

INSPECTION REPORT

**BEAUMONT HILL SCHOOL AND TECHNOLOGY
COLLEGE**

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington

Unique reference number: 114348

Headteacher: Dame Dela Smith

Reporting inspector: George Derby

25349

Dates of inspection: 13 –16 April 2002

Inspection number: 192955

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community special
Age range of pupils:	2 to 19 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Glebe Road Darlington County Durham
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Robert Carnell
Date of previous inspection:	March 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25349	George Derby	<i>Registered inspector</i>	Modern foreign languages.	Characteristics of the school. Pupils' results and achievements.
9189	Daljit Singh	<i>Lay inspector</i>		Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. Attendance. The care the school has for its pupils; Partnership with parents. Links with business and the community.
7042	Keith Gutteridge	<i>Team inspector</i>	History; Physical education.	Leadership and management.
10099	Sue Lewis	<i>Team inspector</i>	English.	Assessment.
11642	Carol Parkinson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics; Special educational needs.	The quality of teaching.
23886	Declan McCarthy	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; Religious education.	The curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils.
18498	Bob Thomson	<i>Team inspector</i>	Post 16.	Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
12641	Pauline Lysett Jones	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Design and technology.	The schools' strategic use of its resources.
13623	Jim Waddington	<i>Team inspector</i>	Music.	
31167	Sharon Jeffries	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science; Information and communication technology; Equality of opportunity; Inclusion.	
18498	Denise Morris	<i>Team inspector</i>	Foundation stage; Personal, social and health education.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Beaumont Hill is a large, maintained day special school for pupils who have a very wide range of special educational needs. There are currently 212 full and part-time pupils on roll between the ages of five and 19 years. These include pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties and those with profound and multiple learning difficulties, autism and severe emotional and behavioural difficulties. Some pupils have visual or hearing impairment and some, speech and language difficulties. Pupils are often taught in separate classes, according to the type of their disability. The school is based on three main sites, in the one road and within walking distance from each other. The school supports a small number of pupils who come into the school from other schools on 'in reach'. Some senior staff also support pupils on 'outreach', who are not on the school's roll, in mainstream schools. Two classes are taught wholly off-site, one in a mainstream primary school and one in a mainstream secondary school. Another class attends the primary school for two days per week. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is well below that expected for their age, because of the effects of their disabilities. Just under a half of the pupils are eligible for free school meals. One pupil has English as an additional language, but is not at a stage of early language acquisition. There is one pupil from a minority ethnic group (Egyptian). Girls form approximately one third of the school's roll. The school gained technology college status in 1999 and serves as a 'centre of excellence' for the local education authority. Over the past 12 months, staffing difficulties, often through illness, have had a limiting affect on some of the schools' work, such as that in design and technology.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Beaumont Hill is a good and effective school which has many very good features. It strongly promotes the independence and personal development of pupils. Pupils make good gains in their skills, knowledge and understanding in subjects and achieve well. There is a strong ethos of care and concern for all pupils and a great sense of valuing pupils' efforts and contributions. As a result, pupils' response in lessons and their enthusiasm for school are very good. The quality of the teaching is good and many teachers use multimedia presentations in lessons to excellent effect. The school is very well led and managed by the headteacher and key staff. There is a very strong partnership between the headteacher and the assistant headteachers, as well as with the community, partner schools and further education college. The school gives good value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The school is very well led and managed and there is a very good, shared commitment to improvement; the use of funding for embracing and developing new initiatives is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and their concentration in lessons are very good; pupils work extremely hard, physically and intellectually.
- Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves are very good.
- Teaching is good overall; the management of pupils by staff is excellent. Teaching assistants make a very good contribution to lessons and support pupils very well.
- Literacy and numeracy skills are very well supported and developed throughout the school.
- The quality of teaching and the pupils' achievements in science, French, information and communication technology and physical education are very good.
- The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- The provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties.
- The support for some pupils' independence, understanding, communication and writing through the use of signs, symbols, objects of reference and computer technology.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since its last inspection in March 1997. The quality of the teaching has improved. There is now significantly more good teaching. Pupils' progress is now good overall, although pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties make more limited progress, because of weaknesses in the provision, especially the teaching. The provision for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties has improved considerably. The school's management has improved considerably. The management structure is clear and senior staff have well defined responsibilities. Very good performance management and appraisal systems are in place. A strong whole school curriculum policy has been produced. There is a logical and coherent programme, designed to make learning relevant for the most disabled pupils. The curriculum is managed effectively by the co-ordinator. Very good assessment procedures are in place for almost all subjects. An efficient computerised recording system enables pupils' progress to be easily tracked. The school is well placed to improve further.

STANDARDS

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

Progress in:	by Year R	by Year 6	by Year 11	by Year 14	Key <i>very good</i> <i>A</i> <i>good</i> <i>B</i> <i>satisfactory</i> <i>C</i> <i>unsatisfactory</i> <i>D</i> <i>poor</i> <i>E</i>
speaking, and listening	B	B	B	B	
reading	C	A	A	B	
writing	C	B	B	B	
mathematics	C	B	B	B	
personal, social and health education	B	B	B	B	
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in their individual education plans	B	B	B	B	

Pupils' achievements are good. They are satisfactory in the Foundation Stage and good in the rest of the school. This is because pupils are well taught and programmes of support for pupils' individual special educational needs are mostly well tailored to meet their needs. However, a weakness in the provision for profound and multiple learning difficulties pupils, and a lack of knowledge of how to help these pupils learn, mean that some make too little progress. The school prepares pupils well for the life ahead of them. Current award-bearing courses are well matched to pupils' individual needs and the school is extending its higher-level courses. Whole-school targets are well considered and help to raise pupils' attainment. Pupils make good progress in English, which is very well supported by the school's approach to teaching literacy. Progress in reading, through print and symbols is particularly strong from pupils' starting points. Most pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and communicating; some pupils with more complex needs make less progress because sign, symbols and other aids are not used consistently by staff. In mathematics, pupils' progress is good and very well supported by the school's numeracy strategy. In science, their progress is very good, helped by the emphasis on experiment and investigation. Pupils make good progress in their personal development, which is well supported by personal, social and health education programmes. The high quality of care promotes independence and learning well. Pupils achieve very well in information and communication technology where their skills are very well developed.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very interested and responsive in their lessons.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils behave very well around the school and are courteous to staff and visitors.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. The school council helps pupils take responsibility for the school life and relationships are very good in the school.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall although attendance of Year 11 pupils is low.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1-6	Years 7-11	Years 12-14
Lessons seen overall	good	good	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 is good and has some very good features. It contributes positively to pupils' good learning in lessons. As a result of the very interesting teaching methods and the high quality of individual support, pupils are attentive and try very hard in lessons. Teachers and support staff have a particularly good knowledge and understanding of the needs of most pupils. Teachers are very committed to providing meaningful and interesting experiences to help their pupils learn, although their planning does not always show the intended outcomes for individual pupils. The teaching of English, including literacy, is good overall. It is very strong for reading and most staff support pupils' speaking skills very well. However, there is a lack of consistent support for some pupils' communication and writing needs, for example by the use of signing, watching, symbols, objects of reference and augmented communication systems. The teaching of mathematics (including numeracy) is good. The teaching of science is very good, particularly in the attention given to practical work. Good teaching was seen in personal, social and health education. Pupils are managed excellently and lessons very well organised. This results in pupils putting great effort into their work and using every minute for learning. The teaching of the small number of profound and multiples learning difficulties pupils is unsatisfactory. Although there is great care and respect for pupils by staff, weaknesses exist in the knowledge of, and the planning for their needs. There are some weaknesses in the teaching and provision for the youngest autistic pupils. The teaching of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties is good and sometimes excellent.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and meets statutory requirements. The curriculum provided is very relevant. The ' <i>Themes for living</i> ' programme is a significant strength and is very well planned to help lower attaining pupils learn in a meaningful way. The very good opportunities that pupils have to learn outside of lessons enhance their personal development. The provision for children aged five years and under does not always take account of their age and stage-related needs. Post 16 students not placed in the post-16 class do not always have access to the same learning opportunities as their peers. Off-site provision in mainstream schools and links with partner schools and the further education college are excellent.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Spiritual development is very well promoted through assemblies, lessons and the celebration of festivals and pupils' achievements. Staff are very good role models, enabling pupils to develop a very good sense of right and wrong. Staff have very good relationships with pupils, talk about a range of matters sensitively, and promote moral development very well. Provision for social development is very good. A very good range of cultural experiences helps pupils to appreciate their own culture and that of others.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides very good quality educational and personal support and guidance. Staff know the pupils very well and work well together to promote pupils' personal welfare and to make them feel safe and secure. The school monitors pupils' academic performance and personal development well. Assessment procedures are very good and the use of assessment is good. The school is already analysing this information well and the good use made of the assessment data could be extended to set targets for individual pupils.

Links with parents are good. The school works hard to maintain regular contact with them.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher provides a very clear educational direction for the school. She has been instrumental in raising standards. The very strong senior management team have clear lines of delegation, support the school's aims and values well and manage their areas effectively. The school is aware of the deficiencies in the teaching of profound and multiple learning difficulties pupils and is taking action to improve the situation.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. Governors, and the chair in particular, support the school well and are well informed. They have a good understanding of the school's strengths and play an important part in shaping the school. They are actively involved in discussions relating to the future development of the 'Learning Village'.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good with very good features. The headteacher and senior staff have been instrumental in checking on the quality of teaching practice and pupils' standards. They know the strengths and weaknesses of their staff well and give good support to them. Co-ordinators' roles are mostly well developed and they check on quality and standards in their subjects. The school's induction programme for new staff is good. Comparing themselves with the partner technology college special school has resulted in effective target setting.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Financial planning procedures are of high quality and are effectively overseen by the bursar. These are well tied into school improvement priorities. Governors regularly monitor budgetary spending. Specific grants are used well.

The accommodation is satisfactory but, in parts, access for pupils with physical needs is limited. Staffing levels are good with good numbers of high quality support staff. Sometimes, staff on outreach activities are covered by staff with insufficient experience. The provision for speech and language therapy and occupational therapy is inadequate and pupils with sensory disabilities do not have enough external support. Learning resources are sound. The school applies best value principles soundly.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Children like to come to school.• There is an interesting range of activities outside lessons; pupils' behaviour is good.• Children make good progress.• Leadership and management are good.• Parents feel welcome in the school and the school works closely with them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of work pupils do at home.• Provision for secondary-aged profound and multiple learning difficulties pupils.• The amount of speech and language and occupational therapy.

The inspection team agrees with the very positive views of parents. A third of parents replied to the pre-inspection questionnaire expressing mostly positive views of the school. Inspectors found the provision for homework sound, but the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties is unsatisfactory, as is the amount of therapy, to meet pupils' needs across the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand, and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower-attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.
2. Pupils' achievements are good overall. The strong teamwork between teachers, support staff and the therapists who work in the school, makes a significant contribution to supporting pupils' needs and ensuring their development. The good knowledge and understanding of these needs, and of pupils' personal circumstances, together with good teaching and well-constructed programmes, especially the *Themes for Living*, mean that pupils make good progress. Most pupils' individual special educational needs (SEN) are well met although there is a weakness in the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). The lack of expertise in dealing with these pupils, mainly in the secondary department, means that their needs are not well met and they do not make sufficient progress overall. Overall, because of these weaknesses, the progress of pupils with additional SEN is sound.
3. Large amounts of time within the curriculum are appropriately given to language, literacy and communication, physical education, and social and health education (PSHE), including a life skills programme for older pupils. As a result, pupils make greater progress in these areas. The staff's skilled and sensitive approach to improving the attitudes of their disaffected emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) pupils, and the good quality curriculum tailored to these pupils' needs in the new Stephenson provision, also helps them to make good progress.
4. When key staff work on outreach programmes in mainstream schools, the staff who replace them lack experience of the pupils they teach and their SEN. This is particularly the case for the youngest autistic pupils; the usual high quality of the provision for these pupils is effected as is the progress the pupils can make. In some cases, the staff with a high degree of expertise are away from their classes for nearly a half of the week.
5. Children in the Foundation Stage make sound progress and their achievements are satisfactory. Although the teaching seen was good during the inspection and contributed to pupils' making good progress in certain areas of learning in lessons, an examination of the work over time and across all areas of learning shows weaknesses, and results in pupils' progress being satisfactory rather than good. There are currently five children in the school who are under statutory school age. They are placed in three different classes according to their own individual abilities and needs, and work alongside pupils in Years 1 and 2. Although planning indicates that they will be taught through the six areas of learning for children under five years of age, in reality they too often receive a more formal approach to learning, such as that appropriate for the older pupils. This limits their opportunities for planned, purposeful activities that promote active learning both in and out of doors.

