographical focus on the Thurston Residential field trip has yet to be developed. Leadership in the subject is satisfactory.

142. Younger pupils by the age of nine are able to understand and link weather conditions, river and tide states, and are already beginning to predict and discuss outcomes. One pupil writes, 'The mouth of a river is where it meets the sea', whilst another finds out that 'Where a river nears the sea, it twists and turns and flows more slowly'. Higher achievers write to a friend to tell them about a local flood and its effects. They are able to discuss the feelings of the local inhabitants. By the age of 11, pupils are beginning to find similarities and differences between places in different countries. They are aware of the importance of the River Tyne and the traditional trades in the area such as ship building and fishing. They know that there are contrasting lifestyles in Chembakoli. They know that some of the children there do not go to school, and they interpret how land is used around the village using a sketch map and key. They are able to make observations and predictions about the work that people in photographs of Chembakoli are doing. Mapping skills, after a slow beginning, steadily develop through the primary classes, from pictures to plans of the class, the school, the play areas and local streets. In the local town, pupils carry out a traffic survey to consider whether it should be traffic free.

143. By the age of 12, pupils have some understanding of microclimates and their impact in and around the school building. For homework they go off to discover microclimates at and around their homes. They learn how to use compass directions and know eight points of the compass. Their mapping skills move on from two-figure map references to four, and higher achievers are beginning to look for key features on Ordnance Survey maps. Older pupils are beginning to grasp the idea of land use patterns in towns and cities. They make a model of the three zones but find difficulty in applying it to their own home areas. Pupils by the age of 14, have knowledge of developing countries and are aware of the many problems of under-developed nations. They are learning about aspects of life in Italy, but find it difficult to focus on them, partly because they are uninspired by the presentation and learning activities, which appear remote and difficult for them to relate to.

144. Teaching in geography is satisfactory overall. In the five lessons seen, one was very good, two were good, one satisfactory and one unsatisfactory. Where teaching was at its best, the teacher was dynamic and planning was thorough, with a good focus on key learning for the lesson. Learning was well directed at the different levels of ability, so that pupils were inspired to give their best efforts and able to succeed in their learning objectives. Conversely, where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher was poorly prepared, the pace slow and pupils were bored and off task. This was because the work was dull, uninspiring and not suitably planned to match the skills and needs of pupils. In some lessons the challenge was too high and the language used to explain simple concepts was unnecessarily technical. Particularly in the study of other countries, the resources used gave pupils little help in clarifying their understanding.

145. Whilst the medium term planning gives some detail of work planned, it does not give enough detail of how to teach pupils of different abilities. As supply teachers often teach this subject, they are at a disadvantage, with a resultant reduction in pupils' successful learning. Grids in the co-ordinator's file provide tracking stages for skills development, in mapping for instance, but as yet they are unused and pupils' individual progress is not assessed. There are some good resources for the teaching of geography which are underused, for example CD-ROMs. There is a need to give pupils more multi-sensory experiences by broadening the range of resources, and by using those currently available.

146. Literacy and numeracy are promoted well through reading, use of reference texts, writing factual information, and spelling and key vocabulary for each unit and for geographical terms. Survey findings are drawn up in graph form and graphical information interpreted. Geography makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, personal, moral, social and cultural development.

HISTORY

147. Since the time of the last inspection there have been improvements in the subject, and pupils' progress at 11 and 14 is now satisfactory. There is a suitable up to date policy, and the subject is now organised on a whole school basis. Draft units of work are drawn from a commercial scheme, linked to appropriate National Curriculum programmes of study, so pupils should be able to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. However, during the inspection, supply staff did not implement planning.

