

INSPECTION REPORT

FELSTEAD SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108878

Head teacher: Mr I Reed

Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker
1424

Dates of inspection: 2 - 6 October 2000

Inspection Number: 192636

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	13 - 19
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Fordfield Road Ford Estate Sunderland Tyne and Wear
Postcode:	SR4 0DA
Telephone number:	0191 5537635
Fax number:	0191 5537640
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs H Graham
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
M H Whitaker (1424)	Registered inspector	Physical education	What sort of school is it?
		Equal opportunities	The school's results and achievements
		English as an additional language	How well are pupils taught?
			Leadership, management and efficiency
R Mothersdale (13462)	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development
			Links with the community
			Welfare, Health, Safety, child protection
			Monitoring of personal development and attendance
			Personal support and guidance
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
P Hall (7615)	Team inspector	Science	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
		Information and communication technology	Resources
P Clark (10760)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
		Religious education	
M Wright (1242)	Team inspector	English	
		Design and technology	Staffing
N Buckingham (16722)	Team inspector	Art and design	Curriculum
		Modern Foreign Language	Assessment and monitoring of academic achievement
		Special educational needs	Accommodation
D Pearson (22466)	Team inspector	Geography	
		History	
		Music	

The inspection contractor was:

Eclipse (Education) Limited
14 Enterprise House
Kingsway
Team Valley
Gateshead
NE11 0SR

Tel: 0191 487 2333

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

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

REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	5
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
PART B: COMMENTARY	
HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?	10
The school's results and achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?	12
HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?	13
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?	15
HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS	17
HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?	18
WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?	20
PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS	21
PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	24

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Felstead is a school for boys and girls aged between 13 and 19 with moderate learning difficulties. A small number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties. All have statements of special educational needs. It currently operates on two sites some five miles apart although a new building is scheduled to be completed by September 2001 when the school will be on one site. The vast majority of pupils are of white ethnic origin; over half the pupils are eligible for free school meals and almost half are over the age of sixteen. There are currently 153 pupils on the roll of the school. Pupils enter the school from a range of different schools and their attainment when joining the school is below national expectations because of their special educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school is now an effective school. The leadership and management are very good. They have developed very good systems for monitoring and evaluating the achievements of pupils and students; behaviour and standards have improved and the quality of teaching is good. Pupils have more positive attitudes to school, and levels of attendance have improved dramatically. The governing body has been effective in working with the local education authority to determine the role of the school in the re-organisation of special educational provision. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The leadership and management of the school are very good and have led to much improvement since the last inspection.
- The range of extra-curricular activities is very good.
- The school provides a broadly based curriculum well matched to the pupils' needs. It is very good in Key Stages 4 and for Post 16 students. Post 16 provision is a strength of the school.
- Systems for checking and evaluating the standards being achieved and the quality of education provided are very good.
- Provision for the personal development of pupils is very good and relationships with the community and local schools are very good.
- Provision for the moral and social development of pupils is very good. Child Protection procedures are excellent.

What could be improved

- Provision for the spiritual development of pupils could be further developed and acts of collective worship should be improved.
- Statutory requirements to teach religious education to students in the Post 16 provision should be met and the school should ensure that the planned religious education curriculum is taught in Year 11.
- Attendance could be further improved.
- The school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents should contain all the necessary information.
- The role of governors in monitoring standards should be developed and the role of curriculum co-ordinators in monitoring teaching should be implemented.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good progress since it was last inspected in March 1997. The management team has responded very well to the issues raised. Standards achieved have improved in English, mathematics and science whilst attendance has improved considerably. The curriculum is now very well planned and procedures for checking the progress made by pupils are in place. The range of vocational courses has developed further. The quality of teaching has improved and systems for checking the strengths and weaknesses of the school have developed very well. Leadership and management has continued to improve and are now very good. Subject co-ordinators' roles have developed and budgetary procedures are clearly linked to educational priorities. Health and safety issues have been tackled. As a result of the improvements the school is more effective and provides better value for money. Although some accommodation issues have remained the plans to relocate the school will resolve these.

STANDARDS

Progress in:	by age 16	by age 19
speaking and listening	B	B
reading	B	B
writing	B	B
mathematics	B	B
personal, social and health education	A	A
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	B

Key	
very good	A
good	B
satisfactory	C
unsatisfactory	D
poor	E

In all aspects of English pupils achieve good standards in relation to their individual needs by the age of sixteen and by the age of nineteen for those students who stay until the end of the sixth form. Similar results are achieved in mathematics and in relation to the targets set in annual reviews and individual education plans. Pupils achieve particularly well in personal social and health education throughout the school and in vocational and careers courses. Achievement in art is particularly high by the age of nineteen. The school has set challenging targets which are being achieved. By the age of sixteen and nineteen pupils' achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory because of the limited teaching in Year 11 and Post 16.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have good attitudes to school. They co-operate well in lessons and increasingly develop their ability to take responsibility and work independently.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour in and around school is satisfactory. Occasional difficulties are well managed. Behaviour on visits or in the community is very good.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop their understanding of the effect of their behaviour on others and become more tolerant of the needs and rights of others as they move through the school.
Attendance	Attendance remains unsatisfactory although there has been considerable improvement and it is now close to the average for similar schools. Procedures for improving attendance are excellent.

As pupils move through the school they increasingly take responsibility for their learning through greater opportunities for personal development. Pupils behave very well when outside the school, for instance visiting the tennis centre or receiving driving tuition. Despite occasional lapses, behaviour in school is generally satisfactory and well managed.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 14-16 years	aged over 16
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good

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

The quality of teaching in all key stages is good. During the inspection 120 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96.7 per cent of lessons, good or better in 72.5 per cent and very good in 30 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in 3.3 per cent of lessons seen.

In English, teaching is good throughout the school and sometimes very good. In mathematics teaching is also good in all key stages. Teaching in science is generally sound but occasionally insufficient demand is made on pupils so that achievement and learning suffer. Teaching in the Post 16 provision and in vocational education is consistently good. Literacy, numeracy and communication skills are taught satisfactorily across the curriculum. As a result of the good teaching, learning is effective in the vast majority of lessons. It is well-matched to the needs of the pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum are very good. It is particularly relevant in Year 11 and for Post 16 students when it is enhanced by a wide range of personal, social and vocational elements. Statutory requirements to teach religious education to Post 16 students are not met.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for pupils' moral and social development is very good. However, provision for their spiritual development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance and child protection are excellent; procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are very good.

The curriculum for Key Stage 4 and Post 16 students is very good and prepares them well for leaving school. religious education is not taught to Post 16 students however and therefore statutory requirements are not fully met. Provision for the social and moral development of pupils is a strength of the school. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to develop social skills in a variety of settings both in and out of school and much emphasis is placed on developing a strong sense of right and wrong. The procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance have been very successful in achieving a substantial improvement whilst behaviour has also improved as a result of the strategies adopted. Relationships with parents are good.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher and deputy head teacher provide very good leadership and management for the school. The role of subject co-ordinators has been developed well and they have a clear understanding of their leadership and management responsibilities but they do not yet observe teaching.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Governors fulfil their statutory responsibilities well although only a small number are fully involved in a regular way. They do not have systematic approaches to checking standards.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good procedures are in place for evaluating the performance of the school. This information is used well to set challenging targets for future developments.
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used very effectively to meet the educational priorities of the school.

Staffing and resourcing levels are satisfactory. Accommodation on the main site is in poor condition but is effectively used and internally maintained to reduce the impact on pupils learning. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have been very effective in developing the school from a position of

serious weaknesses. It is in a very strong position to develop further. The school applies best value principles.

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 progress made by pupils.• The improvements since the last inspection.• Their children like school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of information they receive about the curriculum.• The amount of homework provided.• Clarity about the future of the school.• The range of activities outside of school time.

The inspection team agree with the positive views expressed by the parents. The quality of homework provided is similar to other schools of its type and is broadly satisfactory. The future of the school is becoming clearer; parents would benefit from more information about the curriculum. The school provides a very good, wide range of extra-curricular activities.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS

The school's results and achievements

1 Pupils attain standards below those achieved nationally in the vast majority of subjects because of their special educational needs. However, with respect to their own targets and their earlier learning they achieve at least satisfactory levels and make sound progress. In many subjects achievement is good as pupils build successfully on their earlier learning making good progress. This is reflected in the successes now achieved by pupils in an increasing range of nationally accredited courses. In areas of personal and social development pupils of all ages make very good progress and achieve very well. However, achievement and progress in religious education in Year 11 and in the Post 16 provision is unsatisfactory. It is not taught at all in the Post 16 provision and although planned in Year 11 it is not yet effectively taught.

2 In English pupils make considerable gains in their speaking and listening, reading and writing skills as they move through the school. They enter the school from a variety of backgrounds and with a wide range of attainment. The school very quickly identifies the needs of individuals and provides high quality teaching within well-structured literacy lessons. This develops pupil's confidence and, as a result, attitudes improve, good progress is made and achievement is good. In speaking and listening, for example, their increased confidence enables them to read aloud and participate in drama activities, such as Robinson Crusoe. As they move through the school pupils pose and answer questions with increasing complexity and maturity and are able to discuss books they have been reading. Good progress is also made by pupils with a very wide range of attainment and all achieve well. Higher attainers in both key stages almost achieve nationally expected levels whilst lower attainers develop their reading skills by using different reading strategies to help them. As a result they begin to enjoy reading and to use their skills increasingly in other subjects, for example when working with recipes in food technology. Progress in writing is slower but pupils increasingly build their skills and achieve well. There is a wide range of attainment when pupils enter the school but by the end of Key Stage 4 most have developed their clarity and some have developed their own joined up writing style. They use their developing writing skills to support their work in other subjects, to write postcards or letters and to complete worksheets and questionnaires. Increasingly they use computers to enhance the presentation of their work.

3 In mathematics achievement and progress are good as pupils with a wide range of attainment build on their previous learning as they move through the school. Again this is often the result of high quality teaching using good assessment of pupils' needs. In Key Stage 3 most pupils develop their ability to add and subtract using numbers up to 100 and can count in two's, five's and ten's. They can apply their skills in practical situations, for example when using money to plan trips. Knowledge of two and three-dimensional shapes also improves. By the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils have developed their understanding of fractions and decimals and use their knowledge to solve complex problems. Their speed and accuracy in mental calculations also improves. In shape, they improve their ability to work with angles and symmetry. As a result of improvements in English and mathematics, standards of literacy and numeracy have developed well since the last inspection.