6. In Years 1 to 11 pupils' achievements are good. The curriculum is strongly relevant and well planned, and staff, despite the fact that some are relatively new, have a good knowledge of the pupils and how to adapt the curriculum to meet these needs very effectively.

7. The progress of pupils in the Post 16 department is good and they achieve well overall. The Post 16 provision is mostly separate although some Post 16 students are taught alongside younger pupils. This limits their access to programmes that are relevant to their age and needs. The good quality of teaching enhances pupils' progress well and prepares students well for moving to college or to their next step in life. Attainment on entry to the Post 16 department is lower than for the rest of the school, since the provision caters for students who are not yet able to take up places at the local college. Accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) is in place for the more able students involved in the Youth Award Scheme (YAS). Last year, 2001, 10 students passed the Youth Award Bronze award.

8. All students achieve well while attending the Post 16 provision. In literacy, the policy is to teach the learning objectives within the ASDAN framework of modules. Students achieve well in these sessions. The good progress that students make in numeracy, especially using money, is reinforced by the extra work they do in the Bistro. This is well supported through their experiences in college, the community and residential experiences. As part of this programme they take care of their personal daily needs, prepare simple meals and snacks, carry out basic shopping and cleaning, and learn how to spend their leisure time.

9. Occasionally, some pupils in the school achieve near or in line with the national expectations for their age. This varies from year to year, however. Some pupils attained Level 5 in mathematics in their Year 9 National Curriculum tests last year, representing very good achievement. Pupils with the strongest attainments are educated alongside their mainstream peers in the school's secondary off-site provision. In 2001, one pupil gained five GCSEs, with grades in the range of E to F. This is a considerable achievement and reflects the commitment the school has to supporting pupils' individual needs. The school's range of award-bearing courses, and the grades that pupils achieve have improved in recent years, and this year some pupils have embarked on GCSE courses, such as mathematics, on the Beaumont site.

Pupils' achievement in subjects and in relation to their personal targets.

10. Pupils' achievement in English is good. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in communicating, speaking, and listening. Some pupils, particularly those with moderate and severe learning difficulties (SLD) and older pupils with autism, make very good progress. Pupils' interest in books, signs and symbols is very well promoted and supported. As a result, they make very good progress from their starting points, particularly in their early reading skills and in their interest and involvement in the activities provided. Pupils with autism and those with PMLD make small but significant gains in their recognition of symbols and their 'reading' of their text messages. Pupils with PMLD take part in role-play situations; this supports their interest and involvement in the activity well. However, their involvement in the whole class story telling needs to be maintained more effectively through the use of more individualised support books and more use of tactile stories.

11. Pupils make good, and sometimes very good, progress in their writing. From the moment they enter the school, pupil's mark-making is encouraged and treated with respect. Handwriting skills are very carefully promoted and the use of computer interactive whiteboards and individual white boards encourage pupils to learn from each other and their teachers' models and 'have a go'. There is no occupational therapy available to the school to help teachers devise handwriting programmes for pupils with specific needs, but support staff have received training and provide very good multi-sensory experiences to support some children in this area. The lack of information and communication technology (ICT) aids for communication and writing for other pupils, mean that PMLD pupils in particular have only limited means of self-expression through writing and making their mark, and there is a need to address this.

12. The progress of pupils with additional SEN in English is satisfactory overall. It is strongest for those pupils with EBD and more variable for those pupils with more complex communication and learning difficulties. This is because some staff are inconsistent in the way they use assistive devices, signs, symbols and objects of reference with these children; sometimes it is because staff have only limited knowledge and skills to help these pupils to communicate effectively.

13. Most pupils now make good progress in mathematics from Years 1 to 11 as well as in the Post 16 department, and the level of achievement is good for the majority of pupils. Some individual pupils in Year 9 reach Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests, the expected level for their age and a very good achievement. Pupils at the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and their level of achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with SEN, especially those with PMLD, make slower but satisfactory progress overall. Pupils with EBD make good progress in mathematics. Pupils' progress is good because of the good quality of teaching in the school and the very strong leadership from the co-ordinator for mathematics. The introduction of the numeracy strategy has had a positive effect on pupils' progress.

14. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well in science, helped by the emphasis on experiment and investigation. Eleven students achieved the Oxford, Cambridge and RSA Examination (OCR) accreditation at bronze level, and two students at silver level in 2001. Although most pupils achieve significantly below the nationally expected level, in line with their disabilities, individual pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in Year 9 in 2001 achieved closer to the level for their age.

15. In ICT, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well throughout the school. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and lesson observations indicate that the majority of pupils make very good progress. The planning is good and ICT is used very well across the curriculum. Word processing is taught well and used effectively in many subjects to support pupils' learning. Pupils log, analyse and display data well, use word processing programs to present their work and the Internet to aid original research and to reinforce learning. The current assessment procedures ensure that all provide good support in ensuring that all elements in the programme of study are covered and that learning is continuous and progressive. As a result, pupils make very good progress. A range of peripherals and customised software is available to meet pupils' specific needs. However, PMLD pupils do not have enough opportunities to operate simple switches in order to aid their mobility and communication and this limits the progress they make.

16. Pupils achieve well in personal and social education throughout the school. The new planning for the subjects is being implemented effectively and is helping to raise standards. The clear rationale, which states that the subject is integral to all areas of school life, is evident in the good behaviour exhibited by the vast majority of pupils, and in their confidence

and self-esteem as they undertake their tasks. Pupils in the outreach provision at the local comprehensive school made effective gains in their understanding about citizenship when they discussed issues linked to environmental pollution and the recent revelations about the ozone layer. They clearly understood the need to improve the environment, and made valid suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.

17. In modern foreign languages, pupils make very good progress. The teacher has very good subject knowledge, her planning of the high quality curriculum is very good and she makes good use of ICT to motivate and involve the pupils.

18. Progress in physical education is also very good. In Years 1 and 2 progress is good overall and is sometimes very good. By Year 2, pupils' co-ordination and movement has improved through a variety of activities including gymnastics and swimming. In swimming they quickly gain in confidence and can cross the pool, walking, running and jumping. By Year 6, they have built on their prior achievements and knowledge and are able to make choices and evaluate their own performance. They are beginning to refine their movements in gymnastics and are developing their skills as team members. By the end of Year 9 more able pupils are making very good progress in the pool. They can swim 25 metres using both front and back crawl techniques and jump into the water using a straddle style. Pupils in Year 10 and 11 make very good progress especially in outdoor education. For example, by the end of Year 11, when using a climbing wall, they are aware of necessary safety precautions and can climb using appropriate grips for both hand and feet. Pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a range of after-school clubs and to represent the school in a range of competitions. This further promotes their personal and social skills.

19. In art, music and religious education, pupils' progress is good. In geography it is satisfactory across the school. In history it is satisfactory in Year 1 to 6 and good in Years 7 to 9. In design and technology it is satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in Years 7 to 11. Most lessons observed in design and technology during the inspection were for classes of junior and secondary aged pupils. An examination of the pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff took place to inform judgements about the pupils' progress over time. In Years 1 to 6, design and technology is taught through *Themes for Living*. Pupils' progress in food technology is good.

Target setting.

20. The school is very committed to raising pupils' individual levels of achievement and is successful at doing so. A very good range of assessment information is collected, especially in relation to personal targets, and pupils make good progress towards these. The school has set challenging targets since 1999 and has begun to analyse whole school assessment data in order to improve on its target setting process. Good practice is evident through the performance review system the school has, although more could be done to analyse the achievements of different groups in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.

21. Pupils' positive attitudes, the very good behaviour and the very effective relationships they have with staff and each other are a very strong feature of the school community. Pupils' very good attitudes are an improvement since the last inspection and reflect the diversity of the curriculum, the climate created by the school for learning and the very positive provision made for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Strong links with the community and the very caring attitudes fostered mean that pupils support each other, the school and the local community in mature and purposeful ways.

22. Most pupils are confident, disciplined and motivated learners. They concentrate well and persevere to complete tasks. They co-operate well and work effectively in small groups, exchanging information and ideas. They respond positively when given the opportunity to work independently, although few of these opportunities were observed during the inspection. However, in a Year 10 light engineering lesson provided by the local college of further education for Beaumont pupils (some with a history of disaffection), they were observed working independently, engaged and concentrating very well, in a complex series of activities, which involved reading a diagram and transferring the information into making a garden trowel. Pupils report that they value the opportunity to work independently in some lessons and that this prepares them for the world of work and life beyond school. Pupils who integrate into mainstream schools have really positive attitudes to their work. They concentrate well and enjoy their lessons and, for example, were not put off their work by the disruptive and abusive behaviour caused by some mainstream pupils in the secondary school provision.

23. A small group of pupils, particularly some with EBD in the school's relatively new 'Stephenson' provision are not always keen to learn. They take longer to settle down and frequently interrupt learning and teaching, for example in some English, mathematics, PSHE lessons. However, there were instances in some other lessons, where their attitudes were positive and they were keen and active learners, such as in a French lesson, where the fast pace of the teaching and the multimedia approach kept them interested and involved.

24. Most pupils approach their learning constructively and take a positive interest in their school life. They join enthusiastically in a range of extra-curricula activities designed to support their achievements. For example, in a school council meeting, pupils were observed participating very actively and sharing ideas about fund raising; these opportunities raise their awareness of life skills, enhance their public speaking and communication skills, and help them develop as disciplined and motivated learners. Social activities, such as a game of pool, and planned team games, contribute significantly to pupils' modifying their attitudes and behaviour towards others, and they were often observed encouraging and supporting each other sensitively.

25. Through formal and informal interviews and meetings with inspectors, pupils shared their positive perceptions about the school and indicated that staff are caring, sensitive and supportive. A significant number of pupils feel that the school values their aspirations and that staff empathise well with their differing needs. These views contribute to very effective relationships and a culture conducive to learning.

26. Standards of behaviour are often very good in most lessons and around the school and this allows the school to function as an orderly community. Many pupils are beginning to demonstrate a pride in their school and its traditions. Pupils are friendly, polite, courteous, and most are able to talk very confidently and informatively to adults, both inside and outside of the classroom. For example, during the inspection a significant number of pupils spoke informatively about aspects of Sikhism and other cultures in a mature and respectful manner. A very small minority of pupils reported concerns about bullying and other

inappropriate behaviour, which has been documented by the school. Most pupils are adamant that bullying is dealt with effectively. During the last school year there were 13 fixed-period exclusions and no permanent exclusions. However, this represents a significant increase from the previous year. In 1999-2000, there was only one fixed-period exclusion. The school is taking very positive measures, including academic and pastoral mentoring, to provide purposeful and constructive levels of support to particular disaffected pupils. A number of the behavioural and exclusion issues relate to pupils with EBD who were settling in the school's new provision and becoming familiar with the new support arrangements for them. It is clear that these strategies are beginning to work; the number of exclusions is declining, as is the number of reported incidents.

27. Relationship between pupils and their peers and the staff are very good. The quality of the relationships throughout the school is very constructive and purposeful. They treat others with respect and are willing to help each other in a variety of ways. For example, during a school council meeting, able-bodied pupils volunteered to assist wheelchair users at the start of the day and ensure equal access to pupils with PMLD. Year 10 pupils serve the school well as monitors as do the 'head' girl and boy. They, alongside Year 11 and Post 16 students, support the wider community through work experience. Many of these pupils have opportunities to work closely with pupils with SLD or moderate learning difficulties (MLD), and this contributes to their own personal development. Inspection evidence also indicates that employers appreciate and value the maturity shown by pupils on work experience. Pupils throughout the school serve on the school council and represent their school community in sports events. During the inspection the head boy and girl spoke enthusiastically and proudly of their duties and responsibilities which entailed meeting and escorting guests. Pupils with MLD were observed carrying out canteen duties in a very mature and responsible manner. All these productive, purposeful and constructive relationships contribute very effectively to pupils' personal development and enable them to value their spiritual, social and cultural development in the school and wider community.

Attendance.