148. The co-ordinator, who is not a subject specialist, has worked hard to put the scheme in place, but is temporary, and the subject will be led from Easter by a subject specialist. Although evaluation of units of work is planned and monitored, assessment of individuals' achievement and progress is at a very early stage of development. There are high quality displays of work by primary pupils, with good links to literacy and information and communication technology (ICT). Of particular note, is the splendid work of Years 3, 4 and 5 who have written in their own words about the wives of Henry VIII. Whilst the long term plan is in place, medium term planning has not been fully drafted, and units planned are in insufficient detail for incoming staff to plan effectively to meet the needs of pupils of different levels of ability. There are now visits planned to make history 'come alive', but in class, learning resources, for example on medieval England or World War II, are barely adequate to give pupils a real sense of the past.

149. A thread running through the school is the developing awareness of chronology. Year 3 and 4 pupils bring in photographs of their families to make their own family tree, and they understand the immediate family tree of Henry VIII, of whom younger pupils are enthusiastically knowledgeable. Middle and higher achievers are able to identify the wives of Henry from contemporary portraits and picture captions. They produce their own line drawing portraits of the wives, which they encase in gold-sprayed pasta picture frames they have made. They know, for example, that Catherine Howard had her head chopped off because 'she had boyfriends', and that Henry was very upset when Jane Seymour died. Higher achieving Year 5 pupils enjoy *being detectives*, when carrying out research into the wives using ICT. They work sensibly in pairs to record information found about their births, marriages and deaths. By the age of 11, pupils have some awareness about life in Britain during the Second World War and work conscientiously to find out about aspects of food rationing. In response to questions about how to make the rations last out, a higher achiever suggests, 'grow vegetables'. Middle and high achievers use an index to find out from books about weekly rations, but are uncertain about what 'adult' means. Although they know food was scarce, because ships could not get through, most are unsure of what the ships would be carrying.

150. Younger secondary pupils learn about life in medieval times. They recall facts, are aware of dates, and complete worksheets about the Black Death. They know key features about the life of peasants, the Domesday Book, and the Magna Carta. They draw up a timeline to show some of the important dates and main changes in medicine since medieval times. They are interested to learn that shops in medieval times had shop signs which showed people what was sold without them having to read words. They know that street names often indicate the goods that were once sold there, and that names like 'Smith' derive from ancestors' work in times past. By the age of 14, pupils have some idea that medicine has changed over the last century, and attempt to compare conditions and treatment for common ailments and poor sight in 1900 with what happens now. However, they have insufficient knowledge of treatments and the health system to make sound comparisons, although one pupil wisely concluded that he would rather live now than in 1900 'because there is better water, housing and medicines'.

151. Teaching and learning in history is satisfactory. Four lessons were observed; the quality of teaching in one lesson was judged to be good, in two lessons satisfactory and in the fourth lesson unsatisfactory. When teaching was of a good standard, planning was detailed, lessons took the three-part format, and learning objectives were set and reviewed. Work was very well matched to the literacy skills of the pupils, and they worked with interest and enthusiasm. Higher achievers were set 'detective' tasks, involving using indexes and history reference texts in books and in Encarta on the computer. They showed good skills in co-operation and concentration. Pupils of lower achievement were very well supported in the tasks that they were doing so that they were successful and proud of their work.

152. Where teaching was unsatisfactory, the teacher's planning was different from the unit outlined in the scheme of work. Knowledge and understanding of the subject and of pupils' abilities and prior knowledge was weak, and in consequence, work was not pitched at the right level. Most pupils were unclear about what was required of them, which led to time wasting, or confusion in the written task. The present situation where older pupils are often taught history by a series of supply teachers means that redrafting of the new units of history, in the light of evaluation, is receiving insufficient attention. Present medium term plans are inadequately detailed in levels of work for different abilities to enable supply staff to teach the subject successfully. Lack of summary records, showing pupils' attainments, make it difficult for temporary teachers, who do not know pupils well, to plan suitable activities for all abilities. There is insufficient attention given to practical approaches to teaching and learning, and an over-reliance on work sheets in lessons for lower secondary pupils.