4 Achievement in science is satisfactory overall with some pupils making good progress as a result of some very good teaching in Key Stage 3 and Year 10. In Key Stage 3 pupils develop their understanding of routines in the laboratory and of investigative work, but occasionally become confused about units of measurement when recording results. However, in Key Stage 4 they are able to conduct rigorous and well-recorded experiments, for example when using solvents to determine the

effect on black ink. They increase their knowledge of the organs of the human body and are able to link the use of senses to this work. Higher attaining pupils are not always sufficiently extended, however because some of the work has been covered before and the challenge is not enough for them to deepen their understanding.

5 In the other subjects of the curriculum achievement and progress are good in design and technology, particularly food technology, art and design where particularly high standards are often achieved, and some aspects of physical education. In separate information and communication technology (ICT) lessons achievement is good and good progress is made. The use of ICT in other subjects is satisfactory. In history, geography and French achievement and progress are sound in Key Stage 3 and, for some pupils, good in Key Stage 4 where they are given opportunities to research information for themselves. Progress and achievement in music are satisfactory throughout the school. This is sometimes affected by the absence of permanent specialist accommodation. In religious education achievement is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4 overall and Post 16 but sound in Key Stage 3 and in the lower part of Key Stage 4.

6 Achievement and progress in personal and social development are very good as pupils make rapid gains as they move through the school. Careers and vocational courses and ASDAN work adds considerably to this success and, as a result, pupils and students are very well prepared for leaving school. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls.

7 Targets in individual education plans are largely associated with literacy, numeracy, personal and social development and behaviour. As progress and achievement in all these areas are at least good progress in relation to their individual targets is also at least good for the vast majority of pupils. Overall standards achieved have improved considerably since the last inspection.

Pupils' attitudes, value and personal development.

8 Overall pupils' attitudes to learning across the school are good although there are individual pupils in some of the lessons, especially in the lower school, where they have disaffected attitude to learning. It is very noticeable, however, that other pupils are rarely distracted by such attitudes. The overwhelming majority of pupils are keen to learn. In an art and design lesson, where one pupil at first refused to come into the lesson and then refused to participate, the other pupils' enthusiasm for their work on memories drew the disaffected pupil back into the lesson. Most pupils are very aware, and frequently frustrated, by their limitations. A pupil said, "I know I need an education to get a job". Pupils in a lesson on aspects of the highway code, were frequently frustrated by the language of road signs, but worked extremely hard to memorise the visual signs and their meaning, and to obey their driving instructors directions on road safety. Pupils respond well to practical activities in lessons and, for example, in an ASDAN challenge lesson centred on effective methods of cleaning a room, boys and girls vied to polish mirrors and door handles, and were proud of their detailed knowledge of different cleaning materials.

9 The varied background of the pupils, both in ability and where they come from, results in the most recently admitted pupils in the school, taking time to come together as a group. The school is very successful in encouraging pupils to settle and work together well, and there is a recognisable progression through the school in improving attitudes to work, behaviour and relationships. This has a positive effect on the progress they make and their overall learning. Staff frequently remark on the stormy behavioural background and poor attitude to school life that a now conscientious student in the school's sixth form has had.

10 Pupils' behaviour in the school is generally satisfactory. A great number of the pupils are well behaved with each other, polite to visitors, and very well behaved on all the trips out into the community that were observed during the course of the inspection. Pupils behaved well in all assemblies observed, in the playground, at lunch and when queuing up for the tuck shop. However, a few pupils find it very difficult to maintain the realistic standard of behaviour expected of them by the school and the school will not tolerate any behaviour that puts any of their staff or pupils at risk. Over the course of the last year there have been no exclusions.

11 The personal development of pupils and their relationships with each other and staff are good. Sixth form students particularly enjoy the new range of privileges and responsibilities that come to them as they progress through the school. For example, the breakfast club, attended by a large percentage of the sixth form by eight o' clock in the morning, encourages pupils not only to be punctual to school, but also to help with the preparation of snacks, to organise shopping, as well as to promote friendships and healthy eating. There are many opportunities offered by the school for pupils to go out socially, for example to a performance of Blood Brothers in the week of the inspection. These are enjoyed by pupils as an opportunity to dress up, go out with their friends, appreciate the atmosphere of a large theatre and enjoy the live performance of a musical. Pupils enjoy the residential experiences organised by the school and relish the challenges of outdoor activities. Pupils respond well to the opportunities offered by the school to improve their appearance in hairdressing sessions, prepare for job interviews in careers lessons and learn to travel independently with the support and provision of zoned bus passes.

12 Whilst pupils' attendance at the school is greatly improved since the previous inspection it is still not in line with the attendance rates for authorised and unauthorised absences in a school of this type. Therefore, it remains unsatisfactory, despite the commitment to regular and improved attendance shown by many pupils. Most pupils' punctuality to school and lessons is good, apart from a small number of older pupils who are persistently late to school. The school's acceptance on roll of a number of regular poor or non-attenders from mainstream secondary schools also has a detrimental effect on the high percentage of unauthorised absence, although a significant number of these pupils do improve their attendance records at the school. Younger pupils rely almost totally for their punctuality to school on their regular school transport. Pupils punctuality to lessons is good, but the longer distances pupils have to walk in the main school to their lessons, does sometimes cause delays to the start of lessons.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

13 The quality of teaching in all key stages is good. It has improved since the last inspection and has had a positive effect on the standards achieved in many subjects. During the inspection 120 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96.7 per cent of lessons, good or better in 72.5 per cent and very good in 30 per cent. It was unsatisfactory in four lessons seen.

14 In English, teaching is good throughout the school, and sometimes very good. In mathematics teaching is also good in all key stages. Teaching in science is generally sound but occasionally insufficient demand is made on pupils and achievement and learning suffers. Teaching in the Post 16 provision and in vocational education is consistently good. Literacy, numeracy and communication skills are taught satisfactorily across the curriculum. As a result of the good teaching, learning is effective in the vast majority of lessons.

15 Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and a good knowledge of the needs of the pupils which they use effectively to ensure that pupils learn effectively.

For example in English teachers use their good command of basic skills very effectively in daily literacy support lessons to make aspects clear so that pupils with a wide range of attainment are able to make good progress. In physical education good use is made of external experts to enhance the quality of teaching in tennis and rugby, for example whilst there is also a high level of expertise amongst the staff, particularly in swimming. Subject knowledge in art and design is also very good. Lessons are well planned to ensure that pupils with a wide range of attainment can all make progress.

16 The use of assessment is also a significant feature of the teaching leading to effective learning and good progress. In mathematics and English for example teachers have very good knowledge of the attainment of pupils which they use to modify their teaching approach through planning to ensure a good match between the work set and the achievements of pupils. In mathematics pupils are made aware of what knowledge they have gained and what is needed in order to make more progress. The use of a carefully structured commercial scheme aids this process.

17 Many pupils enter the school with negative attitudes to learning. Teachers use effective methods to motivate and interest pupils through good classroom organisation and management and very effective behaviour management strategies. In art and design the teachers organisation and management of the lessons coupled with infectious enthusiasm leads to very effective learning. In design and technology the variety of teaching methods and aids, including videos and demonstrations maintains pupils interest and motivation. Teaching in information and communication technology encourages the development of independent research skills through exploring search engines on the Internet for example.

18 Expectations of good behaviour and positive attitudes are high in nearly all lessons. This is a significant feature of the teaching in many subjects and leads to good achievement. For example, in French the teacher challenges pupils and insists on responses, even from quieter pupils. In some subjects expectations could occasionally be higher, for example in history some pupils are not sufficiently challenged by the materials provided and in science higher attaining pupils are not always extended. Never the less the emphasis on matching work to pupils' attainment, high expectations of behaviour and good relationships are effective elements of the teaching leading to good learning.

19 Although parents would like to see a more systematic approach to homework it is generally used appropriately in teaching to support learning in a range of subjects where class work is extended to include practice at home.

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

20 The curriculum is broadly based, balanced and well matched to pupils' needs and includes the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It does not meet all statutory requirements in that religious education is not always taught in Key Stage 4 or to students at Post 16. The curriculum reflects the aims of the school and addresses the interests of the pupils well. It provides very good opportunities through its relevance, for pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and this has a positive effect on their motivation helping to build and maintain their self-esteem and confidence. Equal access and opportunity for all pupils whatever their special needs or abilities are available through the current curriculum. The curriculum at Key Stage 4 builds and expands on what has been taught at Key Stage 3 and offers pupils a range of externally accredited courses. Changes to the organisation of the curriculum have been well thought out and documented and have led to appropriate time allocations to subjects across the school. This has meant longer, but fewer lessons each day providing better opportunities for pupils to develop their learning.

21 The overall management, coordination and planning of the curriculum are good. Planning is clear and consistent throughout the school for lessons and for longer periods of time. This is an improvement since the previous inspection and allows subjects to be checked confirming that pupils move through the planned curriculum in a continuous manner. The deputy head teacher monitors the curriculum by observations of lessons and planning and gives valuable written feedback to staff to further improve the quality of what is taught. In addition comprehensive subject files maintained by subject co-ordinators are regularly reviewed and updated.

22 A good scheme of work for personal, health and social education (PHSE) includes sex, health and drugs education and begins in Year 9. More time is given to PHSE as pupils become older and in Year 11 discrete life skills lessons are timetabled. Other professionals are involved where necessary for such topics as dental care. The total PHSE programme gives pupils opportunities to discuss a range of issues which they may come across both in and out of school and supports their social development.

23 The curriculum at Post 16 is very good and has clear purpose and cohesion. It is a strength of the school. It has recently been reorganised and is well structured and very relevant to the needs of these students. A very wide range of experiences and opportunities are available while the basic skills of literacy and numeracy continue to be taught. Many work-related options, such as, hair care, driving, office practice, as well as community links which include a Senior Citizens Club, horticulture, retail, catering, and others which have a link to the curriculum are all available. All courses now carry external accreditation at a range of standards related to the needs of the students. Within the timetable students also study for the youth award, which starts in Year 10, citizenship, life skills and local studies. All potential accredited awards are well documented and the route from Year 9 to Year 14 is easily identifiable. Wherever possible students are encouraged to travel independently to school and this builds up independence and self esteem. The structure of the curriculum and the support from staff enables students to grow in confidence, mature and become very well prepared for life after school.

24 Careers education is very effective and the school has built up a wealth of work experience placements for pupils. Staff work hard to ensure that all pupils are given a good choice of work placement, to give them a sound insight into the world of work. Good support is provided by the careers service who attend reviews at Years 11 and 14 and who are available to assist staff in their work. Careers education begins in Year 9 and gradually increases and widens to give pupils a good awareness into what is available to them and where to find appropriate help. Parents are involved from the beginning and are very supportive of this part of the work of the school. Liaison with other agencies, such as Team Wearside, is good and is effective in keeping students informed of what further education and training is available when leaving school.