28. Attendance is satisfactory overall and has improved slightly since the last inspection. This improvement is due to the diligence of many staff and their close relationship with, and support from, the education welfare officer. They work collectively to investigate and discourage absences. Most pupils enjoy coming to school because of the interesting activities. Unauthorised absences are slightly above the national average for similar schools, but the school is working in a purposeful manner to reduce existing levels. Registers are taken at prescribed times and comply with statutory requirements. A very small minority of pupils arrives late for lessons due to problems with transport. This disrupts registration and causes some disruption to learning and teaching. Staff take appropriate action to discourage poor time keeping. However, the school should take further action to discourage pupils who take family holidays during term time and those parents who occasionally condone absences. The attendance of Year 11 pupils is particularly low at 81 per cent, however. The school is seeking ways of encouraging improved attendance, but this year group's attendance is a particular challenge for the school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

The quality of teaching across the school

29. The quality of teaching is good and has some very good features. The proportion of teaching which is judged as good has nearly doubled and this represents a considerable improvement since the previous inspection. The proportion of the teaching judged as good or better has also increased from the 52 per cent to 73 per cent. Nearly all the teaching is satisfactory or better; three per cent is unsatisfactory, however, mainly due to a lack of understanding of the needs of pupils being taught. In 10 lessons the teaching was outstanding (six per cent); a significant feature of this was the way teachers provided a variety of ways to interest and motivate pupils, despite in some cases, pupils having a history of bad behaviour and disaffection. Often it was the use of information and communication technology (ICT) in lessons by the teacher, as a way of helping pupils to learn, to check out what they understood, but overwhelmingly to engage them, which was one of the most successful 'ingredients' to lessons. Teachers often use very high quality multimedia presentations, prepared to a high level of detail, to ensure that the pupils learn effectively and in small but manageable steps. In a French lesson, Year 10 autistic pupils responded excellently to a challenging question session on new vocabulary gained about articles of clothing. This was because the lesson was organised to a predictable pattern and used high quality visual materials. This held pupils' attention, supported encouraged them to become involved and enabled them to cope with the challenge without anxiety. As a result, they gained a considerable sense of achievement through the praise given for their correct responses.

30. The teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall. Although the quality of teaching seen during the inspection was good, sometimes, children of Reception age working with older pupils do not always have their activities planned sufficiently well to enable them to make the progress they could and this reduces their rate of progress. The effectiveness of teaching basic skills is also reduced and teachers' expectations are not so high as for other pupils, although they are satisfactory. The quality of the teaching is good in Years 1 to 6 and Years 7 to 9, but has some particularly good features in Years 10 to 14. This is largely related to the considerable understanding of pupils' needs at this stage and to the ways in which learning is made particularly relevant for this age group of pupils and students.

31. The teaching in the school's bases in mainstream schools is good. There is good teamwork among the teaching and support staff and close liaison with staff from the Beaumont site. The work is monitored well and ensures that staff, especially those who are not yet qualified, provide effective teaching.

The quality of teaching in subjects.

32. The quality of the teaching in science, ICT, music and modern foreign languages (French and Spanish) and physical education is very good. The teaching in English, mathematics, art, design and technology, personal and social education and religious education is good, while for geography it is satisfactory. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching in history as too few lessons were seen. From the planning seen, it is at least satisfactory.

The features of teaching.

33. The school's strategies for literacy and numeracy are very successful, because teachers are well trained and knowledgeable, and reinforce literacy and numeracy throughout the curriculum. This enables the great majority of pupils to improve their knowledge and skills and to raise the level of achievement in all curriculum areas. As a result, pupils view school positively and to gain self-esteem.

34. Teaching is now stronger throughout the school, and has improved in Years 1 and 2, where previously a weakness had been identified. The previous strength in teaching in Years 10 and 11 and Post 16 is now mirrored throughout the school. However, the weaker teaching for pupils with the most complex needs, and specifically those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), identified in the previous report, remains.

35. The strength in the school's teaching comes from teachers' good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and the very effective ways through which they teach the basic skills. For example, reading, speaking and listening were used well in a history lesson with Year 4 pupils about travel in the past. Although it was the end of the day, they listened carefully, paid attention to the text and asked thoughtful questions. The language associated with numeracy was used as 'key words' in a physical education lesson in Year 6, and in a literacy lesson with Year 2 pupils who were speaking and listening but learning the language of position and direction at the same time. The opportunities provided to support and enhance pupils' speaking and listening skills are very good. Teachers use their voices and diction exceptionally well and this helps to keep pupils' attention and to make the spoken word easier to understand. Good subject knowledge and teaching of basic skills combined with high expectations support the good lesson planning seen in most lessons, and enable pupils to make good progress. Teachers' use of day-to-day assessment is weaker, although satisfactory; it does not always identify the strengths and weaknesses in enough detail so that teaching can focus sharply on areas for improvement, and as a result pupils make less progress than they could. The use of individual education plans (IEPs) is sound, and they are updated every term. A particular feature of the very good teaching is the way teachers use questioning very effectively to help pupils understand the reasons for their answers; for example, in an ICT lesson where pupils remembered a visit to a park and reviewed the photographs they had taken. Very good teaching also drew on, and rehearsed, previous ideas that pupils had learned very effectively in order to build on this and improve understanding.

36. Teachers' management of pupils is very good and a major strength. This good management means that pupils are usually able to settle down to work quickly, and that a constructive atmosphere for learning is created. It helps pupils to concentrate and complete their tasks, to work harder with fewer interruptions and eventually to learn more. A significant number of pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD), or behaviour which is potentially difficult to manage because of their disability and the teachers' high level of skills in this area are essential to enable pupils to learn from teaching. Careful planning of work and the very careful, effective use of equipment and accommodation helps not only to impart information more effectively but also sets a very good example to pupils about handling resources carefully and valuing equipment and how it can help them. Teachers and support staff work very well together so that good use is made of their different skills. Occasionally, support staff are not used effectively enough during parts of the lesson managed purely by the teacher, such as in whole class introductions; opportunities for additional help or for recording observations or making assessments are missed at these times. Members of staff work very well together and set a positive example to pupils, who trust and respect them as a result. The homework provided by staff is adequate and reasonably challenging.

37. The teaching by unqualified teachers during the inspection was generally good. As a result of their effective management of the class, pupils took an interest in the lessons and were enthusiastic learners.

38. Throughout the school the quality of teaching is good for pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), and emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) pupils as their needs are well understood by staff, which helps in the selection of activities that match their needs. Lessons are well planned and consist of well-prepared activities that give classes well-structured opportunities for personal development. Learning outcomes are clear and shared with pupils at the start of lessons. They use a very wide range of teaching methods, which engage pupils. Praise is used appropriately and pupils enjoy their lessons. Teachers have high expectations for work and behaviour. The teaching of pupils with autism is sound overall and is often good. In some specialist subject lessons such as French it is very good. However, it is more variable for the youngest pupils, particularly when the staff are less experienced and are less able to manage their behaviour and gain their interest.

39. The provision for EBD pupils is now good and teaching for them is good. Behaviour management is always very good. Pupils have very clear boundaries and expectations and are encouraged to 'make the right choice' with staff support and guidance. They are rewarded for success and endeavour, and appropriate sanctions are in place for unacceptable behaviour, which are individualised as necessary. This discrete provision has allowed pupils to have equality of opportunity and their very individual needs are met exceptionally well. They are taught some subjects in the Stephenson base and are very ably supported by experienced and talented educators, both teachers and support assistants. The teaching by some subject staff, when secondary pupils are taught out of their base was exceptional.

40. However, approximately 13 per cent of pupils attending Beaumont Hill have PMLD or have Multi Sensory impairments (MSI) and these pupils are not sufficiently challenged to achieve to their potential. Some staff have limited knowledge and understanding of PMLD teaching and learning techniques and this affects their use of time, support staff and resources. The use of assessment information to influence day-to-day planning is underdeveloped has an impact on the expectations staff have of pupils on a day-to-day basis, and their planning of meaningful experiences for them. Although all staff demonstrate a high level of care and concern for these pupils, potential learning opportunities are not sufficiently exploited and some pupils spend too much time disengaged from what is going on.

41. Not all subject co-ordinators have the opportunity to support the present teachers in the knowledge of how specific subjects can be suitably adapted for the needs of PMLD pupils. Many staff have a limited, specific knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning styles which will meet the very individual needs of this group of students. Objects of reference, signing and total communication are considerably underused.

42. Provision for, and use of, ICT to enable PMLD and MSI pupils to develop and make effective choices and statements throughout their day, or take part in day-to-day decision making, is also underdeveloped. The use of switch technology to enable PMLD pupils to control and make choices about their environment and mobility and thus encourage independent mobility is presently limited. There is a good opportunity for this when they use the multi-sensory room and the music therapy room, however.

43. Teachers work closely with external agencies and make good use of the help available, and this helps the pupils with physical disabilities to make sufficient progress in

communication and movement. The lack of storage space for large equipment makes the task of the teachers more difficult and impedes efficiency. Occupational therapy and speech and language therapy services are also inadequate to meet the needs of staff and pupils.

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

Pupils' opportunities for learning.

44. The quality and range of the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils is good overall and in some areas very good or excellent. They are sound for pupils in the Foundation Stage and Post 16. This is because the organisation of the provision for these pupils means that there is no cohesive Foundation Stage class and although Post 16 pupils are mainly in one group, some pupils are in a mixed age class of Years 9 – 14. Therefore, not all pupils at these stages have the same opportunities for learning. They are good elsewhere. The school has worked hard to provide a curriculum that meets the highly diverse needs of pupils within the context of a very complex organisation.

45. The Foundation Stage curriculum is reasonably broad and balanced and closely linked to the Early Learning Goals for children aged five years and under. However, in practice, the relevance of this to the children's needs is sometimes reduced. Although planning indicates that children in the Foundation Stage will be taught through the six areas of learning for children under five years of age, because they are placed in mixed-age classes they often receive a too formal approach to learning, and there are too few informal, but planned, play opportunities.

46. For pupils in Years 1 to 11, the school provides a wide range of learning opportunities which are highly relevant to the needs of most pupils and which includes all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. In the primary department many subjects are taught through a very well thought-out out topic-based approach called *Themes For Living*, which ensures that pupils learn subjects such as history or geography within a particular context, such as shopping or visits to local places of interest. This enables pupils to understand better what they are learning, and especially those with autism, severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound learning difficulties (PMLD). In the secondary department, pupils are largely taught separate subjects on their timetables with a strong emphasis on technology and preparation for work. History and geography alternate every half term, so that both subjects are now taught. Computer skills are taught within the *Themes for Living* topics in the primary department and as a separate subject in the secondary department. Pupils with SLD and PMLD have some subjects taught through *Themes for Living* in the secondary department.

47. The balance of time allocated to each subject is satisfactory, with more time and emphasis rightly allocated to literacy, numeracy and personal and social education in all year groups. The national strategies for literacy and numeracy have been very effectively implemented and have led to improved standards of achievement in literacy and numeracy since the last inspection. Pupils in the primary department have more time for physical education to develop their movement and co-ordination skills. Pupils in the secondary department have a greater emphasis on technology, which complies with the requirements of 'Technology College' status, and have very good opportunities to study technology subjects, such as catering, in college. Religious education is now taught throughout the school and pupils in the secondary department learn French and some learn Spanish. Spanish is offered to lower-attaining pupils, taught by a specialist teacher from a nearby

secondary school and is a further improvement in the provision for modern foreign languages, since the last inspection. The provision for French is of very high quality and pupils make very good progress because of this. However, in Years 10 and 11, pupils do not have enough time to gain any accreditation in this subject.

48. Outside school hours, pupils are offered a very good range of additional activities. These include various lunchtime clubs, such as the reading/book club, summer schools in literacy and technology; a number of themed weeks to raise standards in literacy, numeracy and science; community visits linked to topic work; artists in residence and residential trips, which include foreign trips. After-school clubs include computer work for which pupils achieve modules leading to accreditation. These well-thought out activities clearly have a positive impact on pupils' achievements and represent a considerable improvement since the last inspection. The provision for outdoor and adventurous activities is also very good. Pupils have the opportunity to gain a Youth Achievement Award (YAS), under the leadership of a qualified youth worker who is employed by the school. Activities offered to pupils include canoeing, horse riding, football with Darlington professional footballers, golf, climbing, hill walking, bell boating, dry skiing and mountain biking. The school is also involved in inter-county sporting activities, which again is an improvement since the last inspection. The curriculum is further enhanced through strong links with schools such as Windlestone Hall School (emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD) pupils) for music and Abbey Hill School and Technology College, used for comparing provision and pupils' achievements.