153. Opportunities for reinforcing and practising reading and researching reference texts in history is good, although at times the texts are at too high a reading level. Higher achievers are beginning to extract information from texts and use it appropriately. There are plentiful opportunities to write from their own knowledge, and to complete class work. Each topic has key vocabulary which pupils are made aware of. Although links with other subjects are unplanned, they are strong in art and geography. History makes a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural awareness. Visits to places of historical interest linked to units of work make invaluable contributions to pupils' understanding; these include Hadrian's Wall, local museums, and Beamish.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

154. Standards of achievement in information and communication technology (ICT) are good. They are promoted well by a good range of resources, a broad and suitably modified ICT curriculum, and the good quality of teaching.

155. Younger pupils soon acquire confidence in using the computer, mouse and printer. Older primary pupils became familiar with electronic mail when they communicated with Santa at Christmas time. They were delighted to receive personal replies. Having searched for 'Santa' to find this website, they logged on and responded to questions. Higher attaining pupils decided that Santa must have a powerful database to be able to email them individually! Pupils from 11 to 14 extend their use of ICT to using graphics, databases, spreadsheets and modelling. For example, some have used suitable software to simulate furnishing a bedroom. They could give good reasons why they chose their layout, and kept within a specified budget. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 begin to identify features that make a website effective, and they make a web page for themselves. During the inspection, Year 9 pupils were busy using Powerpoint software to create a weather presentation, consisting of an animated clip, with text. In a one hour session all pupils progressed from watching a demonstration of how to use wizards to creating a short presentation of their own. Higher attainers were able to make several versions, and moved on to add sound to their work in the next session. These pupils were very sensible when a software crash necessitated regrouping and working in pairs or threes.

156. Year 10 pupils were finding out how to set up their own e-mail accounts during the inspection. Higher attainers have a good knowledge of the different forms of communication. All pupils are beginning to understand and use some of the terms associated with electronic communication, such as 'host' and ISP (Internet Service Provider); higher attainers know that the school's ISP is Eduweb. All were successful in setting up an e-mail account, and sending an e-mail to their teacher. They clearly understood the need for security when using the Internet, and fully accepted that their teacher needed to know their secret passwords. Higher attainers were able to sign on independently, whereas lower attainers needed some assistance, in framing their 'secret questions', for example. Pupils in Year 11 move on to achieve Certificate of Achievement Units. Year 12 students are able to apply their skills in the workplace, and use them as part of their vocational courses, such as business administration. They also achieve the CLAIT (Computer Literacy and Information Technology) award.

157. Teaching and learning are good. Four lessons were seen altogether; one was very good, one was good and two were satisfactory. The subject leader has good expertise in the subject, and encourages the use of technical terms, which she explains well. As a result, pupils understand and learn these. For example, several were able to say that a computer, a modem and a telephone line are all necessary for e-mail to be sent. Learning objectives are shared with pupils at the start of each lesson, so they are clear about what they have to achieve in the time available. Practical tasks are selected, and this motivates pupils well. There are good relationships between the teacher and pupils, which helps to create a positive classroom atmosphere. For many classes, there are enough networked computers in the ICT room to enable pupils to work individually, at their own pace, and this promotes learning well. New procedures are carefully taught and good use is made of demonstration. However, on some occasions, a few pupils could have been more independent if

they had been given some

prompts, such as a printout of a screen or a flow diagram, to remind them of procedures to be followed. Teachers make good use of homework tasks to consolidate learning, and an annotated portfolio of levelled work is compiled to increase teachers' expertise in assessing the levels that pupils have reached in the subject.

158. Significant improvements have occurred since the last inspection, when it was not possible to report on standards in the subject because it was not yet established in the school. The co-ordinator has worked wonders since her appointment 18 months ago, and has a clear picture of where further improvement is needed. For example, a recent audit amongst staff has shown where there needs to be more use of ICT to support learning in other subjects. The co-ordinator carefully monitors the curriculum, so that she can be sure that pupils continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Further training of staff is awaiting identification of a suitable training provider. A recent workshop for parents was arranged by the co-ordinator, but few parents attended this. Leadership in the subject is good.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

159. Standards of achievement in French are good. Pupils achieve well in speaking and listening and in reading and writing, as they are given good opportunities to practise all of these in lessons. There are high expectations of what pupils might achieve in this subject. A broad range of learning experiences is provided, and the language is taught well.