25 There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities offered to pupils. All pupils have the opportunity to participate in residential visits and after school visits to the theatre and musical events are a regular feature of school life. A football club is well attended. Sports teams, study support sessions and a link with HMS Ocean all add to the variety of out of school activities. Independent travellers to school can take advantage of the Breakfast Club.

26 Other professional services, such as speech and language therapy and the hearing impaired staff enable pupils with additional difficulties to benefit from the curriculum through good levels of support.

27 Provision for pupil's spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good overall. However it is variable in both quality and quantity between the elements, and is not coherently planned. For

example provision for pupils' spiritual development is not satisfactory. It does not provide a daily act of collective worship, although it does provide very effective patterns of daily assemblies on both sites. They focus on celebrating the results of the award scheme in the school, both for individuals and for tutor groups, and on developing moral themes such as the story of Louis Braille, over three or four consecutive meetings, providing pupils with time for thought and reflection.

28 The provision for both moral and social development is very good. The reward system covers most aspects of pupil's school life. Points are given at the end of each lesson, contributing to individual and group totals. Pupils understand how the system works and are committed to succeeding. They increasingly understand the difference between right and wrong, and think about their responsibilities towards themselves and each other under the consistent guidance of staff. They learn to make choices through the options programme, and to respond to challenge through the Youth Award Scheme. In physical education they accept the need for rules. In some science lessons and in food technology they think about the need for safety and for health and hygiene. Social education is supported through wide ranging personal, social and health education programmes, modules on sex education, remarkable for their openness and maturity, and on a range of 'life skills' all help pupils to think about their place in society as young adults. Pupils readily plan and support social events for local elderly residents. They all have at least one extended opportunity for social development during a residential week at school. They are a credit to the school during many work and training experiences in the community. Provision for cultural development is good. There are opportunities provided during visits to the theatre, and to arts and sports events in the community to develop an understanding of local culture. Many pupils are involved in aspects of the planning of visits. In French, art and design, history, geography and during religious education there are a substantial number of opportunities to widen cultural awareness.

29 The quality of the school's links with the community is good. A royal navy ship built in Sunderland has chosen the school as the main focus of its fund raising initiatives, and its crew offers pupils inspirational role models and opportunities to develop cross curricular links. The city careers service, and a very large number of supportive work experience providers, enable pupils to familiarise themselves with employment possibilities and to appreciate the value of continuing their education. The curriculum is enriched by local studies in the community; for example recently focusing on the city cemetery, Red House sculpture and the Victoria Hall memorial. Older pupils benefit from the provision of a local driving instructor to reinforce road safety, and the weekly social club for pensioners in the sixth form common room, is popular and beneficial both for its members and the students who run the club. Life skills courses in the school develop pupils' independent living skills and make good use of the community to enhance, for example, everyday skills of shopping and travel. Visiting professionals, for example a dental nurse, who shows pupils how to maintain oral hygiene, effectively reinforce the school's health education programme.

30 The school's links to other schools and colleges are very good and make a very positive impact on the curriculum. The school admits pupils from a wide range of schools in the area and works closely with these schools during a new pupils induction. The leadership and management of the school co-operate closely with local secondary schools and colleges to drive forward the plans for the new school building, and its provision for vocationally relevant courses, workshops and new technology. Taster sessions at local colleges and work related learning schemes open up the future for pupils. Pupils are encouraged to participate in the planning of some joint courses with other schools. For example, in the options package where sixth form students work with pupils with severe learning disabilities in another school, the sixth formers themselves decide the nature of outings, visits, and joint activities in school. This link has a profound effect on the school's sixth formers and highlights the compassionate and caring nature of many of these older pupils, as well as providing very good opportunities for their social and personal development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR IT PUPILS?

31 Since the previous inspection a clear policy for assessment, recording and reporting has been put in place giving well-defined guidance to staff. The school now uses a number of different methods to check pupils' progress and has developed a good range of procedures which cover many subjects including some opportunities for pupils to judge their own progress. Good examples of these are used in art and design, and food technology. Pupils are assessed when joining the school in English and mathematics. Many subjects now have some method of assessing pupils' attainment on entry to the school. The results of national tests at the end of Key Stage 3, the school's own marking system, annual reports to parents and external examination results all provide information about the achievement of pupils and the progress they have made. Comprehensive Records of Achievements are produced at the end of Year 11 and when pupils leave. Recently the school has allocated responsibility to a senior member of staff to collect all assessment data and analyse external accreditation results to pinpoint areas for further improvement and to support the setting of whole school targets to raise standards as well as individual targets. There has been good progress in the systems used to monitor pupils' progress in the subjects of the curriculum.

32 Each pupil has an individual education plan which is reviewed every six months. The targets set in literacy, numeracy, behaviour and links with home can be very general and difficult to measure successfully as they tend to be very subjective, for example many begin with "encourage" or "improve". However, individual targets set in the short-term planning in English and mathematics are much clearer and can be more easily measured in terms of the progress made. The idea of using targets to ensure literacy and numeracy are checked throughout the curriculum is very commendable. It is not always achieved because the link between IEP targets and small-steps targets in English and mathematics is not always clear to teachers of other subjects.

33 The school's procedures for child protection are exemplary and have ensured that all staff in the school are aware of the nature of child abuse, the designated persons on both school sites and the use of the specific child protection referral procedures. School tutorials and the pastoral system emphasise the school's commitment to child protection and identify to whom pupils should take their concerns. Modules within the school's personal and social education and health education empower pupils to say "No", when they no longer feel comfortable in a situation. The school's procedures for ensuring pupils' well-being and health and safety are very good. Health and safety procedures are very well organised and the school has completed the full health, safety and risk assessment review of the main school site identified as a priority in the previous inspection. Fire drills are held regularly; a qualified electrician on the school's staff checks electrical appliances on an annual basis. Physical education and design and technology equipment is also regularly serviced and checked by outside contractors. First aid procedures are efficiently organised. Dismissal and arrival arrangements for transport are well supervised.

34 The school's procedures for the promotion and monitoring of pupils' attendance are excellent and have had a very positive impact on increasing the number of pupils present in school. The team leader for the area's education welfare service continues to maintain an office within the school and to liaise on a daily and weekly basis with staff over any attendance issues. This has a very positive impact on the school's ability to respond swiftly to reports of any pupil's absence or truancy by requesting a home visit by the local attendance officer on the same day. The school's reward system is linked to a daily totalling of pupils' attendances at lessons and a weekly analysis of year and tutorial groups rates of attendance. This is a very positive incentive to pupils to be in school and at their lessons on time. The school works extremely hard to motivate pupils who come to the school with a history of very poor attendance and a disaffected attitude to education. Realistic targets for

improvements in attendance have been agreed directly with the Department for Education and Employment.

35 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour, and eliminating oppressive behaviour are very good. A clear and simple code of behaviour is now prominently displayed around the school, which is an improvement since the previous inspection. At the core of the school's strategies for improved behaviour are the tutorial and pastoral system, and the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Pupils know that whatever extremes of behaviour they exhibit, they are entitled to a fair hearing, a consistent application of the school's behaviour management strategies and the opportunity to take responsibility for their own actions through a specifically targeted behaviour contract. The school maintains records of incidents. Very good, centralised systems for tracking and monitoring improvements or deteriorations in behaviour are in place. The daily tutorial sessions are used to review personal successes and failures of pupils linking these to the total reward points for good or improved behaviour. The school is sensitive to the impact of bringing together pupils from different backgrounds, schools and ages, and is aware of ensuring the safety and well being of more vulnerable pupils. Lunchtimes have been shortened to allow less time for possible incidents and more time for after school activities. Detention and the withdrawal of privileges are used effectively to promote good behaviour and senior staff are available to monitor and manage the behaviour of any pupil who is threatening to disrupt the learning of a class.

36 The school's good advice and support to pupils making their transition from school to further education or employment is founded on a wide range of career opportunities, work experience placements and links to work related learning experiences. The staff's very good knowledge of the pupils enables them to match work experience placements to their specific and stated interests. The school's ability to draw on the good will of the community in providing these placements and opportunities is a strength of the school. A high priority is placed on pupils' health education, and subject specialists who have a sensitive approach to the maturity and knowledge of the pupils teach the programme for sex education, focusing most information in Year 11, when the school considers it most appropriate for their pupils. The school's support for pupils' personal and social development is centred on the daily tutorial sessions and this is an important time to build relationships, pass on information, and review behavioural, personal and academic targets. The school's options package very effectively supports older pupils in gradually assuming the social and personal responsibilities of adulthood such as through driving instruction, caring for elderly persons or students with special learning needs. The school works hard to introduce pupils to the leisure facilities available in the area so that they know where they can continue sporting activities once they have left school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

37 The parents' views of the school are good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. They are right to be positive about the work of the school. The school works hard to maintain close links to families, regularly phoning home to discuss aspects of, for example, a pupil's behaviour or attendance, and letting parents know that they are welcome to come into school at any time to discuss their children's education. As many families live a long way from the school, the school relies more on phone conversations with parents rather than day to day personal contact. Parents appreciate the efforts made by staff to settle new pupils, and parents, into the routines and life of the school. One parent spoken to whose son joined the school in the previous term said, "It is as if he had never been at any other school".

38 The monthly meetings of the parent's support group has given the school a forum to discuss for example the homework policy, home/school contracts and behaviour management. Pastoral tutors

regularly liaise with parents of the pupils in their groups to support their involvement in annual reviews and careers and further education choices.

39 Adaptations have been made to the timing of reviews and for the governors' annual report to parents, but parental attendance is still limited in these areas. Parents are however well represented at the school's annual careers event. A small number of parents do help on a regular basis in the school and the school values their support, for example, with the literacy enhancement programme and school outings. Many parents take advantage of the school's ability to organise preferential rates for family attendance at some football matches, and enjoy the opportunity to meet and to get to know staff on an informal basis outside of the school.

40 The quality of information provided for parents and carers, especially about their child's progress, is good. Copies of all reward certificates received by pupils are sent home to parents' throughout the school year. Parents are consulted and involved in the progress of behavioural contracts and regularly involved in discussion about how events at home are affecting a pupil's work in school. The school is increasingly using new information and communication technology to create newsletters home to parents, but there are some minor discrepancies on attendance figures in the school brochure and governors annual report to parents. The positive efforts by the school and parents to work in partnership is having a positive effect on the standards achieved by the vast majority of pupils.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

41 The head teacher and deputy head teacher provide very good leadership and management for the school. Since the last inspection they have been instrumental in providing a clear direction for the school and have introduced a range of strategies and systems which have led to considerable improvements following the identification of serious weaknesses. Key members of the governing body have also been actively involved in working with the local education authority to determine the future role of the school within re-organised special needs provision in the borough.