49. Since the last inspection, the weaknesses identified in the development of a whole school curriculum policy and weaknesses in planning for subjects in mixed-aged classes have been addressed with reasonable success. Subject policies and termly plans have been updated and are more rigorously monitored by subject leaders to ensure that all activities are covered. Although there are still mixed-age and mixed-key-stage classes, as at the last inspection, there have been improvements in planning to ensure that a broad range of subjects is offered and pupils acquire new skills that build systematically on prior learning. Most pupils now build up their knowledge year-by-year irrespective of the age range in the class. A rolling programme of topics is now planned for term-by-term in both the primary and secondary departments.

50. However, although pupils' access to learning opportunities is satisfactory overall, the school does not always ensure that all pupils have the equal access and opportunity. Pupils with PMLD and those with other complex needs do not receive a consistently high standard of education and appropriate educational support. Limitations in the accommodation lead to pupils of secondary age and pupils from Year 3 to Year 6 being based with pupils in Years 1 and 2, and this denies them the opportunity of working in a school for pupils of their own age and in an age-appropriate setting.

51. Secondary aged pupils, and those in the Stephenson Centre with EBD, benefit from a highly relevant Vocational Curriculum, which includes the YAS with opportunities to gain silver and bronze awards, a well thought out careers education programme and a good programme of work experience. For example, through the Team Enterprise project, the school has established strong links with local businesses such as a construction firm, which enables pupils to run mini-enterprises on a commercial basis. These activities make a very good contribution to their personal development as they gain experience in such matters as negotiating loans with a local bank, ordering and paying for goods and services and learning how to manage a budget. Pupils have constructed a school bistro and are currently laying a patio in the school. Not only do pupils gain a work experience certificate at the end of each project, but they have also enhanced opportunities for employment with local firms who have knowledge of their work. For example, one pupil has already been offered a job as a direct result of this initiative. Strong links have been established with Darlington College to ensure

that older pupils and students have opportunities to participate in training programmes such as those in engineering and catering,

52. The range of accredited courses offered to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is good. These include Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) bronze and silver, City & Guilds Wordpower (Entry Level) and Numberpower (Entry Level and Level 1), vocational examination courses in light engineering and food handling, AQA units in science, Edexcel Certificates of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) and Edexcel certificates of competence in work experience. This year, GCSE mathematics and science courses have begun in Year 10.

53. An appropriate and separate Post 16 curriculum is offered to the majority of Post 16 students, although some do not receive this, being placed in classes with pupils who are younger than they are. The range of Post 16 learning opportunities is broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of the students. Continuity from Year 11 to Post 16 provision is encouraged, and the development of key skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal and social development is stressed appropriately Post 16. Although there is a discrete Post 16 curriculum, students also integrate into the main school for certain lessons and physiotherapy, when this is appropriate. Students in Years 12 to 14 participate in an 'Integrated Learning Group'. Eight students attend Darlington College on Fridays as part of a planned transition programme. In school, these students study personal, social and health education (PHSE), English and mathematics most mornings and also modern foreign languages, art, humanities, science, technology and physical education. Other, less able, students follow a similar timetable but do not attend college. Instead, they further develop their independence skills and focus on literacy, numeracy and physical education.

54. Music therapy, including the school's involvement in the 'Amicus' project, enhances communication skills and contributes to pupils' sense of self-esteem and achievement. Vocational courses are provided at Darlington College and result in accreditation. Overall, the Post 16 curriculum, and in particular the range of courses offered, has improved considerably since the last inspection.

Links with business and the community.

55. There are very effective, purposeful and constructive links between the school and the wider community and this partnership provides very good opportunities for the learning and personal development of the pupils. Links with partner schools and college, in particular, are outstanding. The school is 'outward looking', ready to extend its links and give support, where it can, to other schools. The school, staff and individual pupils have been very successful in winning numerous awards, which are a credit to the provision, but also ensure that the school maintains a high and positive profile in the community.

56. As part of the school's work, five senior staff have significant 'outreach' roles, supporting pupils in local mainstream schools. They regularly visit and advise staff in primary and secondary schools on a range of special educational needs (SEN); for example, one teacher visits to advise on the ways of working with autistic pupils. This supports the local education authority (LEA's) policy to educate as many pupils as possible in mainstream schools. Local headteachers and senior managers value these links, which they judge to be highly effective and successful. One headteacher commented that such was the commitment of Beaumont Hill that he now had the benefit of employing this experienced SEN teacher as his special education needs co-ordinator (SENCO). Another said that having Beaumont Hill pupils 'enriched his school' and that his staff and pupils have 'blossomed as a result'. Nevertheless, when the school has staffing difficulties itself, due to

illness or other factors, then such outreach work can put provision under strain and sometimes results in classes being taught by teachers who are less confident in dealing with the particular disabilities with which they are faced.

57. The very strong links are valued by the pupils and staff of the schools. Although integration opportunities for Nursery aged pupils have reduced since the last inspection, the school has recently expanded its links so that EBD pupils benefit from high quality music provision at a nearby County Durham school for EBD pupils. The school's considerable links contribute to pupils' inclusion into mainstream school settings and also provide a 'pathway of opportunity' for the world of work and future college placement. During the inspection inspectors met with representatives of the wider community, including those from the local link schools and community education and they confirmed the very productive and purposeful relationships which supports pupils' education, careers, work experience and enables them to learn as responsible citizens. Visits were made to local schools; the quality of care, concern and teaching for these pupils was very well maintained; experiences and programmes very well planned; this indicates that pupils' transition from the different stages of education is smooth and support pupils' continuous progress. Pupils, particularly at primary school level were very well included and welcomed by their host school.

58. Community and youth links are very strong, For example, a very active youth group has raised money for a school trip to Lapland and lower-attaining students in Years 12 and 13 have worked with mainstream students in raising money for summer camps.

59. The school has been deemed a centre of excellence by the local education authority and received 'Technology College Status' in 1999. However, staff illness has prevented the development of design and technology provision and local schools are unable to be supported with ICT, as the co-ordinator for this is absent due to maternity leave. The school is involved in a number of local and national initiatives, which enrich the school's provision and pupils' learning, such as the Amicus project and a 'virtual reality' provision for pupils in Years 3 to 6. This is in its infancy, but is designed to enable the most disabled pupils to gain as near first hand experience of everyday experiences, such as being at the seaside, as possible. The school is also involved in the 'Healthy Schools' initiative and in the 'Sports Co-ordinator' initiative, in partnership with a local comprehensive school and five primary schools.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

60. The provision for pupils' personal development, including that for their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved considerably since the last inspection and is now very good.

61. The opportunities for pupils' spiritual development have increased considerably. At the last inspection they were judged to be 'underdeveloped'. Provision for spiritual development is now very good, with numerous opportunities throughout the school, both planned as part of the school's curriculum as well as spontaneously occurring throughout the day. Opportunities for spiritual growth and reflection occur, particularly but not exclusively, in religious education lessons. Other examples include assemblies to celebrate pupils' achievements and that give pupils an opportunity to have their work acknowledged publicly. In a primary department assembly seen during the inspection, the event contributed to pupils' spiritual development through the offering of reflection, concentration on a special 'thought' about, and consideration for, others.

62. Pupils often say a prayer in their classroom before they go to lunch. A good example of this occurred in a Year 6 class where one pupil spoke and signed the prayer and the rest of the class signed and said the prayer with her. Pupils also give thanks in the dining hall before their lunch is served. At the end of the school day, pupils have time for reflection before they go home. The religious education co-ordinator also has responsibility for spiritual development across the school. She has worked hard and developed a 'spirituality' file for staff, which has circulated the school, covering all National Curriculum subjects and providing advice to staff where and how opportunities for spiritual development can be further developed. Religious education, music, art, physical education, PSHE and citizenship all make a significant contribution and pupils are uplifted and challenged by experiences within these subjects. For example, pupils spontaneously celebrate and express their feelings in music lessons. They understand how well their bodies are performing in their swimming lessons and show pride when asking visitors to watch their increased performances in the pool. Outdoor education lessons develop a sense of trust and team work between staff and pupils and between pupils themselves.

63. Provision for pupils' moral development is very good. The ethos of the school, the support provided by the adults in the school and very good relationships with staff all help pupils to have a clear understanding of right and wrong. The management of pupils' behaviour in lessons is nearly always very good and pupils work in an atmosphere where class rules and other features of the school community, such as respect, are strongly promoted. Pupils are awarded merits for good behaviour and they strive to improve the amount of credits they accumulate taking pride in their achievements. Staff provide very good role models, in their dealings with each other and in their treatment of the children in their care. The school's comprehensive PSHE programme has a positive influence on the moral development of pupils and students. Very good relationships in school contribute to pupils' moral development. Activities in the 'Team Enterprise' for the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties enhances team work, such as sharing, but also pupils' moral development when they consider fairness and honesty in what they do. The school now provides a school council, made up of representatives of pupils and students from across the school. Some of their work means that they consider school rules and the responsibilities other pupils need to have in the everyday life of the school. This is good practice for life after school.

64. Opportunities for pupils to develop their social skills are also very good. Social development is an important part of the school's programme. A high quality programme for PSHE permeates every aspect of the school. There is a constant but unobtrusive emphasis on appropriate behaviour, taking turns and thinking of others' needs. Communication is encouraged and assisted in lessons, and other activities reinforce social development, such as lunchtimes, play times and out of school activities, for example, when a Year 10 class went along the nearby bridle-path to study the local environment. In lessons, pupils are encouraged to work together and many subjects offer a good range of educational visits, including a residential ski trip to France. This is an excellent opportunity for pupils to mix with their peers from other schools and students from the local college of further education. In school, pupils and students run an enterprise scheme preparing food for their Bistro. The school common room is an excellent facility for pupils and students to mix freely. They mix socially, read magazines, play pool, watch videos, or just sit quietly and watch others play games. Other pupils use the Post 16 classroom to play board games and small games. During these opportunities, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. The Bistro is used for social events, and also as a sheltered, internal work experience placement for students.

65. During the week of the inspection, Year 10 and 11 pupils were involved in a very good after-school, Italian meal presentation at the local college. Pupils were fully involved in preparing the food and serving and presenting the meal and this was an excellent opportunity for them to enhance their social and cultural skills. This they did extremely well, as can be vouched for by four inspectors who attended the meal. Internal work experience provided for senior pupils, gives extra opportunities for them to develop their social skills.

66. Pupils and students frequently go out to social events such as the theatre, museums, the Life Centre at Newcastle, sports centres and garden centres. They make numerous educational visits to places such as the fire station, police station and railway station. All these activities encourage pupils and students to communicate and interact with a variety of different people. The result is a strong feeling of pride and sense of belonging in the school community.

67. The school offers an extensive and varied programme of cultural activities and visits, which enrich the pupils' learning significantly. Music and art are important elements in providing pupils with experiences in their own and other cultures. Pupils have very good opportunities to experience the multi-cultural aspects of society within other subjects. For example, in food technology they look at the foods of different countries and cultures and produce dishes from around the world. In art, they study African culture and have made displays of African masks and art. They visit the local Mosque and study Muslim customs, well supported by Muslim parents who provide real artefacts and first hand knowledge. They visit Indian and Caribbean restaurants in town. Pupils use the Internet to research and download information on such topics such as the Taj Mahal, and Caribbean culture. The school invites visitors from other religions and beliefs into school to discuss their beliefs. There are good examples of artists work from other countries and cultures. Pupils have made impressive displays, copying artists' styles and famous pictures, such as those of Claude Monet and Pablo Picasso. Pupils also benefit from their studies of 'Customs Around the World'.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

The school's pastoral care and welfare.

68. The quality of pupils' care, their support, guidance and supervision is effective and complemented by the sound arrangements for child protection and the creation of a safe and secure environment for learning. Since the last report the school has successfully sustained its good pastoral provision.

69. There is good pastoral support in place, led effectively by the headteacher, senior management team, form tutors and learning support assistants. They work collectively to ensure that all pupils receive very good levels of personal support and guidance. Staff know individual pupils well and empathise with their needs. Pupils' concerns are addressed and their many achievements are acknowledged and celebrated by the effective use of registration time, assemblies, residential visits, provision for extra-curricular activity and through informal contacts during break, lunchtime and at the end of the school day. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) receive very good levels of individual support and guidance, which ensures that their emotional, social and personal needs are well addressed, enabling them to function as responsible members of the school community and to make good progress in relation to their special educational needs (SEN).