160. Pupils now start to learn French in Year 6. After only two terms of lessons, they are able, amongst other things, to give and respond to everyday greetings in French. They increase the range of sentences they understand, and were seen during the inspection building up sentences about the subjects they like best at school. Higher attaining pupils were able to identify the verb and an adjective in their sentences. Several used a multi media computer programme to consolidate their language skills. Pupils in Year 7 are more sophisticated in their responses to greetings. For example, in response to *Comment ça va?*, one higher attaining pupil replied, *Comme çi comme ça*. These pupils can describe what they like to do at the weekend. Pupils in Year 8 were learning about how to frame a negative response to a question. Higher attainers knew that the addition of *ne...pas* would make a verb negative, and with practice all were able to make a negative response. By the time they reach Year 9, pupils can return a greeting, and in response to questions in French, can say what they are called, where they live, whether they have animals or not, and whether they have brothers or sisters. They read familiar vocabulary well, and can circle activities they like, highlight verbs, and underline likes and dislikes on a worksheet, for example. Pupils in Year 10 complete their study of French by achieving accredited units for the Certificate of Achievement. During the inspection, they were taking a post module test. Higher attaining pupils were able to write a short advertisement for a property, and when given certain criteria, were able to identify a suitable property. Lower attainers were able to name several rooms, and label rooms on a diagram of a house.

161. Teaching and learning are good. Altogether five lessons were seen. Teaching and learning

were very good in one, good in three, and satisfactory in one. A particular strength of teaching is the link with literacy, planned through collaboration with English teachers, so that pupils become familiar with grammatical terms. Pupils learn about verbs, adjectives, and punctuation, just as they do in English, but also about the masculinity or femininity of nouns in French. Teachers have good expertise in the language, despite being non-specialists, and they encourage correct pronunciation. Pupils show remarkably little embarrassment, and try hard to improve their spoken French. They also show complete respect for one another's efforts; there is no hint of ridicule, and younger pupils applaud others' successes. As a result, pupils learn from their mistakes, and quickly grow in confidence.

162. Teachers make good use of a wide range of resources, including tape recordings of native speakers, interactive software that enables pupils to practice skills at a suitable level, and information, including worksheets, downloaded from websites. The software that has been produced by the co-ordinator is of a high quality. The classroom used for most lessons has a good range of prompts on the walls, and pupils use these to help them occasionally. In a Year 10 lesson, the class had downloaded estate agents' advertisements, in French, from the Internet; they were using these in their topic, *Chez moi*, about language associated with the home. This interested pupils, as it was real to them. Occasionally, support staff join French lessons, and they are an asset. They record pupils' responses during the speaking and listening sessions, and support pupils well, challenging them to work things out themselves. For example, one was seen reminding a pupil about alphabetical order during dictionary work, and this enabled the pupil to find a word herself.

163. Teachers share learning objectives with pupils at the start of each lesson, and review these at the end. This works very well. Pupils are clear about what they have to do to achieve success. Tasks are also tailored well to the pupils' abilities. For example, higher attaining pupils will have to find out a larger number of meanings during dictionary work, and write these in their books. The setting of objectives could be further improved by setting different ones for pupils of different abilities. All written work is marked well, and in a way that is helpful to pupils. Suitable praise and encouragement is also given to pupils in class, and as a result pupils take care with their written work. Achievements of the oldest pupils are well documented through the end of module tests, but an area for further development is recording of achievement for pupils from Years 6 to 9.

164. There has been a marked improvement since the last inspection, when the subject could not be reported on because it was not established in the school and all pupils were disapplying from learning a modern foreign language. The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop expertise, and the quality of his work was acknowledged by others when he was asked to speak at a conference. Leadership in the subject is good.