42 The roles and responsibilities of subject co-ordinators have been clearly established and developed. They are now responsible for evaluating the subject for which they are responsible. They devise subject action plans which contribute to the whole school development plan and managing the delegated finance arising from the action plan. They check the planning for their subject across the school and this is also monitored and evaluated by the deputy head teacher. They do not yet observe and evaluate the impact of teaching on learning in a systematic way. The effects of improvements on the standards achieved and the quality of education provided is evaluated. The temporary split site situation has put pressure on the management but the arrangements have been very effective. The head teacher and deputy head teacher in particular have worked in a very effective partnership to ensure that working on separate sites has not had a detrimental effect on pupils or staff.

43 The governing body fulfil its statutory responsibilities through the work of a small group of active governors. This makes the work of the various committees difficult because most governors are members of most committees. However the full governing body discharge their functions appropriately. Statutory requirements are not fully met in the information provided in the school brochure or the annual report to parents because of some minor omissions. Standards are monitored through reports submitted by the school management team but governors do not have regular formal, systems in place.

44 The school development plan is a very effective tool for managing the development of the school. It clearly identifies priorities and is linked to the budget to ensure that developments are well

supported by the available finance. Procedures for evaluating the impact of the developments on the standards achieved are also in place. Co-ordinators have become increasingly involved in determining the priorities through their detailed subject reviews and action plans and this is having a positive effect on the standards achieved.

45 The schools financial procedures are good. The head works closely with the administrative officer who provides very good support. Principles of best value are applied. Regular and thorough monitoring of expenditure ensures very good financial control. The most recent auditors report recommendations have been acted upon.

46 The leadership and management are very good, teaching is consistently good leading to good levels of achievement whilst costs are broadly average. As a result the school provides good value for money.

47 There is an adequate number of staff, both teaching and non-teaching to ensure the delivery of the full National Curriculum and the Post 16 curriculum, including the extensive option programme. Management effectively monitors the flexible but prioritised deployment of the staff to ensure that the use of skills and expertise is well balanced to meet the needs of both sites. Inevitably compromises are made but due attention is paid to staff preferences and the needs of the pupils. A good fit is made between the levels of staff's subject knowledge and their roles and responsibilities. The majority of staff have particular qualifications or experience to enable them to successfully work in a special school.

48 The well-developed staff handbook, peer support and structured in service opportunities assist in the induction and professional development of teachers, classroom assistants and the wide range of support staff. Staff, irrespective of their role, feel part of a developing school.

49 Appraisal documentation, performance management and threshold assessment procedures are all developing at a satisfactory level. Management is conscious of the potential tensions which could effect a split site organisation and minimise these to ensure there is no adverse effect on the learning opportunities provided for the pupils.

50 Although staffing costs are high as a result of the current management structure the senior management team is being effective in minimising the effects of this on other aspects of the schools development.

51 Whilst the accommodation continues to have some weaknesses in terms of the outer fabric of the main site building, for example, a leaking roof, both buildings are very well maintained and kept very clean and tidy which is to the credit of the caretaker and his staff. Pupils respect the buildings generally and there is no graffiti and very little litter. Both sites use the accommodation they have very well and make the school as welcoming as possible. Work has been undertaken to improve the environment by creating pleasant courtyards within the main site and the good displays of pupils' work at the Hylton Castle site helps to produce welcoming surroundings which support the positive learning atmosphere prevalent at both sites. Some classrooms at the Hylton Castle location are small, for instance, the French room, and the lack of a separate room for music sometimes puts the subject at a disadvantage in ensuring that equipment can be readily available. At the main site good specialist rooms for careers, art and design, science, food technology, information and communication technology, design and technology and a discrete Sixth Form base are well used. Accommodation for physical education is not ideal although there is a large hall on the main site for indoor activities. The school makes very good use of local school and community facilities to counteract these shortcomings and this actually enhances the subject. Both sites have small libraries. Outside areas are limited but

sufficient for the school's purpose. Although the buildings are not ideal there have been some improvements since the previous inspection and during the period of inspection the condition of the grounds was satisfactory. The changing areas criticised in the last inspection are no longer in use.

52 Resources to support learning are at least satisfactory in all subjects. They are good for mathematics, design and technology, geography, music and English. They are very good in French and for information and communication technology and science on the Hylton Castle site. The development in ICT hardware and software, together with the networked Internet access are leading to improved skills that will aid research in many curriculum areas. Resources are generally well stored and accessible to support independent learning.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

53 In order to raise standards further the head teacher, staff and governors should:

- (1) Improve standards in religious education by ensuring that it is taught in Key Stage 4 and in Post 16 provision. (Paragraph 20 and 143)
- (2) Improve the provision for the promotion of spiritual development of pupils and acts of collective worship by ensuring that opportunities are clearly planned and identified. (Paragraph 28)
- (3) Improve the overall leadership and management of the school by
 - (a) developing the role of governors in monitoring and evaluating the standards achieved by the school to ensure that they are as good as they should be. (Paragraph 43)
 - (b) developing the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring the quality of teaching to determine the strengths and the areas for development. (Paragraph 42)
- (4) Improve the overall level of attendance. (Paragraph 12)

In addition to the above issues the following minor issue should be addressed;

- ensure that the school brochure and the governors' annual report to parents contain all necessary statutory information. (Paragraph 43)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	120
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	11

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0.8	30.0	41.7	24.2	3.3	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	Y9 - Y13
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	153
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	83

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Y9 - Y13
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	153
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	153

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	8
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	12

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	0
White	151
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

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	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	0	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y9– Y14

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	7.0
Average class size	N/A

Education support staff: Y9 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	9
Total aggregate hours worked per week	103

Financial information

Financial year	1999-2000
	£
Total income	1,028,676
Total expenditure	984,646
Expenditure per pupil	6,193
Balance brought forward from previous year	13,900
Balance carried forward to next year	57,930

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	153
Number of questionnaires returned	39

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	56	44	0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	46	44	5	0	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	46	36	0	3	15
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	22	41	24	8	5
The teaching is good.	69	31	0	0	0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	53	39	3	3	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	79	21	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	26	0	0	3
The school works closely with parents.	62	36	3	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	59	38	0	0	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	33	3	0	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	41	8	0	0

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

PROVISION FOR POST 16 STUDENTS

54 The quality of the curriculum for students aged between 16 and 19 year is very good. It is broadly based, contains good vocational elements and is well matched to the needs of the students. The quality of teaching is predominantly good and as a result students learn effectively and make good progress. They are well prepared for leaving school. Post 16 provision is a strength of the school. However, statutory requirements for religious education are not met.

55 In English students build well on their earlier learning and make good progress achieving well year by year and in externally accredited courses. Records indicate that students have made good gains over recent years and consistently achieve well on accredited courses. For example good results are achieved in Certificate of Achievement courses. The majority speak confidently, they write extensively in spite of their limited reading abilities. Most students overcome many of their reading difficulties and increasingly read with confidence.

56 Students in Post 16 classes produce neatly written scripts often using different styles of writing and redrafting their work for a wide variety of purposes. They write postcards, letter, and book reviews and extended story writing in the form of novels such as 'Jacks Revenge'. Students enhance the presentation of their work by confidently using computers and desktop publication skills.

57 Students write current news items, poems, letters and prepare application forms with increasing accuracy and confidence. Many of their pieces of work achieve good pass standards when submitted as part of nationally accredited communication coursework.

58 The quality of English teaching for Post 16 students is usually good. Occasionally it is very good and it is never less than satisfactory. The course work is well co-ordinated and good resources enhance the provision in English.

59 Achievement in mathematics in Post 16 is good. The students are prepared for external accreditation Certificates of Achievement in which they achieve good results. In the National Award for Numeracy last year 11 students passed with distinction and 4 with merit. In addition they are able to apply their mathematical knowledge and skills in practical situation both in the Life Skills course and through Work Experience.

60 By 19 years of age the majority of students have developed confidence in using money, costing, budgeting and giving change. They tell the time accurately, can read bus and rail timetables and can work out the expected length of journeys. They can use tallies, interpret frequency tables, understand and plot graphs using co-ordinates and know how to work out means and medians. When the school was planning to start the Breakfast Club a group of students were asked to plan a survey in order to give advise on the type of food most likely to be chosen after it opened. During the Options programmes students meet with Senior Citizens every week, do their shopping and are responsible for bringing back the goods along with the receipts and correct change. They collect the money for lunches, Bingo and the raffle. All of this builds on their previous attainment and provides practical opportunities for students to use their mathematical abilities.

61 The quality of teaching in Post 16 mathematics is satisfactory and sometimes good. The good relationships and supportive atmosphere created by the staff ensure the students are confident to work as hard as possible to achieve the best results possible. The regular and on-going assessments provide

the students with clear knowledge of how well they are progressing and how much they have to do in order to achieve their next targets. This good teaching promotes a high level of enthusiasm, motivation and enjoyment helping to prepare them well for the adult world.

62 In art and design most students achieve well and produce some good and interesting pieces of work. Some students are given the opportunity to enter their work for GCSE and have gained good results, for example grades B and D. The work of a wide range of artists is studied, Van Gogh, Modigliani, Chagall, McFadyen, Klimt and Picasso. Some students produced very effective Delaunay lanterns following a visit to the local glass factory. The oldest students work through a range of processes and techniques for the “small environment” unit which result in a three-dimensional figure.

63 Teaching of art and design to Post 16 students is very good and is a significant factor in the high quality work produced. Very good subject knowledge, confident teaching which is adapted to suit the needs of these older students results in good pace to the lessons and leads to good learning with these students using prior learning and acquiring new insights into the varied work of the artists. There is a high level of challenge resulting in an increase in the understanding of specific techniques.

64 Students achieve well in the resistant materials element of design and technology and when working on construction tasks in the horticultural option. The students demonstrate good making and constructions skills and a good understanding of joining and fixing processes building on their earlier work. Most pupils show less enthusiasm and competence in relation to the design elements of the subject. Pupils achieve well and make good progress in food technology and when they apply their learned competences to life skills based activities.

65 In resistant material and food technology students achieve well on externally accredited courses, for example National Vocational Qualifications in joinery.

66 The standard of teaching is at least satisfactory and sometimes good. Lessons are well planned and linked to appropriate externally accredited courses. Expectations are high and good relationships are developing within the lessons creating a learning environment where pupils can begin to improve their skills, extend their knowledge and to make at least satisfactory progress.