70. The care and medical attention that pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) receive is based on sensitive and caring attitudes of staff. However, the specialist support needed from external agencies by many pupils is limited, although the school makes good use of the time and services that are available to it. The school makes its own arrangements for supporting pupils with feeding programmes and staff have been trained to undertake this role. Speech and language therapy provision is insufficient overall, although the school has made bids successfully for speech and language therapy support for autistic pupils and provision for them has improved. The school makes good use of its support from its physiotherapist and the time available is used very effectively. Programmes arranged by the physiotherapist after her assessment are implemented carefully and reliably by school staff. However, there are few powered wheelchairs to give pupils greater independence and mobility and no provision from occupational therapy services to meet pupils' needs in this area.

71. The health and safety procedures in place are effective in ensuring that pupils learn in a safe and secure environment. The procedures are complemented by the commitment of the caring and committed designated teacher responsible for child protection. However, the correct procedures are not always followed and governors should ensure that all reported incidents are referred directly to the designated teacher and that the measures for reporting incidents of child abuse meet with the requirements of the code of practice, prescribed by the area child protection committee.

72. The policy and procedures for monitoring pupils' attendance are effective and implemented purposefully. They enable staff and the education welfare officer to ensure that all reported absences are rigorously investigated. Absences are monitored and good strategies are in place to raise existing levels of attendance. For example, the strategies used to raise attendance in Year 11, in close partnership with the local college of technology are working well. Pupils enjoy attending both school and college and enjoy the challenge of the work-related curriculum. Other strategies, for example the immediate communication with parents to investigate absences, are generally satisfactory, but the existing action to contact parents promptly should be applied more consistently and rigorously. Most pupils respond effectively to the system, which rewards full and improved attendance. The school is committed to improving the existing levels of satisfactory attendance.

73. There are very effective systems in place to investigate, monitor, record and report bullying and other types of anti-social behaviour, to parents and the local authority. The information is used effectively to communicate information and constructively challenge all reported incidents. Many of the recommendations to provide social inclusion and discourage racism are in place and enable the school to achieve very good behaviour amongst all sections of the school community, which inevitably supports very good attitudes, relationships and personal development.

74. Procedures and practices for supporting pupils' personal development are very strong and have been improved recently as a result of the school's adoption of the P scales, computerised record keeping system and revision of the format of individual education plans (IEPs). All annual review reports record pupils' progress in this area and many pupils know their personal targets in this area well.

Assessment and the monitoring of pupil's academic performance.

75. The school has made a very good improvement in its monitoring and use of pupils' academic and personal development, since the last inspection. At that time, although procedures were satisfactory overall, there were weaknesses in the ways in which the school monitored progress in many subjects and across and within departments; those assessments that were carried out were insufficiently tied into the National Curriculum and a key issue was the need to develop a common assessment policy throughout the school.

76. A considerable amount of work across and within subjects and departments, and strong leadership from the assessment co-ordinator and senior management team, have resulted in very clear procedures and a system which all staff understand and have ready access to, through the recently developed computerised recording system and database. The system enables individual pupils' progress as well as that of groups to be readily tracked. The school now assigns National Curriculum Levels, including the pre-National Curriculum 'P' Levels, to pupils' work and moderates these carefully in subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Not all staff are as skilled at incorporating the information available into target setting for lessons and for individual pupils, but this is being carefully monitored and supported by the school and is an improving area of its work. Most IEPs now specifically identify the most important things which a pupil now needs to learn, although not all have clearly identified success criteria and a few are too general to allow progress against them to be specifically judged. An annual 'Performance Review' week has been introduced. This, and the target setting linked to the school's technology college status, means that all pupils' progress is now very carefully considered, as are standards in subjects and reflects the school's determination to meet individual needs even more effectively and raise pupil achievements further.

77. The school's procedures for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development are now very good. They are particularly strong in English, mathematics, science, ICT, modern foreign languages and religious education, where almost all teachers also use the information gained very effectively in their planning for individual pupils and for groups. In English and mathematics, for example, the school makes very good use of more formal reading, spelling and mathematics tests, as well as the assessment by teachers to identify pupils who are not making sufficient progress. In reading this has led to a well-founded system of targeted support. Assessment is weakest in music, where currently there is no consistent system of record keeping and assessment. In design and technology and art, although records kept are satisfactory, teachers' planning needs to take more account of what is known about pupils' levels as a result of the assessments carried out. Assessments and record keeping in relation to pupils at Post 16 and in the Foundation Stage are satisfactory. However, there is a need for the curriculum for pupils of five and under to be more specifically planned on a day-to-day basis to take account of children's levels, progress and needs in all the Foundation Stage areas of learning. The computerised system and its effective use is being very well overviewed by senior staff, who moderate pupil work in subjects such as English regularly to ensure that the levels assigned are accurate.

78. The pupils' Annual Review of their Statements of SEN also acts as their annual school report. The school's arrangements for the review of pupils' progress in subjects and in relation to their Statements of Educational Need are very good. Parents are included well in the process and say that they find the discussion and the information provided very helpful. The reports provided for these are generally of high quality, although there is some variation amongst teachers and subjects. For example in some subjects, while there is a clear description of the activities a pupil has experienced and how they have responded, there may not be a clear statement about the progress the child has made since the last report.

The school tries hard to involve the pupils themselves in the Annual Review process and in the IEP target setting, which arises out of it. Most IEP targets clearly identify the specific area for development for the pupil, although it is not always clear how the child's progress will be measured in relation to the target. This, and the need for planning for all lessons to take account of individual pupils' targets, is areas where the school recognise they still need to support individual staff. A new IEP format in the secondary department is to be introduced into the primary department soon and will help ensure more consistency in this area. The school keeps good records and examples of pupils' work and attainments in a Record of Achievement that is sent home at the end of each key stage.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

79. Most parents' benefit from the effective relationship that exists between them and the school. They have rightly identified a significant number of strengths and areas of development, which were evident in this inspection. The parents are pleased overall with the education the school provides for their child. Parents are particularly impressed with the leadership and management of the headteacher, the good quality of teaching and learning, and the school's climate for learning which helps their child to become mature and responsible. These positive characteristics were particularly evident when pupils across the school were observed serving the school and wider community. Most parents are pleased with the progress of their child, which often results from the close working relationship between teachers, parents and pupils, but some parents have rightly reported that the information about academic progress is sometimes difficult for them to understand. Much of the written information provided through annual reviews is written in a style, which is not easily understood by all parents. Inspectors, while agreeing with parents' constructive and positive views have also addressed their main concerns. For example, some parents criticised the quantity and quality of homework provided. Inspection evidence indicates that homework provided in most subjects is effective and challenging and promotes pupils' learning. Overall provision for homework is good. A small number of parents at the pre-inspection meeting were concerned about the provision for PMLD pupils in the secondary department. Inspectors judge that this is unsatisfactory and that improvements are needed in what is provided for these pupils across the whole school.

80. The overall quality of information provided is satisfactory. Regular and good quality information is provided through newsletters and consultation evenings, which most parents appreciate and attend in large numbers. An 'open door' policy, advocated by the headteacher and supported by most staff, is valued and aids communication well; the home school diary is also an effective tool used by most parents and eases many of the concerns and tensions that some parents feel. Overall, the lines of communication between home and school are clear. The governors' annual report and the school prospectus are informative and interesting. The end-of-year pupils' report is valued and appreciated by most parents and meets with statutory requirements.

81. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their child's learning at school and home. Most parents actively support events such as drama performances and some play an active role in the school fund-raising committee. This organises a number of social event at Christmas and Easter, as well as barbeques, which are well attended and supported. Inspection evidence further indicates that parents of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) also accompany their children to theatre visits, swimming classes and on educational visits. This raises pupils' confidence and self-esteem and ensures parental support for the school community. Most parents ensure their child attends regularly, and on time. However, homework is not always supported. The school is aware of these issues and continues to provide adequate facilities, which enable pupils to complete their homework

in school. Overall, parents' support in the home and school is satisfactory and has a sound impact on pupils' achievements and their personal development.

82. Since the last report, the school has sustained its relationship with parents, but should build on this partnership to improve levels of attendance, especially in Year 11.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership and management

83. Since the last inspection the school has made very good progress in addressing issues related to leadership and management, which are now very good. The management structure has been thoroughly reviewed and changed to one that provides simple, very clear and unambiguous roles for the management team. All policies now apply to the whole school. Increased movement of staff across all sites is well managed and has improved communication between staff. It has given them a greater insight into the work of their colleagues and the demands made of them.

84. The headteacher's, senior management team's and governors' shared vision of the school provides a very clear direction that is reflected in the school's aims, and is clearly evidenced in the school's work. She has built a good staff team and is insistent in improving provision and eradicating any weaknesses. For example, the school promotes an environment of respect where all views are highly valued. Staff are encouraged to raise issues which concern them and pupils are involved through the student council. The school operates a system of whole staff, departmental and senior staff meetings, where issues can be discussed. This aim to listen to all views has aided school development and created a strong, shared commitment to improvement and the capacity to succeed. When decisive action needs to take place, such as in identification of the weaknesses in profound learning difficulties (PMLD) provision and the necessary improvement to be made, the headteacher does this rigorously, tenaciously, but sensitively.

85. All staff have clear job descriptions and there is good delegation of responsibilities right through the school. Co-ordinators carry out annual reviews of their subjects or areas of responsibility. There is now very good oversight of the whole curriculum, which is planned in detail and regularly monitored. The outcomes of these audits and monitoring are fed back to the senior management team and form the basis of the highly detailed and very thorough school improvement plan. This process ensures that the very well thought-out school priorities as set out in the plan are appropriate to the needs of the school and are considered on a long-, medium- and short-term basis.

86. The school's monitoring and evaluation of its own performance is good. The school is involved in a benchmarking and target-setting process with its associate school as part of its practice as a technology. This has led to the introduction of a number of practices to monitor pupil progress including the use of the Newcastle University 'EQUALS' planning. These initiatives have also resulted in the introduction of GCSE entry level courses. The school's annual review of its performance is carried out well and helps to set targets for the next year, either for the whole school, or in individual subjects. The monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching is good. The school's strategy for appraisal and performance management is very good. Senior staff regularly observe teachers as part of the performance management process. The comments they make are of a high quality and identify ways in which teaching can be improved. As a result, the quality of teaching, and particularly the amount of good teaching, has improved since the last inspection. The headteacher and senior management team recognise that the provision for pupils with

profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) is less effective than other areas of the school. The co-ordinator for the provision for pupils with PMLD has reviewed the work in the secondary class and has identified where improvement needs to be made. However, because of her other duties she has not always had sufficient time to support and teach alongside colleagues in order for her to directly improve the quality for these pupils.

87. The governors have a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The chair of governors has had a long-standing association with the school and is very aware of key aspects of the school development. The governors have a strong role in shaping the direction of the school. They have supported the school's bid for technology college status and are actively involved in the Public Finance Initiative to build a new 'integrated' school. The governors receive detailed reports at meetings and the chair of governors makes regular visits to the school. This practice needs to be extended to all governors, so that even greater insight can be gained into the work of the school, and in particular the curriculum.

88. The school has very well-managed arrangements for the integration of some pupils in some local primary and secondary schools. The two co-ordinators for this also have a role in promoting inclusion within the Darlington local education authority (LEA). One is involved at a strategic level and is part of a planning group to promote an 'Inclusive Schools Award' in local mainstream schools, based upon the nationally recognised 'Index for Inclusion'. This co-ordinator is also a member of the LEA's 'statementing' panel and special educational needs (SEN) moderation group. The co-ordinators are enthusiastic and experienced special educational needs practitioners who have encouraged inclusion within the LEA, where it has been appropriate to do this and in the interests of individual pupils. Beaumont Hill has been both creative and innovative in its approach to inclusion by recognising advanced skills teachers and using their experience, passion and enthusiasm to go as ambassadors into mainstream schools to share their knowledge, understanding and experience of special educational needs and promote equal opportunities. Local headteachers and senior managers value highly these very well managed arrangements, which they judge to be highly effective and successful, and the spirit of partnership is very strong.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

89. The school has a good staff team. There are sufficient numbers of teachers and support staff with skills well matched to the demands of the curriculum and the needs of the pupils. This is an improvement since the last inspection when there was not enough staff. Many teachers and support staff are very experienced and well qualified, and this has a positive impact on pupils' achievements in all areas of school life. Senior managers support new and less experienced staff well. Induction procedures are good, and effective monitoring of all staff helps to maintain the good standards. Effective policies for the appraisal and development of staff are well implemented, and there is a good link between staff training and the school improvement plan. The school is effective in its support and training of new staff and for those undergoing initial teacher training. Currently, there are five unqualified teachers. The school has taken a well-considered decision to promote effective and able teaching assistants and appoint them as unqualified teachers, supporting them to achieve registered or graduate teacher status through Teesside and Birmingham University training courses. The unqualified teachers, who are mentored effectively by the inclusion co-ordinators, teach both in the schools where pupils integrate, and on the Beaumont Hill site.