MUSIC

165. Standards of achievement in music are good. The subject has a high profile in the school, and high standards are promoted by the wide range of learning experiences, the good quality of learning resources, high expectations and the good quality of teaching by an enthusiastic subject specialist.

166. Primary aged pupils learn to sing in tune, to perform as part of a group and to play tuned and

untuned percussion instruments. They begin to develop an understanding of pitch and rhythm, and the meanings of musical terms; most in a Year 5 clap in time to a piece of music. Pupils in Year 7 develop an understanding of the importance of the lyrics of songs. Higher attainers know that the melody of a song is the tune, and that lyrics are very important if there is no melody. They work in groups to compose a rap of their own, and as they do this, they learn that words have a number of beats to them. Pupils in Year 8 are confident users of electronic keyboards. They use these to compose pieces of their own. During the inspection they were composing spooky or scary lullabies, as examples of compositions that challenge clichés or conventions. Higher attainers knew at the start of the lesson that lullabies are soft, are often waltzes, and are played smoothly. One recalled that scary moods can be created by using minor keys, chords and notes. Almost all were able to compose a spooky lullaby, by choosing a suitable voice and style on their keyboards, and composing a melody of their own. Pupils who could work independently were able to do so as there were enough keyboards to go round. As each played their composition during the latter part of the lesson, several were able to suggest positive features, and areas for improvement. For example, they identified the *wood base* as a suitable voice for a spooky lullaby.

167. All pupils have a wide range of musical experiences outside lessons. There are plenty of opportunities to sing, and singing in assembly is particularly good. There are also opportunities to listen to others perform, including visiting musicians, and to experience a wide range of culturally diverse pieces of music. An extra-curricular music club gives pupils an additional opportunity to learn to play keyboards.

168. The music co-ordinator has taken several of the pupils' compositions, enhanced them, and recorded them on a compact disc, and this has been professionally packaged for sale to raise funds for charity. Pupils are highly motivated by this and are always keen to record their compositions electronically, or perform them in assembly.

169. Teaching and learning are good. Three lessons were seen, and teaching and learning were very good in one, good in another and satisfactory in the third. In a very successful lesson, the teacher carried pupils along on a tide of her enthusiasm. In the space of an hour they listened to lyrics of several types of songs, discussed the messages conveyed, heard the teacher's own rap composition, then worked in groups to compose a rap of their own, which they wrote down, then performed with great delight. They left the lesson determined to perform this in assembly. The teacher chose well the pieces of music pupils listened to at the start of the lesson, and carefully teased out learning points, such as rhyming words. She skilfully set slightly different composing tasks, so that each group experienced success. She and the support assistant provided just the right amount of prompting, the teacher by suggesting lyrics when pupils were stuck, and the support assistant intervening to give hand over hand prompting to a pupil who had difficulty clapping the number of beats in a phrase. There were good opportunities to reinforce literacy and numeracy skills; pupils wrote their lyrics down and counted the number of beats in words and phrases. When it came to the performance, pupils were asked to select accompanying music. They knew that some styles were inappropriate, and were able to decide that hip hop would be suitable.

170. Leadership in the subject is good, and there has been a marked improvement since the last inspection. Since the co-ordinator has taken up the post she has revised the curriculum, making it more challenging, established productive links with mainstream schools, and built up good resources,

which were unsatisfactory at the last inspection. She has ambitious plans for further development. These include providing a GCSE music course, and individual tuition for pupils to learn to play an instrument.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

171. At the time of the inspection there was no specialist physical education co-ordinator in post. The headteacher is taking responsibility for co-ordinating the subject, pending the arrival, in the near future, of a newly appointed co-ordinator.

172. There have been improvements since the last inspection. These are very largely due to the fact that there is a good curriculum in place, with schemes of work based on National Curriculum requirements. It is broad and balanced and has enabled pupils to continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding.

173. Standards of achievement are good across the school. Standards compare favourably with those found in mainstream schools. Pupils would benefit from an extension of external accreditation, which has already started to develop since the previous inspection.