67 The Youth ASDAN Scheme is strong and well developed in this school. It forms an important part of the Key Stage 4 and Post 16 curriculum offered to pupils as a way of accrediting learning and experience. Students achieve well in units which develop their skills for independent living, discuss the world of work, and offer opportunities to respond to challenges in the performing arts, media studies, information and communication technology and history. They explore independent study skills, and provide very significant opportunities to develop the ‘Key Skills’ in a systematic and well-organised way. A large proportion of pupils achieve the Bronze Award by the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils then move on to Further Education entry-level awards. During the last year over 60 Key Skill units have been acquired by pupils. This represents good achievements for the students as they build well on their previous learning.

68 Students respond to very good planning and recording systems, to challenging teaching of a good quality, and increasingly develop confidence in their own skills as individuals and groups within the Youth ASDAN Scheme. Health and sex education units are well taught both at a personal level now, and in preparation for adult life. Health and hygiene, and safety are also linked closely to work and training environments.

69 The development of the award programme is well led and managed, supported by a substantial staff training programme. The results in the school have been highly praised by external review

processes. The scheme is well placed to contribute to the overall development of a more coherent 13-19 curriculum in the school following the planned move to a new site.

ENGLISH

70 Pupils attain below the nationally expected level in English. They do, however make good progress in their learning and achieve considerable gains in relation to their earlier levels of skill in speaking and listening, reading and writing. There are very positive improvements in the standards achieved since the last inspection.

71 Pupils rapidly develop a good learning attitude in Year 9 after entering the school from a range of feeder schools. Good use is made of early assessment information to enable challenging targets to be set for individuals. As a result they begin to make good measurable progress in relation to the development of their reading, writing and spelling skills. This good progress is primarily due to the schools early identification of needs, good teaching and the provision of well-structured literacy support lessons on the Hylton Castle site.

72 Many pupils enter the school with a low level of attainment and in many cases have difficulty expressing themselves orally. As they progress through Year 9 and Key Stage 4, they acquire a growing confidence in speaking and when reading aloud in public. They actively participate in dramatic activities such as the Robinson Crusoe “Shipwreck” activities. They pose and answer questions clearly and communicate using complete sentences and in pairs discuss the books they have been reading.

73 Pupils enter the school with a very wide range of reading ability with a significant number of low attainers being unable to read basic texts. The few higher attaining pupils can read at a level almost in line with national expectations. The majority make good progress and rapidly achieve well and begin to master and enjoy reading a range of fiction and non-fiction. They read with understanding and increasingly in Key Stage 4 begin to use their reading to support their learning in other subjects of the curriculum as when reading recipes in food technology lessons. The pupils confidently read aloud in class, they can recall the characters and the plot of stories and begin to read with expression, for example when poetry reading using Windy Nights by Robert Lewis Stephenson. They willingly discuss their books with visitors and can explain the basic classification system used in the library. Many have developed adequate phonic skills which enable them to attack new words and to use dictionaries to assist in the development of their writing. Pupils responded well to National Poetry day and shared the enthusiasm of the teachers and produced good work in reading and writing.

74 Achievements in writing are slower to emerge. Pupils enter the school from a variety of other schools and bring with them a range of writing styles and levels of skill. By the end of Key Stage 4 most have mastered a level of neat clear print and a few have begun to develop their own writing style using joined script. This good progress when measured against their levels of competence on entry is continuous throughout the school.

75 Pupils use their writing skills increasingly to notate maps and diagrams, to write post cards and letters, and to complete worksheets and questionnaires. In Year 9 pupils begin to write book reviews and develop their skills in Key Stage 4. They continuously work to improve the quality of presentation and begin to use computer skills to enhance the presentation of their work. By the end of Key Stage 4 there is evidence of good progress in all elements of the English curriculum and this is particularly well illustrated in records of work maintained over recent years.

76 The pupils rapidly develop positive attitudes to English and respond well to the enthusiasm and expectations of their teachers and classroom support assistants. They are conscientious and complete tasks set for them. Most satisfactorily complete and return homework tasks. They are generally polite, courteous and collaborate well with staff and peers in English and drama lessons. They show

enthusiasm and excitement when engaging with the drama topics in Year 9 and when involved in class reading about Australia, and when developing an understanding of poetry.

77 The quality of the teaching of English is predominantly good, occasionally very good and never less than satisfactory. The teachers have a good command of the subject and teach with enthusiasm. Good attention is paid to the teaching of basic skills and the routine class work is reinforced in Key Stages 3 and 4 by the provision of very well structured and effective daily literacy support lessons. Assessment procedures are adequate but are used well by teachers to plan individual targets. They are under review and IEP targets are also being refined to provide greater consistency. Teachers' expectations are very high and as a consequence pupils are responding well. They are a significant factor in the notable gains in competence recorded over recent years. Teaching methods are varied and successfully used to maintain the interest of the pupils throughout the lessons; in consequence the management of the pupils is effective. The good, planned use of classroom support assistants and the close working partnership established between all adults in classrooms, has a marked impact on the progress the pupils make, particularly the lower attainers. Teachers plan lessons well and make good use of the resources available to them including Language Masters, computers, books, dictionaries, encyclopaedias and teacher produced and published support materials. A positive climate is created to encourage good learning and the progressive acquisition of skills, knowledge and understanding as well as a love of books. Teachers' assessment systems are developing well and beginning to inform both their planning and the pupils' own knowledge of their achievements.

78 The English curriculum is broadly based, balanced and matched to the needs of the pupils. It fully meets the statutory requirements. Contributions to the social, moral, spiritual and cultural development, of the pupils are satisfactorily planned for, through the use of a good range of literature, festivals, visits and visitors to the school. Good attention is paid to planning to ensure equality of access for all pupils for example print being enlarged for pupils with visual impairment in reading and food technology lessons. The extra literacy support teaching is highly structured and effective. Care is taken to ensure that pupils are not disadvantaged by the withdrawal procedures through missing often important work. All staff are provided with details of the particular literacy needs and competences of the pupils in the lessons and some are developing key word banks to be taught in specific subject areas. As a result literacy skills are being developed in all subjects. English is effectively monitored throughout the school.

79 The subject is efficiently co-ordinated and managed. The subject policy and schemes of work are in place and resources are well audited to meet the needs of a rapidly developing subject area. There is a good level of good quality resources, books, library areas, computer software and videos. The achievements of the pupils, the ethos of the subject and the quality of the teaching are all much improved since the last inspection. Effective use is made of visits and visitors to the school.

MATHEMATICS

80 Achievements in mathematics are good throughout the school and good progress is made. Pupils come to Felstead School from a variety of different schools and with a wide range of mathematical knowledge. On entry each pupil is given an initial set of tests to determine their numerical skills after which they are provided with individual targets which are kept under regular review. From Year 10 onwards all pupils work through the planned course at their own level and, within reason, their own pace although the staff are aware that some pupils need considerable supervision and encouragement to work hard and consistently.

81 By 14 years of age the majority can add and subtract numbers up to 100, order a number line and count in two's, five's and ten's. Most can multiply and divide using unit numbers including sharing

money into equal portions. They can recognise and name regular two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes and have investigated their various properties. For example making solid three-dimensional shapes using Clix blocks to count sides, corners and angles. The majority can measure using different units such as centimetres and metres, grammes and killogrammes, tell time to the o'clock, half and quarter hour on the analogue clock and read a digital display. They understand the calendar and some know how many days there are in each month. Most recognise, name and know the value of coins up to £1, can add simple amounts of money and give change confidently up to 50p. They learn to represent data in different ways and can understand histograms and bar charts. At the moment the Year 9 pupils have been making a bar chart to show the number of medals won by each Country in the Olympic Games. For most pupils this represents considerable gains on their achievements when they entered the school.

82 In Key Stage 3 pupils continue to develop their skills and confidence in all areas required in the National Curriculum albeit at their own pace. Achievements continue to be good. By 16 years of age the majority of pupils can add, subtract, multiply and divide with increasing confidence manipulating numbers up to and exceeding 100. They understand fractions and percentages and the relation between them. Most begin to problem-solve, the more able choosing the best methods to find a solution. All pupils progress well in speed and accuracy when doing mental arithmetic. Most understand the necessity to measure accurately but also the place for estimation, for example estimating how many cars will fit on a transporter. They can draw shapes both regular and irregular and know how to measure angles, understand about symmetry including rotational symmetry and make patterns using that knowledge. The more able understand the use of letters to represent numbers in formulae and different ways of representing data. During the inspection one girl was devising a survey on her friends preferences in music which she would then show in pictorial form as a pie chart.

83 Pupils enjoy mathematics and are generally well behaved. The majority are attentive, ask for help when necessary, follow instructions and work independently or together as required. The occasional outbursts of anti-social behaviour are quietly and effectively managed by staff so causing minimum disruption for other pupils. Overall pupils' positive attitudes have a beneficial effect on the progress they make.

84 The good progress achieved by pupils throughout the school is attributable to the quality of teaching which is usually good. A significant number of pupils transferring to the school in Year 9 do so with poor attitudes to learning and a disinterest or even dislike of mathematics. The calm, friendly and encouraging approach of the staff helps to build pupils' self esteem so that they begin to make individual effort and work independently. Confidence and a desire to work hard and achieve well are essential to the programmes in Key Stage 4 where pupils are expected to work through the carefully structured commercial mathematics scheme (SMP) according to their ability and at their own pace. Staff know the pupils well and have high expectations for good behaviour and independent work so that as the pupils move through the school and mature they are encouraged to take more and more responsibility for their own target setting and achievements. Assessment is used well to support pupils' learning and enable them to make progress through carefully guided small steps. The use of regular, on-going assessments ensures that everyone has knowledge of what they have learned and what is needed to make further progress. Numeracy skills are not extensively used in other subjects except in vocational courses and in science and information and communication technology.

85 The curriculum in all Key Stages and Post 16 is broadly based, balanced and relevant to the needs of the pupils. In Key Stage 3, pupils cover all areas required by the National Curriculum with special emphasis on the development of numerical skills and an introduction to mental arithmetic. In Key Stage 4 and Post 16 the curriculum follows a commercial scheme which ensures all National Curriculum requirements are met. In addition to this in Post 16 students are given opportunities to

extend their application of mathematics into everyday situations through the Life Skills Course, ASDAN modules and Work Experience. Students gain accreditation through Certificates of Achievement and through the Key Skills programme.