90. The provision of Beaumont Hill staff for 'outreach' teaching in local primary and secondary schools is good, and enables pupils to be taught alongside their mainstream

peers. High quality support is provided for many pupils. However, when these teachers are working out of school, the skills and experience of some of the teachers replacing them are not always adequate. This situation resulted in some unsatisfactory teaching during the inspection. Furthermore, the limited number and range of staff supporting the school from outside, particularly for pupils with sensory impairments, those requiring disability access, and those with PMLD, has a negative impact on provision for these pupils. Occasionally, the deployment of support staff within the school is inconsistent, with too few in some classes for pupils with moderate learning difficulties, and under-use of support staff in other areas of the school. This leads to some pupils not being adequately included or supported in lessons. However the quality of support staff in general is very high and all staff, including caretaking and catering staff have a very strong commitment to the school and to children's progress.

91. The accommodation at the school is satisfactory but strengths only just outweigh weaknesses. There are many good features and a number of fundamental weaknesses. The good specialist accommodation has improved since the previous inspection with some very good areas for music therapy, modern languages, and the virtual reality room. The accommodation available for English, mathematics, science, history, geography, religious education and personal and social education, is good and is well used to promote learning. Provision for the pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) is also good, and is effectively used throughout the school day. The swimming pool is very well used and has a positive impact on standards in swimming and water confidence.

92. The accommodation is based mainly on three sites. The provision is closely linked to the ages of the pupils although limitations in the number of rooms and their facilities mean that some pupils are taught in buildings for pupils of a different age range. All sites provide at least satisfactory accommodation for pupils. However, there are times when some of the areas in the senior school do not have well-controlled temperatures and the glare from windows and covered walkway made it difficult for pupils to concentrate. The premises are well managed, clean and tidy, and are looked after well.

93. However, not all pupils have access to some of the specialist facilities, such as the art and design, design and technology and information and communication technology (ICT) rooms. Many classrooms lack appropriate access for the disabilities of pupils. In addition, access in and around the sites is problematic with narrow doorways which make wheelchair access difficult. In this way, the accommodation limits some pupils' access to the curriculum and their personal development. One particular classroom in the middle school is too small for its purpose and it also limits the ways in which pupils' challenging behaviour can be managed by staff when it occurs.

94. Storage facilities for resources are adequate, although some large equipment, such as sports equipment, lacks appropriate storage to keep resources safe and secure. There is very little room for storage, for example for standing frames or other equipment necessary for mobility, or speech or physiotherapy.

95. Resources for learning are satisfactory overall with some good features. The school has enough resources to meet the demands of the curriculum in all subjects and they are generally of good quality and used appropriately to support teaching and learning. Particularly good resources are available for religious education, where the wide range of books and artefacts has a positive impact on pupils' achievement in that subject. Resources are very good in music (including music therapy) and in modern languages, and are satisfactory in all other curriculum areas. Very good use is made of the excellent technology equipment, such as interactive white boards to enhance the quality of the teaching and pupils' learning. On the other hand, specialist resources for pupils with

complex physical and sensory needs are weak. This reduces their progress in communication and language skills. Resources in design and technology are not always 'disability friendly' and, therefore, those pupils with physical difficulties are unable to use them.

The school's strategic use of resources and financial planning.

96. The governors' strategic view of long-term financial planning has improved considerably and is now good. This is an improvement since the last inspection when it was unsatisfactory.

97. Governors know what the school needs to spend its money on and why that spending would be good for the school; the school improvement plan priorities are suitably costed and school expenditure is regularly and effectively monitored. The school has a financial forecast until 2005, which allows the governors and the headteacher, to make effective management decisions to meet school priorities. The developing Private Finance Initiative (PFI) intended to create a 'Learning Village' presents governors with long-term financial planning issues which are being dealt with well.

98. The school's position as the sole LEA special school means that it provides some services on behalf of the LEA. The school and the LEA finance officers maintain close and productive links in relation to school financial development ensuring that, for example, suitable funding is in place to run the relatively new Stephenson Centre.

99. The governors use the principles of best value satisfactorily and are becoming more systematic in their application of them. Governors use specific grants properly. For example, Standards Fund monies for curriculum development are available to all subject leaders through a clear formula based on the number of sessions which are taught.

100. All items in the most recent auditors' report have been fully met. There is clear separation of duties between the office manager and the bursar, day-to-day financial administration is efficient and systems of financial management continue to be good.

101. The school's use of new technology to aid efficiency, to ensure that pupils' records and other documentation are easily accessible by all staff, to improve the quality and layout of teachers planning and also as a tool for teaching, is very good. The highly sophisticated management information systems used by office administrators make for very good information retrieval. The school's secure assessment and recording system, available at any computer network point, means that records can easily be updated and information viewed to ensure that teachers have up-to-date information on pupils' achievements and their levels of attainment. High quality multimedia presentations, using interactive white boards, were a significant feature in lessons where the teaching was judged as very good or excellent. Teachers have embraced this new technology very well. The new approach to using virtual reality presentations is in its infancy, but has considerable potential for the most disabled pupils in the school.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

102. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, senior management team and governing body should:

- Improve the provision for pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) by:
 - * ensuring that the teaching is lively, imaginative, that teachers' are knowledgeable about the needs of the pupils and that planning takes full account of these and subject requirements;
 - * examining how the use of new initiatives already in the school, such as virtual reality contexts and the use of multimedia presentations, can be used to support the learning of these pupils.
- Improve the use of signs, symbols, and objects of reference for those pupils who would benefit from them, and make greater and more consistent use of augmented communication systems and aids for writing, especially, technologically based devices.

103. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan.

- * Improve the access to all parts of the building and within rooms for pupils with physical and sensory disabilities;
- * Ensure that learning programmes and class organisation takes full account of the needs of Nursery and Reception children and Post 16 students;
- * Review, evaluate and balance better the use of staff with specific expertise who work outside the school, with the needs of the Beaumont Hill school provision and ensure that staff who cover classes when they are absent from school have the necessary expertise;
- * Increase the amount of speech and language and occupational therapy across the school to meets the needs specified in pupils' Statements of Special Educational Need (SEN);
- * Increase the amount of support for pupils with sensory needs;
- * Follow the prescribed procedures for passing on child protection information.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	173
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	60

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	10	40	77	41	5	0	0
Percentage	6	23	44	24	3	0	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	211
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	101

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	0
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence	%	Unauthorised absence	%
School data	8.6	School data	2.93

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 (Year 2)

It is not possible to record pupils' attainment in the National Curriculum tests and tasks as only six pupils were assessed at the end of Year 2 in 2001. Most pupils' attainment was below National Curriculum Level 1, however.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

Sixteen pupils were assessed at the end of Year 6 in 2001. All were assessed below Level 3 so no tests were taken.

In English 50 per cent of pupils were below Level 1, 38 per cent attained at Level 1 and 12 per cent at Level 2

In mathematics 56 per cent of pupils were below Level 1, 25 per cent at Level 1 and 31 per cent at Level 2

In science 44 per cent were below Level 1, 8 per cent at Level 1 and 38 per cent at Level 2.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Thirteen pupils were assessed at the end of Year 9 in 2001.

Percentage of pupils

Subject	Absent	Teacher assessment only	Disapplied	No level registered	L 2	L 3	L 4	L 5
English	0	83	17	0	0	0	0	0
Mathematics	3	41	17	3	3	17	7	7
Science	3	55	14	3	0	17	7	0

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Accreditation results for Year 11 pupils in 2001.

ASDAN* YAS bronze 16 pupils.

ASDAN* YAS bronze/silver 3 pupils.

City & Guilds Wordpower entry level 12 pupils, entry level units 2 pupils.

City & Guilds Numberpower entry level 8 pupils, entry level units 2 pupils, entry Level 1 5 pupils, Level 1 units 1 pupil.

Teeside Regional Open College Network Cooking 14 pupils (new in 2001).

AQA units in science 41 pupils (in laboratory safety – offered to all pupils and new 2001).

EDEXCEL certificate of competence in information and communication technology (ICT) 14 pupils.

EDEXCEL certificate of competence in Work Experience 14 pupils.

One pupil, taught wholly at Eastbourne Secondary School, attained seven GCSE awards in art, English, French, science (double award), geography and mathematics. All were attained at grade E, except art, geography and mathematics which were grade F.

* Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network.

Attainment at the end of the Post 16 phase (Year 14)

No award bearing courses were followed in the Post 16 department during 2001 as most students' education was undertaken at the local college of further education when they transferred there to follow appropriate courses for students with severe learning difficulties.

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	211
Any other minority ethnic group	1

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	5	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YN–Y13

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	28
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.4
Average class size	8.1

Education support staff:

YN–Y13

Total number of education support staff	32
Total aggregate hours worked per week	1074

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2084287.00
Total expenditure	2067927.00
Expenditure per pupil	9191.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	53007.00
Balance carried forward to next year	69367.00

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	6

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

212
71

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	77	17	1	1	3
My child is making good progress in school.	71	20	7	0	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	37	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	28	38	10	9	15
The teaching is good.	79	14	3	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	73	17	4	4	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	84	13	3	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	70	26	4	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	70	20	6	1	3
The school is well led and managed.	75	18	0	4	3
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	71	20	6	1	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	74	21	1	1	1

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

104. Provision for children in the Foundation Stage of learning is satisfactory overall, with some good features. This represents a good improvement since the previous inspection, when provision was limited.

105. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. Although the teaching seen in lessons during the inspection was good overall, the teacher's planning, organisation and pupils' records, over time were weaker. Overall, the children's progress is satisfactory. The planned curriculum is broad and balanced and closely linked to the Early Learning Goals for children of this age. However, in practice, it sometimes lacks relevance to the children's needs, because there are not enough planned, progressive opportunities for the children to deepen their understanding through playing, observing, exploring, experimenting, testing and making choices. There are currently five children in the school who are under statutory school age. They are placed in three different classes according to their own individual abilities and needs and work alongside pupils in Key Stage 1. Although planning indicates that they will be taught through the six areas of learning for children under five years of age, in reality they too often receive a more formal approach to learning, such as that appropriate for the older pupils. This limits their opportunities for planned, purposeful activities that promote active learning both in and out of doors. Management of the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, although more could be done to ensure that the opportunities that pupils receive are relevant to their age and stage.

Personal, social and emotional development.

106. Provision for personal, social and emotional development is good. Teachers and support assistants know the children well and relationships are strong. The quality of teaching and learning in this area is good, and children make good progress. Clear targets identify the next stage of learning for each child and these are well monitored, so that consistent progress can be measured. Children are given as much independence in their personal skills as possible and good procedures are in place to ensure that they develop some autonomy in their daily lives. For example, they are offered a choice of drink or use symbols to choose a snack. They indicate their presence in the classroom on a daily basis, and are beginning to identify their own plans for the day in the form of simple timetables. Staff have high expectations that children will behave well and respond to questions. This ensures positive attitudes and an eagerness to take part.

Communication, language and literacy.

107. Provision for communication, language and literacy is also good. Practitioners are skilled in talking and listening with young children. They take time to respond to them and make good provision of resources to ensure that they have a means of communicating. The quality of teaching and learning in communication language and literacy is good. Lessons are well planned and children make good progress. Staff choose stories with exciting and stimulating characters and sensory possibilities to enhance learning. For example, in one lesson, children with profound and multiple difficulties (PLMD) were observed using switches to respond to a story. They were able to press their switch to make an animal noise as they studied the rain forest. They showed high levels of enjoyment in this interaction, listening carefully to the range of noises made. In another lesson, a child with

autism was able to use symbols well to choose an activity. The good, structured system enabled him to make a valid choice and receive a reward. A child with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) was observed using play-dough to make animal shapes. He was able to extend his understanding that objects have names as he worked closely with an adult to model a lion and improve it. Children are benefiting from the good implementation of the literacy strategy and show good awareness of books and pictures. Children use and share books well. They have many opportunities to make marks on paper and are learning to hold pens appropriately.

108. Not enough examples were observed of children playing with adults in social situations, such as a 'play house', to extend further their communication skills.

Mathematical development.