174. During the inspection, primary pupils were learning to play hockey. A very good discussion about the importance of warming-up led into an effective warm-up session. Pupils were able to explain simply the value of this part of the lesson. Their recall of previous work was good, and made a contribution to this. Pupils progressed to stick control, using beanbags to dribble around a series of obstacles. Boys and girls worked very effectively together, in pairs and taking turns fairly. They responded well to opportunities to show initiative, and enjoyed taking on responsibility for tasks. Health and safety issues were discussed in the whole group and there was a good level of awareness of reasons for safety rules. The lesson was thoroughly enjoyed by the pupils.

175. A lesson developing dance performance of younger secondary pupils was very successful. The primary objective was to learn to express feelings through the medium of dance. The opening discussion again drew out the importance of the warm-up session, and valid points were contributed by pupils. References were made to muscle condition and problems of strain, for example. All pupils in the mixed sex group soon became engrossed in the tasks. Pupils were very well motivated. Their expression of feelings, such as *sad*, *quiet* and *happy*, were well connected to posture and movement. There was an excellent balance between direction and free expression. Boys and girls were working well together and the atmosphere in the group was very positive. As the lesson developed, pupils were able to work with partners. This element again proved successful, with some impressive interpretations. There was very good therapeutic content threading through the physical activity.

176. Older secondary pupils were seen improving their soccer skills, particularly dribbling. Another excellent initial discussion took place and all pupils were participating; they could clearly discuss and explain their work. Pupils learned how to control aggression during play. Very good pairing and teamwork was displayed. As pupils move up the school, they developed their ability to work together, with a very marked element of mutual support and encouragement. It is noticeable that equipment is treated with respect and handled carefully.

177. Teaching is good overall, with some very good lessons seen. Lesson objectives are always clearly set out and discussed, and the lesson sequence is carefully considered. Teachers' subject knowledge is now good, and support staff are used skillfully to enhance learning. Behaviour management is very good and pupils work extremely well together. Quality of discussion is a real strength, and there are always frequent pauses for ongoing assessment and reinforcement. Reinforcement of speaking and listening skills is very good. Relationships at all levels are very good and this also greatly improves the quality of learning. Great emphasis is placed on the therapeutic value of physical education, and in this context there has been very successful use of an outdoor pursuits centre in the Lake District. Information about additional special needs is often identified in this subject and if specialist advice is needed, it is sought. Good records of achievement are kept, and the whole school assessment and recording policy is applied well. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection.

178. Resources have also improved. The school makes good use of additional resources, not available on the school site, such as swimming pools, rock climbing facilities, larger athletics venues, squash courts and facilities for step aerobics. Another additional resource is the enlisting of support from other professionals. For example, team members from local football clubs visit the school on a regular basis for extra-curricular coaching. If risk assessments show that important activities are unsafe at Epinay then every effort is made to carry them out elsewhere.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

179. Standards of achievement are good overall; primary pupils make very good progress and secondary pupils make satisfactory progress. Higher standards amongst primary pupils are associated with better teaching, although all pupils cover a broad range of topics in the subject.

180. By age 11, pupils know the story of Palm Sunday, and how it was followed by the Crucifixion. They reflect on how the disciples must have felt about the death of Jesus. Pupils also find out about Islam, including the symbols associated with it, and Mohammed's journeys. They know that the Koran is the holy book of the Muslims. By the age of 14, pupils develop their knowledge of Sikhism when they hear the story of Guru Nanak. They have also studied the Buddhist religion with special emphasis on the main Buddhist festivals. In Christianity, they have an understanding of the Holy Trinity, and why the Resurrection of Jesus is important to Christians. As they approach 16, pupils work towards accredited units, on topics such as apartheid and Sikhism. Through these they gain insight into issues such as integration and segregation, race relations and prejudice. The section on Sikhism includes an in depth study of the life and works of Guru Nanak with some knowledge of the other gurus.