86 The role of the co-ordinator is well developed and the subject is very well managed. There is regular checking of pupils' progress. Systematic checking of strengths and weaknesses for teaching is not yet established. All pupils work to individual targets which are regularly reviewed while the on-going assessments are used to guide the planning. Liaison between the two school sites is inevitably difficult but as good as can be expected. The co-ordinator teaches at the main school site while the short term plans for staff at Hylton Castle are written in conjunction with the co-ordinator. She also monitors the results of all the assessment sheets before pupils move from one stage to another. The subject is appropriately funded and well resourced with plans to extend the use of computing. Learning support assistants make a valuable contribution to pupils learning through carefully targeted support. The co-ordinator is clear how mathematics should develop in the future. The National Numeracy Strategy is gradually being introduced.

SCIENCE

87 Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory which represents an improvement since the last inspection. This picture includes the very good outcomes of a significant amount of very good teaching in Key Stage 3 and the early part of Key Stage 4. However other teaching in these years, and in Years 12 to 14 is just satisfactory in the main, but with significant unsatisfactory features in some lessons, which do not always allow higher attaining pupils to be sufficiently extended.

88 Year 9 pupils had been in the school for only a few weeks at the time of the inspection. Pupils are learning the routines of laboratory investigations. They know in principle, why they wear laboratory coats and goggles and how to set up and handle equipment safely, but are still impulsive, and do not always follow the guidance.

89 Pupils know investigations involve measurement but are not always secure about which units to use for example confusing units of measurement for liquid with those used for length. They learn to match their equipment set-ups to diagrams on their worksheets.

90 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils can conduct a rigorous and well-recorded experiment to look at the effect of a small number of solvents on a range of black inks. They conduct experiments into a range of household acids and alkalis, having first made an indicator themselves. They handle the equipment carefully and record their results in tables. In a lesson on human senses in Year 11 pupils make some progress in linking the senses to organs of the body, but higher attaining pupils have done this work before, remembered the information and make little discernable progress. Progress is satisfactory for the rest of the class. Pupils have remembered how they tested for a plant's ability to respond to light and water.

91 By the end of the sixth form students have achieved satisfactory results at a variety of entry levels in a nationally recognised certificate of achievement, and this year, will be entered for GCSE. This represents a significant improvement in the expectations of achievement. Scrutiny of work shows a high dependency on worksheets at a similar level for all pupils, and indicates very few opportunities for extended writing or narrative about what they have learnt, or for presentation of results using computers. This sometimes fails to extend potentially higher achieving pupils.

92 Pupils' attitudes towards science are good. When pupils receive the very best teaching, and a high level of challenge, behaviour is very good. In the best lessons the ethos in which learning takes

place is calm, careful and purposeful. Pupils' behaviour is very good and closely matches the teacher's expectations.

93 In lessons where the same standards are not set and maintained, concentration is much less secure and time is lost. In a Year 11 lesson, pupils presume on a level of informality that does not allow for sufficient rigour or focus, and time is lost with frequent reminders from the teacher to behave better. This group's attitudes and behaviour were recorded as 'very good' in a number of further lessons on the same day. In a sixth form horticulture lesson on a plot of rough land, digging is overcrowded and pupils use of tools is poorly developed. One student, after bickering with another boy, wanders off unnoticed until reported by another student. The other students remain remarkably compliant.

94 The teaching of science is satisfactory. There is very good teaching in more than half the lessons in Years 9 and 10, some satisfactory and a single example of unsatisfactory teaching. In Years 11 to 14 teaching is satisfactory but with unsatisfactory elements in most lessons seen. The planning of the schemes of work is good, an improvement since the last inspection. In the best teaching, planning is clear, equipment has been carefully prepared and safety features considered. Demonstrations are precise. Questions are used well to involve all pupils and to check for prior knowledge and current understanding. A very clear ethos of scientific rigour is established and adhered to including the use of special clothing and safety equipment. Subject command is very good and allows pupils to ask questions with confidence. Each question is listened to carefully and treated with respect.

95 In the satisfactory teaching, good features such as imaginative lesson design and good subject knowledge are offset by unsatisfactory features such as very modest expectations, lack of attention to the needs of higher attaining pupils and a failure to insist on sensible behaviour. In the occasional unsatisfactory lessons, these elements outweighed the positives, and safe practice was not sufficiently adhered to.

96 The curriculum is now broadly based and balanced with a good emphasis on investigation and experiment. There are increasing opportunities for accreditation and GCSE is now to be offered for some pupils. The development plan identifies a need for this group to be given separate consideration if they are to achieve the best results. Planning will need to ensure that higher attaining pupils are sufficiently challenged for example, there are insufficient planned opportunities for the use of computers, and for extended writing. The plan also indicates a sound rolling programme of curriculum review and development. Recording and assessment schemes are in place and provide useful management information. The quality of subject documentation is good and meets the requirements of the last inspection report.

97 The subject is well led, and now meets the areas for improvement identified in the last report. There is now a need to focus on improving the quality of teaching. The absence of systematic checking of teaching has hindered this process so far. The Hylton Castle site has a well-developed new laboratory that supports practical work with careful supervision. A further new laboratory is planned as part of the projected accommodation currently being designed. Resources are good on the Hylton site and adequate elsewhere.

ART AND DESIGN

98 Pupils in both key stages achieve well. They make good and sometimes very good, progress in art and design. In Key Stage 3 pupils can name primary and secondary colours and know how to mix them developing an awareness of the properties of paint in relation to colour theory. They make

progress in relation to their baseline assessment. Most begin to understand the difference between “impasto” and “colour wash”. They have some knowledge of the work of Len Tabner. Analysis of work shows that they have developed their understanding about different hardness of pencils and use charcoal, ink, pastels and crayons. A colourful display of masks demonstrates that they have developed their modelling skills using a range of materials and producing a three-dimensional object of good quality. There is also evidence of lino printing showing improving control over using tools and designing prints. In Key Stage 4 pupils build on previous learning, consolidate techniques and make good use of sketchbooks to plan and prepare larger pieces of work. In Year 10 pupils’ work focuses on the unit about the local environment. They make pencil observational drawings of trees and of Hylton Castle and develop their knowledge of perspective and shape trying to use colour and depth of colour to interpret mood in the painting. They begin to have an understanding of shade and tone when they mix colours. The works of Monet and Turner are studied and Tabner and Escher. In Year 11 pupils have studied the work of Gustav Klimt as they investigate colour and pattern. Their work shows an understanding of complementary and contrasting colours and most pupils can explain what they are doing and why. Their gains in knowledge, skills and understanding as they move through the school represents good, and for some pupils, very good achievement.

99 All pupils have positive attitudes towards art and work hard during lessons. They listen attentively and apply themselves to the task producing some good work. They like art and design and enjoy the lessons. When evaluating their work with the teacher pupils are willing to adapt their work and try out new colour combinations and styles.

100 Teaching in art and design is generally good. The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and uses this most effectively to develop pupils’ skills and knowledge of technique and other artists. Her enthusiasm for the subject is infectious and pupils learn well. All art and design lessons are well planned and organised using a good range of materials. Good relationships and knowledge of pupils’ abilities help teachers to get the best from pupils through carefully planned work matched to the needs of pupils. The lively approach in lessons supports a good pace of work so that much is achieved and the development of pupils’ imaginations moves forward.

101 The subject is well led and managed across the school by a knowledgeable co-ordinator. The structure and organisation of the curriculum is good giving pupils a wide range of experiences in both technique and the work of other artists. Planning is clear and all pupils are given good grounding in essential basic techniques which are built on as pupils move through the school. A baseline assessment is in place on entry and work is constantly assessed during lessons. Sound self-assessment procedures are also in place. Pupils’ work is effectively displayed and teachers make imaginative use of resources which are scarce. Accommodation for the subject is satisfactory but the lack of a kiln inhibits clay work. Some pupils are entered for GCSE and two pupils recently gained B and D grades for their work. Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils’ cultural and social development, through its wide curriculum and opportunities for co-operative work. All teaching on the main site is taken by the art and design specialist and she has been observed teaching by the deputy head teacher. As yet she has not had the opportunity to monitor the teaching of art and design on the other site.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

102 Pupils attain standards in design and technology which are below those expected nationally for pupils of their age because of their special educational needs. However they achieve well and make good progress.

103 Pupils enter the school in Year 9 from a number of different schools and with a variety of experiences in the subject. They rapidly settle into their new school routines and begin to make satisfactory progress in their learning in food technology and their work with textiles and resistant materials. By the end of Key Stage 4 they have made good progress in all aspects of design and technology.

104 In both food technology and when working with resistant material they quickly develop an understanding of the relevant health and safety issues and learn to control implements and tools with confidence. They can select resources appropriate to tasks well as when making sandwiches in Year 10, or when designing and making working toys in Year 9 and when working on Certificate of Achievement modules in Year 11.

105 They develop an understanding of the principles of design and evaluation and are able to make comparisons between their own experiences and those encountered in commercial production. This is particularly well developed as an aspect of the food technology course where pupils watch and learn from videos depicting “How foods are managed in the Food industry” – a study of quality control systems.

106 In working with resistant materials pupils progressively learn to control hand and power tools, construct working models, boxes and small items using wood, metal and plastic. They make working toys and demonstrate an adequate knowledge of power sources and energy. By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrate good gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding.

107 They develop good attitudes to learning. They respond well to the well-organised teaching and the good but firm relationships established between themselves and the staff. The atmosphere created in lessons is a positive feature which has a real impact on the good progress they make.

108 They behave well and sustain their interest in order to complete their tasks usually with considerable enthusiasm and pride. In all lessons they take turns and willingly take responsibility for clearing away resources or washing up at the end of the sessions. They work at a good pace, pay attention to detail and respond well to prompts from staff.

109 The quality of teaching is consistently good or very good in both elements of design and technology. Teachers have a good level of subject knowledge and understanding and they use this well to develop pupils’ understanding. Teachers planning is detailed and ensures full coverage of the statutory curriculum and the challenges provided for the pupils through the curriculum are high. This coupled with the high expectations of the teachers has a positive impact on the good progress the pupils make. Teachers use a variety of methods in order to sustain the interest of the pupils including, direct teaching, models, videos and good demonstrations. Excellent use is made of time and the good working relationships established between teachers and classroom support assistants have a very significant impact on the quality of work achieved. The good structured teaching helps to create an environment where pupils enjoy learning, work at a good pace and develop the skills of independence which prepares them well for transition into the Post 16 department.

110 Assessment procedures are adequate and are used to guide planning but need to be refined in order to demonstrate the progressive accumulation of skills acquired by the pupils as they engage with new projects. They are, however good in relation to food technology.

111 The range of learning opportunities is wide and prepares pupils well for the Post 16 department and for life beyond school. The subject fully meets statutory requirements and policies and

schemes of work are closely aligned to the National Curriculum. External accreditation is used well to set targets and raise attainment.