109. Provision for mathematical development is satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is also satisfactory, and children make at least sound progress. Children benefit from working within the National Numeracy Strategy, undertaking different activities to develop their awareness of objects and patterns in their day. They enjoy playing with toys and exploring different objects. They benefit from some good tactile approaches with many different resources. For example, children with profound learning difficulties enjoyed moving their hands in paint, glue and sawdust as they develop their awareness of textures. Another child with MLD was observed making numbers with play-dough. Teachers create appropriate opportunities for children to observe and listen to mathematical language and tasks. For example, they sing simple number rhymes as they practise counting to ten. However, not enough activities were observed where children were able to explore a wide range of mathematical skills. Lessons are often too formal for children of this age. In one lesson, they sat and listened for up to 30 minutes to tasks that were too difficult for their level of understanding. Opportunities are missed to encourage mathematical knowledge through play and other activities, such as cooking, play-shops, games, construction, estimating and exploring.

Knowledge and understanding of the world.

110. Provision for the development of children's knowledge and understanding of the world is also satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory but has good features. Children make satisfactory progress in this area. Teachers encourage children to listen to stories about other countries and about different people. They use a range of pictures, books and objects, as well as information and communication technology (ICT), to help extend children's awareness of life beyond the classroom. During the inspection, children were observed investigating a range of animals from the rain forest and jungles. They could name many, such as elephant, lion, tiger and snake. In one class, they showed great enjoyment when making animal masks to take home. The children were able to use simple glue sticks to stick paper and card, with some help. They could roll dough and shape it into recognisable forms. They are able to name photographs of people and objects that they know, and are beginning to show awareness that pressing a switch causes something to happen. However, the range of activities for this area of learning is too limited. There are not enough opportunities for children to investigate unknown objects, to be curious about living and non-living things, and make choices in their activities. Not enough play activities are planned with other children and with adults as role models, so that children can gain knowledge from each other in social / play situations.

Creative development.

111. Provision for creative development is satisfactory, with some good features. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and children make satisfactory progress. Teachers create a stimulating environment in which they plan a range of creative activities that enable children to express themselves. For example, children with PMLD were observed moving their fingers and hands in different textures, colours and smells, as they created big green frogs for a large class picture. The children showed good awareness of the feel and smell of the mixture, and were eager for a turn. However, not enough time was given to each child to further extend the experience. Too much attention was paid to the finished item, rather than to the experience itself. Hence, children did not have enough time to explore with their hands and consolidate their understanding of texture. Too few items are available for children to investigate for themselves, or choose to play with, in order to stimulate their curiosity.

Physical development.

112. Provision for physical development is also satisfactory. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory and children make sound progress in physical skills. Children with autism and MLD were observed running and jumping around the playground with confidence. They have planned times each day to explore space and move on their own within it. They use hall apparatus with support, climbing carefully up and down benches and over obstacles. They benefit from working with other, older pupils, who represent good role models for them. There is an outdoor play space in which the children can move freely using large toys or activities of their own choice.

ENGLISH

113. The school has made considerable improvement in its provision for English since the last inspection. At that time, pupils' progress in English was satisfactory except for pupils in Years 1 and 2, where it was unsatisfactory.

114. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in speaking, listening and writing skills, including early pre-writing skills. Sometimes the pupils' progress is very good in these areas. From children's starting points, progress is strongest in reading and in reading attitudes, where it is very good. The school makes good use of information and communication technology (ICT), the Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) and symbols, alongside 'Big Books' and other texts to support the pupils' interest in and understanding of books and other reading matter.

115. English is very well led and managed by an Advanced Skills Teacher who has an excellent grasp of the subject and a high commitment to its further development within the school. The provision for English for those pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) has been strengthened as a result of recent new teaching appointments and is now good. There is a need, however, to develop further staff knowledge and practice in relation to those pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and those who need additional support for communication, such as sign, symbols and/or ICT devices.

116. The provision for English in the school is now very good overall. This is because of the good and often very good teaching, the highly effective use of new technology and other resources by many teachers and the school's very strong response to the National Literacy Strategy. In addition, pupils' literacy skills are well supported in subjects other than English

and through the targeted literacy support and literacy summer schools. All these initiatives have yet to fully improve standards in the school, although individual pupils now achieve closer to national standards in reading and pupils' attitudes to reading and writing are now very good. A few pupils, particularly those with EBD are still very reluctant writers, although the school is working hard through using ICT and writing frames to support their interest and confidence. Others pupils with additional special educational needs (SEN) need more consistent use of PECS, symbols and of ICT to enable them to make better progress.

117. Throughout the school, pupils make good progress in communicating, speaking, and listening. Some pupils, particularly those with MLD and severe learning difficulties (SLD) and older pupils with autism, make very good progress. By Year 2 these pupils generally listen attentively to their teachers, for example when listening to stories or other texts. Other pupils learn to attend for longer periods of time, to take their turn and to join in familiar routines or action and finger rhymes. These pupils are very well supported by staff, who extend their language well and give them time to express themselves. Sensitive use of probing questions helps pupils to begin to give explanations for what they are doing and enables pupils to build on their learning. By Year 4, higher-attaining pupils can give simple explanations about their work, recount the basic events in a story and are beginning to think about the characters in their reading book and what they are like. By Year 6, higher-attaining pupils are speaking confidently in front of others and take pride in using new vocabulary, such as 'powerful' and 'bulging' that their teacher has introduced. Their language has extended in complexity, although it is still very immature for their age. Those pupils who attend the mainstream school provision in Heathfield Primary School gain confidence in sharing their ideas in front of others and listen very carefully to their teachers and each other in English and in other lessons, such as a mathematics. Pupils with EBD use a range of subject vocabulary appropriately such as *author* and *adjective*, they are learning to adapt their language according to different situations and people, although some find this hard because of the nature of their difficulties. Other pupils are more aware of each other and their teachers, engage eye contact more readily and use their PECS symbols to make simple choices. They enjoy using their Big Mack communicators to play their part in a story such as *The Hungry Caterpillar*.

118. Pupils of secondary school age continue to make good progress in their speaking and listening skills in their lessons in the school and at Eastbourne Secondary School. This is because the good, and often very good, teaching in Years 7 to 11 challenges the pupils to listen, think and observe. Consequently, there are many opportunities for pupils to contribute in their lessons and staff are very good at extend the ideas they give. This enables them to extend their vocabulary and grammar, and good staff models encourage pupils to improve their pronunciation of words. In their discussion of the story *The Secret*, for example, the teacher drew out pupils' knowledge, using a quiz technique to help them formulate questions; this reinforced pupils' understanding of the story and characters very well, while encouraging them to collaborate and listen to each other. Older pupils in Year 10 as part of their accredited work on media, discuss the features of an advertisement, using words like *logo*. The higher-attaining pupils explain their viewpoint logically; others are less fluent but are very well supported by the teachers' questioning, so that they express a view and make their own choice. Older pupils with autism make similarly good progress and symbols and PECS are used well with these pupils to help them to anticipate what will happen next and to keep them focused, as in poetry lessons related to *Mother Shipton*. The oldest pupils with autism are supported well in their social use of language and involvement with others by joint work from the speech and language therapists and the teacher.

119. Pupils' interest in books, signs and symbols is encouraged very skilfully and is supported very well. As a result they make very good progress from their starting points, particularly in their early reading skills, their interest, and their involvement in the activities

provided. By the end of Year 2, they handle books with care and enjoy stories tremendously. Some higher attainers know the names of a small group of letters and try hard to identify their name from those of others. Regular routines, such as weather routines and hello games, mean that by Year 4 most pupils have a small sight vocabulary of symbols and words including class names and activities, the key characters in the school reading scheme and weather/ calendar vocabulary. Some higher attainers blend sounds to make simple consonant-vowel-consonant combinations such as *f-ee-t*. They read simple sentences in their early reading books, enjoying the story and pointing out features of the text and pictures. Reading skills are systematically supported throughout the school and pupils are helped to recognise and think more carefully about what they are reading or looking at because of the very good support provided by all the staff. By Year 6, a small group of pupils are reading simple texts with confidence and talk about their books with enthusiasm. Although most are still beginner readers, they are very keen to read and make good attempts at sounding out unfamiliar words, rather than waiting for their teachers to tell them. The use of symbols with text enables others to access text independently and to 'have a go' at new words and phrases. This strong support for independent reading continues with older pupils, with all subject teachers using a 'sticker system' to remind them of the basic skills that they are trying to promote. Pupils with autism and those with PMLD make small but significant gains in their recognition of symbols and their 'reading' of their text messages.

120. By Year 9, pupils demonstrate clear awareness of story progression and are beginning to comment themselves on characterisation in the text. Their teachers' expressive story telling enables them to follow as they read the text together, for example, *The Secret* by Ruth Thomas. Lower-attaining pupils develop their awareness of letter names and sounds further and contribute to the reading of a symbol story of *Mr. Fox* with enthusiasm. The very good pairing of pupils to follow-up activities in this lesson was characteristic of the very good teaching in English – it enabled pupils to feel a sense of achievement. Many are aware of the progress they are making in their reading and are keen to demonstrate it to others. Pupils with EBD by Year 9 are more willing to read out loud in front of others and ask their teacher for help when they do not understand something. Although many have very delayed reading skills for their abilities, the school's strong support is enabling them to make good progress in relation to their starting points as they build up their word-attack skills and enjoy the texts they are reading. By Year 10 a small group of pupils are fluent readers with very good attitudes to books and use their reading skills well to support their information finding for other subjects, through the Internet for example. Other pupils have progressed very well in their ability to make sense of the signs and symbols around them and are well placed to improve their reading skills further. Pupils with PMLD looked with interest as their teachers acted out the story of *Dumbo*. This supported their involvement in the activity well. However, there is a need to maintain their involvement in the whole class story telling more effectively, through more individualised reading materials and the use of tactile stories.

121. Pupils' progress in writing is good and sometimes very good. From entry to the school, pupil's mark-making is encouraged and treated with respect. Handwriting skills are very carefully promoted and the use of interactive whiteboards and individual white boards encourage pupils to learn from each other and their teachers' models and 'have a go'. There is no occupational therapy available to the school to help teachers devise handwriting programmes for pupils with specific needs, but support staff have received training and provide very good multi-sensory experiences to support some children in this area. The lack of ICT aids for communication and writing for other pupils, mean that PMLD pupils in particular have only limited means of self-expression through writing and there is a need to address this. By Year 2 most pupils, regardless of disability, make marks with pencils, paints and on the computer with enthusiasm and are keen to share these with others. A small number write recognisable letters and tell you what they have written. By Year 4, higher-attaining pupils can spell simple words, complete simple worksheets and construct

phrases for their news dairies. Lower-attaining pupils help to make class stories and enjoy showing them to others. Staff act as scribe for their ideas and they understand that what they have to say is important and can be written down for others to read. The use of symbols and PECS helps these pupils to make choices about what to write. By Year 6 higher-attaining pupils write simple sentences about what they have done and understand that a poem has to be written differently from a story. They have a growing bank of words that they can spell, and can use word or symbol dictionaries to find others that they want to use. The very meaningful activities provided for writing by the school result in them being very well motivated to write. Lower attainers have made steady progress in their hand control and in their selection of symbols for their writing and are helped to complete simple worksheets and records about what they have done. Reading and writing are very strongly linked together for all pupils and this works well in supporting pupils' understanding of what they are doing and why.

122. Older pupils continue to make good progress with their writing. Again, this is particularly so for the highest-attaining pupils whose writing not only develops in length but also in form by Year 9. The motivating activities provided, for example using e-mail messages, encourage the functional use of their developing writing skills. By the time many leave school in Year 11, pupils' writing levels are highly variable. A small group write with reasonable grammar and for a range of purposes, writing, for example, a good draft of a football commentary using a range of expressive and relevant vocabulary and phrases. Most have a good basis for making their needs known and for the writing activities they will meet on their next courses. They have been well supported in these skills through the other subjects they have been taught, confident to have a go and they have basic dictionary skills to help them. Pupils with EBD are often more reluctant writers but the range of activities devised improves their motivation and is improving their confidence and attitudes.

123. The progress of pupils with additional SEN in English is satisfactory overall. It is strongest for those pupils with EBD and more variable for those pupils with more complex communication and learning difficulties. This is because some staff are inconsistent in the way they use assistive devices, signs, symbols and objects of reference with these children; sometimes it is because staff have only limited knowledge and skills to support such pupils' communication effectively.

124. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in English are very good overall. Most pupils, including those with EBD, attend well and are appreciative of the support that their teachers and others give them. They take care with their work and try to incorporate the advice of their teachers in it, handling the books and materials with respect. Profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) pupils and those with more complex needs respond very well to the opportunities that they are given individually and try very hard to maintain their attention when asked to. Pupils and their teachers use ICT very well to support their learning in English – to practice new skills, to research and to plan, present and revise their work.