181. The quality of teaching is good, and this is reflected in the pupils' work. Altogether four lessons were seen; one was very good, two were good and one was unsatisfactory. In a very successful lesson for primary pupils, the teacher shared the learning objectives with the pupils, and provided a good variety of activities that successfully gained and retained pupils' interest. In one lesson, pupils acted out the story of Jesus' entry into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, and this role playing helped them to understand the events of that day. Questioning was used well, in several lessons, to include all pupils in the lesson, and to check on the level of pupils' understanding and

recall.

182. For secondary pupils, lessons often approach more abstract concepts, such as reflecting on one's own experience of life and death. A successful lesson was seen on this theme, where a written task was set for pupils to write their own obituaries. This task helped pupils to understand this rather difficult concept. In contrast, in an unsatisfactory lesson, a difficult concept was not well taught, and pupils did not achieve the learning objective set.

183. Assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding in the subject. Three assemblies were seen during the inspection and each was an act of Christian worship with a story about Jesus, a hymn and a prayer. This was because it was nearly time for the festival of Easter. Other major world religions are included in assemblies at other times.

184. Leadership in the subject is good. The well qualified co-ordinator has recently introduced a new scheme of work which includes a study of all the major world religions with particular emphasis on the cultural aspects of each religion. Good quality wall displays reflect the topics being studied. The co-ordinator and senior managers monitor teaching and learning and the co-ordinator checks that all aspects are covered. The provision of new textbooks and computer software has served to up-grade the resources of the subject. There has been a considerable improvement since the subject was last inspected.

Personal, social and health education (PSHE)

185. Standards of achievement are good across the Key Stages. This is associated with good teaching of a broad range of learning experiences.

186. At the last inspection personal, health and social development (PSHE) was not taught; it is now on all timetables, and provision is good. There is a school policy and a good scheme of work which is relevant to the pupils and students' needs. The scheme covers a suitable range of topics, including personal safety, dangers to the environment, health and hygiene, healthy eating, feelings and emotions, sex education and drug misuse. The department is very well organised by a co-ordinator who has worked extremely hard over the past two years to establish this new subject. Leadership in the subject is good. The school nurse is making a very positive contribution to the subject. In addition there is a weekly drop-in clinic for pupils and students to discuss health issues and personal problems with counsellors from The Children's Society.

187. Resources for PSHE are good, and there are very good wall displays covering themes such as dangers of smoking, addiction, and safety in the home. In the past 12 months, the school has won the Healthy School Award, and this has helped to create a healthier school environment: the school is now a non-smoking zone, fresh fruit is sold every day in the tuck shop, and a very healthy breakfast is provided each morning.

188. At Key Stage 4 and Post 16 level, pupils and students may achieve accreditation with a certificate of achievement in Health and Social Care and Leisure and Tourism. There is also accreditation to be gained via the Bronze and Silver awards of ASDAN (Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network).

189. Teaching and learning are good; lessons are well planned and imaginative, with practical activities that appeal to pupils. Younger pupils in Year 5 understand it makes sense to wear light coloured clothes at night, and Year 8 pupils enjoyed collecting rubbish from a local beach and were able to sort it into biodegradable items and those that could be recycled. During a Health and Social Care session Year 10 pupils decided on the best value layette for a new baby. Boys within the group displayed no embarrassment in dressing a life size baby doll, and discussing the best price for disposable nappies. There was a good example of inclusion during this session when a Year 10 pupil from a local high school joined the group; he mixed well and was accepted within the group.

190. The school now promotes the subject as a vehicle to enable pupils and students to realise their full potential. PSHE is taught as a discrete subject and it makes a strong contribution to pupils' personal development.

191. For certain pupils, the school sets individual targets in personal and social development (PSD), and these are included on pupils' IEP. Most of these targets are too broad, and not measurable, which makes it difficult to assess and identify progress. Nonetheless, teachers know pupils well, and they provide suitable opportunities for them to work on their targets in subjects across the curriculum. However, where there are temporary teachers who do not know pupils well, planning for lessons needs to include reference to pupils' PSD targets.