112 The department is very efficiently managed by the co-ordinator who has a broad responsibility including food technology, resistant materials and information and communication technology. The practice of checking the teaching or development of the subject is insufficiently developed. Resources are audited and priorities established. The budget is efficiently managed, meetings are held regularly and the department's action plan is beginning to become a valuable tool in the development of the subject.

113 There has been continuous and satisfactory development in the subject since the last inspection. Systems are now more coherently organised and accreditation procedures much more appropriate to the needs of the pupils.

GEOGRAPHY

114 Geography is taught to Key Stage 3 pupils. The ASDAN accreditation in Year 11 covers humanities for geography and history. The provision for geography is satisfactory. The policy and scheme of work are comprehensive. Daily plans for Year 9 are in line with the long-term plan. Individual education plans and pupil profiles focus on the particular needs of pupils, although this criterion is not always taken into account during lessons. Homework is set to encourage pupils to look at their local environment for first hand evidence. As a result pupils achieve satisfactory standards and make sound progress. Satisfactory improvements have been made since the last inspection.

115 All pupils in Year 9 follow the same study on map making. They have made satisfactory progress to look at specific houses where they live by preparing a drawing for homework. The calm well-organised lessons ensure all pupils attend with interest and behave well. Pupils listen carefully and follow instructions precisely. Individual help is given and the teacher encourages pupils who have finished their work to assist pupils who need help. Very clear instructions ensure pupils successfully complete the task and are making satisfactory progress to understand the process of map making. The good use of correct terms by the teacher encourages pupils to recognise a key and its function and the difference between buildings. Most pupils have difficulty in recognising a three-dimensional model from a two-dimensional model. The good use of model making encourages pupils well to make and then place their models on to a plan. Most pupils recognise a terrace of houses, a church and semi-detached houses. Most pupils can draw a rectangle to represent a particular building. The teacher encourages an aerial view of the models with pupils standing on their chairs to view their work. A few pupils then recognised the shape of the buildings are rectangles. Good progress is achieved when the lesson is divided into small achievable steps. The high expectations throughout all the lessons ensure pupils are very well behaved, consistent encouragement and praise support pupils well. All pupils are developing good working practice. There is a good range of wall maps, reference books and practical resources for investigation. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. The pace of the lessons are rather slow. A more interesting range of approaches would ensure all individual needs are met.

116 Evidence of work for pupils in Year 11 show they study a continent such as Africa. They use books and the internet to seek information for the main facts and views. A good range of work for the ASDAN accreditation covers international awareness to contrast a continent to the environment of parts of Europe, such as Great Britain. Pupils have looked at France and the effects of the Channel Tunnel. They plan and research a holiday abroad and consider Politics and the British Government in the 20th Century. The pupils' work shows good development of skills over time to achieve credits. There is a range of different writing skills and ability, the work is neatly presented. All work is marked

with relevant comments to support pupils' learning. The structure of ASDAN enables pupils to make satisfactory and some make good progress over time especially higher achieving pupils. The good range of work is linked well to other elements such as communication skills and citizenship. The challenging and interesting work is linked well to the unit in the Bronze Award.

117 Since the last report the provision for geography has improved with lesson time increased to ensure sufficient time is given to the subject. There is now good progress by pupils in Year 11. The quality of teaching for Year 9 is satisfactory and it is good in Year 11. Pupils in Year 10 do not have the opportunity to study geography. The quality of teaching is not yet systematically checked to identify strengths and weaknesses to improve the achievements further. Planning is good across all phases with high expectations of good behaviour.

HISTORY

118 The provision for history is very good. The quality of teaching of pupils within Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and for pupils in Key Stage 4 is very good overall. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Year 9 and good to very good progress within Key Stage 4. There is good support given to all pupils at the end of lessons with relevant comments on work and behaviour. There is evidence of a good range and output of work.

119 The teaching of lessons in Key Stage 3 are of a slow pace but the quiet atmosphere encourages pupils to behave and concentrate well. Good comments from the pupils are picked up by the teacher with praise and interest. One girl was encouraged to read from her previous writing in order for her to explain why she gave her answer. Pupils put up their hands, eager to answer questions. Most pupils are making satisfactory progress to recognise the differences between life in the 1750s to life in the 1900s by picking out items in pictures that are different. One girl knows villages are in the country. None of the pupils know what 'population' means. The teacher challenges the pupils by using correct terms and giving good descriptions of primary and secondary evidence. Pupils are fully encouraged to express themselves during question and answer time. The work sheets are all the same with a written sheet unsuitable for most of the pupils to read. Work is not planned to meet individual needs. The use of more exciting and challenging materials would ensure all pupils are involved and the lesson was of a more challenging pace.

120 The series of well-planned lessons for the term ensure all pupils in Year 10 make good to very good progress to develop skills of gathering evidence and carrying out research. The teacher's high expectations encourage pupils to behave very well, they are sensible and co-operative especially on field study outings. They all show respect when visiting a cemetery with one boy removing his cap and pupils careful not to step on the graves. They take rubbings of the different shapes of the stone markers and the emblem shapes to record first hand evidence. Pupils are able to discuss the different nationalities and that they are mainly air force personnel from America, New Zealand, Poland, Canada and Germany. Higher achieving pupils take rubbings of the names and the ages of the personnel. A few pupils are making a connection between the men who died here in World War II and an old airbase which is now a museum. Most pupils show a great interest in talking to two elderly people who remembered the airmen being brought to the cemetery. The teacher encourages pupils well to think how they can carry out further research. They suggest using the internet, the library, talking to older people and writing a letter to Germany. Further visits to museums are planned and pupils have already found via the internet that one name is recorded in America. Pupils independently use a digital camera to record information.

121 History in Year 11 is studied as part of an ASDAN unit for humanities. The quality of teaching is very good with a variety of approaches to ensure all pupils are involved. The teacher explains the tasks very well to ensure pupils are sensible and achieve a high standard of work. Pupils rise to the challenge of a 'thinking skills' task to work together well as a team. They are making very good progress to identify pictures and pass on information to their team who write it down. The timed units ensure a very good pace to the lesson with a range of interesting resources well matched to individual needs. Pupils are learning to use visual source material and answer questions. Most pupils know the meaning of a ghetto and Anti-Semitism. They are developing an overview and sequence of the Holocaust. The group are brought together well at the end of the lesson to read a poem about the Holocaust to which a few pupils are able to make the link that 'we must never let this happen again'.

122 There has been good progress since the last inspection and very good progress in Key Stage 4. Targets are more thorough to show what pupils can do especially in Year 11. Assessment has improved to record pupil attainment. Accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4 is comprehensive with

all pupils working towards or achieving a high standard in the ASDAN unit with good cross curricular links with citizenship and communication skills. A systematic approach to evaluating the quality of teaching and its impact on pupils' learning is not yet in place.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

123 Pupil's achievements in information and communication technology are good in the specialist lessons seen. Accreditation by the end of the Post 16 courses is good and sometimes very good. Achievement is satisfactory across the fairly narrow range of work seen in the books and folders from other subjects, but following recent developments in the quality of provision, teaching and subject leadership, the rate of progress is good. This represents good progress since the last inspection.

124 There are extensive, and very good results emerging from the sixth form students against the requirements of the National Skills Profile-Information Technology, against the ASDAN Award Scheme Key Skills at level 1, and for a few pupils a higher level accreditation.

125 In the short time that pupils have been at the school in the current Year 9, they have learnt to handle the new computers well. They log on with their own passwords, enter text or images, save, copy and paste files to new locations.

126 In Key Stage 4 pupils have increased their confidence and skills. They develop their ability to enter data from a table into a spreadsheet program, short cut the calculations required, and consider and alter the background colour of presentations. They increasingly save work and exit programs safely and securely. Pupils, as part of the Youth Award Scheme, input formal letters of enquiry, think carefully about font size and presentation. They develop their ability to save and publish their results. Post 16 students have widened their range of skills. They can work with a range of toolbar icons and commands. They are using desktop publishing strategies to produce well-designed posters and leaflets, cutting and pasting both images and text.

127 Pupils' attitudes to their work with computers are very good, surprisingly good in Year 9 where they have only been in school for a few weeks, and particularly good in the Post 16 groups where pupils share machines and offer to help each other readily. They develop a good level of skill and therefore confidence to work independently, but are assertive in asking for help when needed.

128 Teaching is good. The specialist teaching in all key stages is predominantly very good, and ranges from satisfactory to good where other teachers are making a contribution. Specialist staff have good subject command, a clear sense of priorities, have prepared materials and lessons very thoroughly, ensure a good level of published outcomes. They follow a range of methods that is moving groups forward with good levels of independence, but will increasingly need to offer higher levels of challenge as the skill levels widen out in each class. A lesson on accessing the Internet provided a good range of current topics, connected to the Sydney Olympics, maintained a high level of pupil motivation, enabling staff to provide individual support as it was needed. It led to a very good work rate being sustained.

129 Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is developing fast in this school. A recent appointment is providing very good leadership and management, and is supported by an increasing motivated staff team. The management strategy has very clear and appropriate priorities. A new suite of Internet linked and networked computers on the Hylton site is also linked to a machine in every classroom. While the facilities are not quite as good on the main site, plans include upgrades as the new accommodation is developed. The curriculum offers a good range of accreditation for pupils and is focussed on specialist teaching. At present a small number of other subject areas are regularly

making use of ICT, but this is not yet well developed across the curriculum. However the level of individual support for staff is good and there are now plans to augment this with more formalised training opportunities. Word processing, some limited use of spreadsheets and the use of the Internet and CD-ROMs for research are appearing in a number of subjects, but not in a fully planned and structured way. Control technology was not observed. Multi-media work is at an early stage of development. The curriculum content being given the highest attention at present pays attention to those aspects that will help pupils with existing work and with research. The recording and assessment of the work that is being covered in specialist lessons or as part of the Youth Award Scheme, is very good, but a system has yet to be developed to cover work undertaken in other subject areas. This is also the case in monitoring the teaching of the subject and, in particular, its effect on standards.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

FRENCH

130 Pupils in both Year 9 and Year 10 make sound and sometimes good progress in French. Pupils in Year 9 can confidently count up to ten and use this ability in games such as “lotto” and French monopoly. They know how to greet a friend and that “salut” can be interchanged with “bonjour”. All can give and ask for a name, for example, “je m’appelle Danielle”. They repeat new phrases such as “j’habite à Sunderland” and ask “quel age as tu?” and use them in brief conversations with classmates. These phrases are also useful when corresponding with their penpals. In Year 10 role-play is used well to reinforce and practice words needed to ask for food and drinks in a café. They use “je voudrais” and add “un café au lait” or “un coca cola”. When actual food is available their interest level increases and all participate. All pupils have the opportunity to have a French penpal and correspond, in French where they are able, via E-mail or post. Little written work is undertaken except for copying lists and short phrases which most pupils can read back to an adult.

131 Pupils generally have positive attitudes to French although a few are reluctant to respond orally and lack motivation. They enjoy learning through games resulting in good interaction between pupils. Behaviour is usually good and pupils concentrate on the task and try very hard with pronunciation. They work well in pairs and small groups when speaking and take turns when playing games.

132 Teaching is broadly good in French and is taught with enthusiasm and a lively approach. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and conducts most of the lessons in French encouraging pupils to respond appropriately demonstrating their understanding of the target language. Lessons are well organised and move at a lively pace. A range of activities maintains pupils’ attention and encourages reluctant speakers to become involved. Praise and encouragement are used well to improve self-confidence and maintain pupils’ interest. Learning support assistants are well used when they are available to assist with group work. The high expectations of the teacher are very challenging to the quieter pupils but her insistence on responses allows her to assess how well all pupils are learning.

133 The co-ordinator manages the subject well and has made some very good links with a range of institutions to broaden the appeal of the subject for pupils. Some pupils visit primary schools and play games, in French, with young pupils and all pupils have a French penpal from a college in Macon to whom they correspond via E-mail or post. There is a very good range and quantity of resources including CDs and good use is made of information and communication technology for both research and appropriate games which help to develop the language further. An initial assessment is in place because little information is received from the feeder schools and pupils are able to gain externally accredited units for number and colour amongst others. The subject makes a good contribution to

pupils' cultural development. Good links have been established with Sunderland University and native French speakers regularly visit school. Relationships with local firms have also been fruitful in raising funds for additional resources and have made a positive impact on the standards achieved. The quality of teaching is not systematically checked by the senior management team to evaluate strengths and weaknesses, although some monitoring does occur.

MUSIC

134 The provision for music is good. There has been good progress in what is offered to pupils since the last inspection. The lesson time has been increased and resources are very good with a range of CDs, books and posters about composers. Access to the internet ensures pupils can research and print out information. The lack of a specific music room inhibits the use of stands and space for playing instruments. Music is now offered to Year 9 and 10 pupils. The use of accreditation is developing well through the use of nationally recognised courses. The opportunity to perform in a number of festivals has been maintained. The co-ordinator for music is new to the post. The quality of teaching is satisfactory.

135 Pupils make satisfactory progress in music. Pupils in Year 9 are encouraged well and perform to each other and sing to a CD. Most pupils can read the words on the song sheet as they practise the words to hymns for the Harvest Festival. Two girls sing all the words correctly without reading the words while the other pupils join in the chorus. Most pupils can beat or shake a percussion instrument in time. The teacher encourages pupils well to perform in front of each other. Most pupils enjoy the session and support each other well. The teacher has a pleasant singing voice but the lack of subject expertise results in a lack of rigour in developing pupils' skills in playing instruments. The teacher has made good progress in showing pupils how to care for violins in Year 10. The teacher uses the correct musical terms to encourage pupils to recognise pizzicato and bowing. Most pupils can pluck a violin and play a clear note. They are making satisfactory progress to recognise different instruments and basic notation. The lack of high expectations of good behaviour, direction and structure to the lesson with clear explanations to pupils inhibits progress. Work is assessed and filed neatly. Accreditation has been successfully introduced with pupils gaining credits for awards for investigations of sounds. The quality of teaching is generally good but the absence of a specialist room sometimes causes difficulties, for example with equipment or sound quality. Teaching is not yet systematically checked for its impact on learning.

136 A good range of photographs and videos, record public performance and work with musicians. Video evidence provides good examples of pupils' performance at the Christmas service at a local Church where most of them join in to sing the Twelve Days of Christmas. This is quite an achievement for pupils to perform in front of an audience. What they lack in singing technique they make up in enthusiasm. Pupils take part in the BBC 'Music Live' singing event for local schools. The higher achieving pupils sing well and tunefully using a microphone they have a lot of confidence and presence. All pupils support each other well and enjoy performing. Music in the park is an event where a percussionist introduced pupils to a wide variety of percussion instruments. Pupils responded to the high expectations that they will behave well and perform together. Pupils follow a good demonstration to beat a rhythm together. They enjoyed taking turns to be the conductor showing great delight in controlling the group. Visiting musicians provide good examples of brass instrument playing. Rhythm at Mowbray included experiences of a Didgeridoo. Pupils were introduced to folk songs with 'Industrial and Agricultural Life in Song' at Beamish open air museum.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

137 Pupils in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 achieve satisfactory standards in physical education building on their earlier learning as they move through the school. They make sound progress in a range of activities. No physical education was observed with Post 16 students although they were observed in a football match. Standards have improved since the last inspection.

138 In Year 9 pupils make good progress in swimming. Beginners make good gains in their confidence in the water. They develop their ability to move backwards and forwards through the

water. They can propel themselves with the aid of floats on their backs across the pool. 'Improver' swimmers are beginning to swim across the width of the pool using a recognisable front crawl stroke, most without aids. They benefit from good quality teaching from a qualified swimming coach and from the use of a swimming pool at a local secondary school. They also make good progress in the development of their hand-eye co-ordination skills when practising tennis. They develop their ability to use both forehand and backhand and try hard to develop volleys although their attainment remains low. Again they benefit from the use of off-site community facilities and the expertise of qualified tennis coaches. Horse riding skills are also developed in Year 9 using a nearby Equestrian centre.

139 Knowledge, skills and understanding of games are further developed by the end of Key Stage 4 and progress is good. Racquet skills are developed in badminton lessons where Year 11 pupils improve their forehand and backhand and volleying skills are enhanced when working in pairs and in small team games.

140 Post 16 students develop their games skills when competing in football matches with a local comprehensive school. This also enhances their social and personal development.

141 Teaching of physical education is good overall and is enhanced by the use of an external specialist. The enthusiasm of teachers and coaches captures the imagination of pupils and as a result their behaviour and attitude and consequently their achievement improves. The poor main school accommodation is overcome by the use of a good range of community resources and facilities. Co-ordination of the subject is effectively shared by two teachers – one on each site and a broad and balanced programme is taught. As yet there is no formal system for observing the impact on teaching or the standards achieved by pupils. However gymnastics teaching is limited by poor resources on the main site. Resources for gymnastics are satisfactory on the Hylton Castle site. Overall resources are sound.

142 The subject makes a very effective contribution to the personal and social development of pupils. Teachers have worked very hard to create a network of contacts within the community which not only improves the available facilities but also provides invaluable social opportunities.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

143 Pupils' achievements in religious education are satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and in Year 10 but unsatisfactory in Year 11 and therefore unsatisfactory overall in Key Stage 4. The school fails to meet statutory requirements since religious education is not taught in Post 16.

144 Evidence from teacher planning indicates that topics in religious education are well covered in Key Stage 3 so that factual learning is good but evidence of pupils' understanding is limited. In Year 9 pupils are introduced to a variety of cultural and religious interpretations of Creation including Siberian, Polynesian, Christian and the scientific 'Big Bang' theory. They enjoy the stories and some develop their ability to recognise similarities and differences between them. For example that most stories mention earth, sky and water and have an 'explanation' for the appearance of human beings and animals. Midwinter festivals are studied from a variety of different societies both past and present and pupils develop their understanding of the importance of Christmas in the Christian calendar. They learn about elements in the Life of Christ in particular listening to the parables and make good progress in relating the moral aspects of the stories to their own behaviour. They learn how Christianity was brought to the North East of England and by the end of the year are introduced to the Hindu religion in preparation for studying it in greater depth in Year 10. As a result pupils clearly build and develop their understanding and knowledge throughout Year 9.

145 Achievement in Key Stage 4 is inconsistent. In Year 10 it is satisfactory but in Year 11 there is no evidence of coverage or learning prior to the start of the term of the inspection so that overall achievement in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory. In Year 10 pupils develop their knowledge of Hinduism as an in-depth study of a major religion required for a Youth Award scheme module. They learn about the origins of the Hindu religion, and some of the fundamental beliefs of the Faith. For example the meaning of Dharma, Brahman and the Trimurti learning the names and appearance of the three faces of Brahman i.e. Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. They enjoy looking at the various artefacts such as models of the Gods which help to develop an understanding of their significance; one pupil was able to identify the 4 arms of Vishnu as representing special powers and another that blue skin is not human and so is also very significant and special. Factual learning is good but some of the concepts are too difficult for the majority of pupils to understand.

146 In Year 11, during the inspection, pupils were learning about the need to care for the environment and relating this to their own lives. They understand the damaging effect of 'global warming', pollution and the need to dispose of litter. Through a Red Indian story they learned that the environment has been seriously affected by the way people fail to care. They are aware of the main symbols representing the six major world religions but were unable to identify their significance except to say that the Christian Cross was 'how Jesus died'.

147 Pupils are generally well behaved in religious education lessons and particularly enjoy listening to stories, looking at artefacts and doing practical tasks such as colouring in religious symbols and designing posters to identify areas of the environment which need to be treated carefully and preserved. Initially pupils find difficulty to taking part in class discussions of complex issues but by Year 11 they are developing the confidence to express their own opinions and listen to the differing opinions of others for example the effect of smoking and petrol on the environment.

148 The quality of teaching is usually satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally poor. In general planning is satisfactory, relationships are good and resources are used effectively. Where teaching is good the explanations are clear and pupils understand the relevance of their learning either to their own lives or how to compare one piece of information to another. Where teaching is unsatisfactory the tasks are inappropriate and irrelevant. The teacher's approach is too directive so that opportunities are missed for developing pupils' own ideas and understanding. Expectations are not always in line with pupils' abilities being either too low or too ambitious resulting in 'off task' behaviour and signs of boredom.

149 The curriculum is broadly based on the Durham Agreed Syllabus with significant modification and adaptation for the particular needs of the pupils. Planning across the two key stages is good but there is no evidence to indicate that, up to this year, the curriculum has been adequately taught in Year 11.

150 The role of the co-ordinator is underdeveloped. He has worked hard to plan an appropriate curriculum but there is no systematic method for monitoring either teaching or progress between the two school sites. As a consequence pupils' achievements by the end of Key Stage 4 are unsatisfactory. Resources are adequate for Key Stage 3 but insufficient for Key Stage 4.

151 At the time of the last inspection religious education had only recently been introduced and was in the early stages of development. Improvements have been in terms of establishing the subject within the whole school curriculum and providing schemes of work for both key stages. In addition pupils' work in Key Stage 4 is incorporated into their modules for accreditation in the Youth Award Scheme.