125. Teaching is good overall. It is sometimes very good or excellent. Excellent teaching was seen in one lesson, where the teacher's careful clear presentation of the task and excellent adaptation and use of an 'Easiteach' program, enabled them to succeed well in an activity blending sounds into words. Most teachers tell stories expressively, bringing the story to life for the children and with learning assistants supporting story telling and pupils' involvement well. Support staff make strong contributions to pupils' English progress, some have received additional training to support pupils' particular needs in reading and writing and they do this well. Work is generally carefully planned to take account of the needs of individuals and groups of children, although lesson objectives are not always shared with pupils. Very good use is made of praise and encouragement and pupils are given clear indications of what it is that is good about what they are doing. Most teachers make effective

use of the plenary sessions at the end of lessons, to reflect on pupils' learning. They also have very good relationships with pupils and support pupils' independent and collaborative work very well. Occasionally, the pace of a lesson is too slow and fails to retain the pupils' interest, or materials are used inappropriately. The size and positioning of a 'Big Book', for example, in a whole group lesson for PMLD pupils, was inappropriate for most of the pupils involved. Although the staff worked hard to try to engage pupils' interest, the size of the group meant that many were 'off-task' or too far away to focus sufficiently on the teacher or the activity. A number of these pupils had severe visual impairments and materials were not suitably adapted for their needs.

126. The curriculum in English has been strengthened by the school's very good response to the National Literacy Strategy. It is broad, balanced and very relevant and meets statutory requirements. The school is particularly successful in providing experiences relevant to the range of pupils in its care. Although the curriculum for PMLD pupils is weakened because of the weaker teaching, the curriculum challenges other pupils very well and lays very good foundations for their inclusion in society, because of its strong emphasis on communication and basic skills. Although the school no longer teaches drama as a separate subject, role-play and drama are used very well by individual teachers to support pupils' learning. Assessment and monitoring procedures are now very strong, although the quality of the written reports provided for parents is variable. A range of formal and informal assessments supplements the statutory tests, including a reading test. The results of these are used well, both to set targets and overview standards in the subject, but also to identify pupils who need more support. The school recognises the need to develop its diagnostic work with pupils with EBD, in order to identify any who have specific learning difficulties such as dyslexia or dyspraxia, and recent appointments have considerably strengthened the expertise they have in this area.

127. Most pupils take some form of English accreditation by the end of their school life, either through entry-level GCSE work, ASDAN or basic skills work. Individual pupils attend Eastbourne Secondary School for GCSE courses and the school is looking at ways of extending the range of English qualifications available for both higher and lower ability pupils.

128. English is very well managed by a strong and committed co-ordinator who has a clear vision for the subject and regularly monitors the planning and teaching of literacy. She is involved in analysing pupils' performance and target setting at a whole-school level, as well as over-viewing standards in general. In English lessons, many opportunities are provided that support pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural well being, including the use of drama and role-play to develop pupils' understanding and self-expression. Resources for English are good; the school has made a number of purchases that have extended the range of reading and other materials available. Computers are used very well to aid children's understanding and engage them in lessons, but could be used more to facilitate early writing and communication. The school's library facilities are limited and, although the Internet and other ICT facilities are used very well to help pupils with their research skills, this means that there are limited opportunities to promote independent study. However, there is a good range of books, videos and other materials to support English. There is a need to extend the range of tactile books, including individual books and materials for group activities, for those pupils with the most complex needs.

MATHEMATICS

129. At the time of the previous inspection, pupils' progress was satisfactory overall, with some unsatisfactory features in Years 1 to 6. However, there was some good and some very good progress in Years 7 to 11. This was the result of stronger teaching to these year groups. Good progress has been made in the mathematics provision since the last inspection and most weaknesses have been eradicated.

130. Most pupils now make good progress throughout the school from Years 1 to 11 as well as in the Post 16 department, and the level of achievement is high for the majority of pupils. There are examples of very good levels of progress by some individual pupils in Year 9; some attain Level 5 in the National Curriculum tests. This is the expected level for their age and represents very good achievement. Pupils at the Foundation Stage make satisfactory progress and their level of achievement is satisfactory. Pupils with special educational needs, especially those with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD), make slower but satisfactory progress overall. However, those with emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD) make good progress because of the strong support they receive.

131. Pupils' progress has improved because of the good quality of teaching in the school and the very strong leadership from the co-ordinator for mathematics. Pupils have good attitudes to learning as a result of the high quality of teaching they receive. When the teaching is good, pupils' interest, concentration and behaviour are also good and sometimes very good. When teaching is weaker pupils' attention and interest are more variable.

132. At the end of Year 2, pupils with moderate learning difficulties (MLD) learn to count to ten and to sing and chant number rhymes. They learn to match colours and shapes, and have improved their ability to express what they have learned and to take turns. They benefit from the good use of mathematical language by teachers. Pupils who are based in a local primary school also make good progress. They respond well to the very good speaking and listening opportunities presented to them, which help develop mathematical ideas, especially of the 'language' of mathematics. For example, they consolidate and extend their learning of positional language and can recognise and describe what is wrong with a picture. They recognise "Man standing upside down" and realise that rain is moving upwards when it should be falling. Good relationships among pupils and with adults, careful planning and good use of resources enable pupils to make good progress. Pupils with PMLD experience different lengths of materials, such as string, by letting it run through their fingers and using it to make patterns with paint, with the help of staff. They begin to track sounds on a drum and recognise it as an introduction to the next activity, so developing a sense of order. This good teaching is weakened by the minimal communication systems available to the pupils with the most complex needs. Most pupils communicate by limited eye contact and informal gesture, and it is easy to misunderstand pupils' intentions and wishes. Autistic pupils make sound progress and some make good progress. They learn to develop fine motor skills, recognise numbers one to ten, and build a wall of bricks while copying a pattern they have seen outside. Sometimes pupils' learning is interrupted by other pupils in their class. However, the teacher's management and pupils' degree of interest enables them to return to their tasks in due course. Pupils show confidence when using the cursor and manage it effectively. They use and enjoy counting programs on the computers and some successfully follow instructions on an interactive programme. However, sometimes the pace of the lesson is too slow and/or pupils' behaviour is difficult to manage. This reduces their rate of progress.

133. By Year 6, the pupils working in their base in mainstream primary school make good progress. They carry out simple subtraction with an understanding of the word 'minus'. Others learn their seven times table and begin to recognise number patterns arising from

this with the help of the teacher. Pupils also successfully use 'hundred' number boards on the computer to extend their knowledge and recognition of number patterns, such as counting in fives or tens. This gives them an opportunity to work independently and at their own pace. Pupils' achievements in mathematics are supported by well-planned and delivered teaching with a strong focus on speaking and listening. Teachers make good use of questioning, for example asking pupils how they have arrived at an answer. This helps pupils to explain, rehearse and remember their reasoning and pupils understand what they are learning. Pupils with autism make good progress. With help, they count up to 20 and backwards. Pupils are able to listen carefully and respond to the teacher's instructions. They begin to match the name of numbers up to 20 and can match the number on the number line, with the corresponding number of dots. They carry out simple addition and other operations in a variety of ways, for example, they will answer questions, match words and symbols, take turns and use the computer. However, they have too few opportunities to work with each other, although they respond well to adult support. Pupils with more complex learning difficulties in Year 6 can sign colours, sort objects into colour groups and match shapes. These pupils make good progress when work is planned at suitable levels for their different levels of ability, and this helps them to maintain their concentration. Some pupils' progress is slower because lack effective communication systems and rely entirely on adult intervention before they can take action or express themselves. Others, because of the way the lesson is organised with pupils watching while a member of staff works with one pupil, are passive for significant periods of time and make less progress as a result.

134. All pupils with the exception of pupils with the most profound and multiple learning difficulties use information and communication technology (ICT) well throughout Years 3 to 6, to support their learning. This helps them to work independently and practise known mathematical skills as well as their ICT skills.

135. In Year 8, pupils with MLD learn the order of numbers up to 100, and understand 'more than/ less than'. The good teaching supports pupils' confidence and achievement, through careful checking of understanding, the setting out of clear and orderly objectives and carefully graded work which enables each pupil to be challenged at a suitable level. These pupils make good progress in learning number order and being able to estimate numbers. Pupils with autism make slower progress, and while their progress and achievements are satisfactory on the whole, they are not so good as those of other pupils. This is because sometimes their behavioural difficulties mean that more time is spent on behaviour management. Also some of the activities are too repetitive with insufficient development over time. For example they learn months of the year and tell the time on the analogue clock to the quarter hour, but much of this work is consolidation. By Year 9, some pupils with MLD know their three times tables and can calculate mentally $23+3$ and $36-3$. Some pupils know that some shapes have only one line of symmetry and can identify the lines of symmetry in an equilateral triangle. Pupils listen to each other carefully and respectfully. Pupils are helped to achieve and to gain confidence by the teachers' careful planning, very good use of resources and good questioning to help them reflect on their learning.

136. Older pupils with PMLD make more limited progress. Teachers' planning does not always identify the mathematical purpose of the lesson clearly enough and this leads to a lack of challenge and opportunities for these pupils to learn.

137. Pupils with EBD make good progress. For example, in Year 10, pupils with EBD and those with MLD make good progress in learning to convert fractions into equivalent fractions or decimals when solving practical problems. They use a hundred squares to represent a carpet or a field and then calculate what fraction is used to grow different vegetables, or represent different colours of carpet. Pupils enjoy mental arithmetic games and compete eagerly. This improves their attitude to learning, their speaking and listening, and their thinking skills, as well as their achievement overall.

138. Teaching in mathematics is good and strengths far outweigh weaknesses. Some unsatisfactory teaching was seen, however. Reasons for judging the teaching as unsatisfactory were related to insufficient mathematical content in two lessons taught to pupils with PMLD and weak behaviour management in another for more able pupils. The weaknesses also include inconsistent support for communication and a lack of day-to-day assessment guiding the planning. A strength in the teaching is the teachers' good subject knowledge. Teachers' use and management of resources is very good and helps pupils to work more independently, handle equipment confidently and to develop good relationships. Teaching is very good when day-to-day assessment is used effectively to plan for and review pupil progress.

139. The curriculum in mathematics is good. It offers pupils a broad and balanced base for learning mathematics. The school's implementation of the numeracy strategy is very successful. Many opportunities are taken to use mathematics throughout the school in different subjects and in the daily life of the school. The school's status as a technology college means that it has been able to use allocated funding to strengthen mathematics resources, especially computers.

140. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. Many good developments have taken place since the last inspection, especially the successful introduction of the numeracy strategy. Careful monitoring of the planning and teaching has enabled the subject leader to have a clear idea of the department's strengths and weaknesses. Grants and other financial input are very well used and resources are very good. A considerable amount of funding has been spent over the past few years in enhancing the provision through the purchase of 'programmed learning' software as well as additional computers and an interactive whiteboard. The co-ordinator for mathematics has clear aims and is able to implement them very effectively.

SCIENCE

141. Since the last inspection, the provision for science has improved considerably, and pupils' achievements are now very good. This is because of the hard work and enthusiasm of the co-ordinator and her very good leadership and management. The time allocated to the subject is in line with national recommendations and the good planning enables pupils to make progress across the school. The school's science policy sets out its aims clearly. The scheme of work has developed well since the last inspection and it now ensures that all parts of the curriculum are taught. The quality of provision is particularly strong for moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD) and autistic pupils.

142. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Eleven students achieved OCR accreditation at bronze level and two students at silver level this year. Although most pupils achieve significantly below the nationally expected level, in line with their disabilities, individual pupils taking the National Curriculum tests in Year in 2001 achieved closer to the level for their age.

143. Staff and resources are used well to enhance the quality of learning and to improve pupils' progress in lessons. The teaching now allows pupils more opportunities to investigate topics in practical settings and through other subjects. This corresponds well with pupils' needs and has resulted in very good attitudes to learning and behaviour. Pupils' progress is now tracked well and targets are being set. The school now has a dedicated science laboratory, which is used effectively by most pupils. Computers and other equipment, such as microscopes are used well. Pupils log, analyse and display data, use word processing programs to present their work and the Internet to aid original research and to reinforce learning.

144. In Years 1 and 2, science is taught as part of an integrated topic from the Themes for Living curriculum and in Years 3 to 6 specific scientific activities are linked to the termly topic. Teachers produce short-term plans, which set out different learning outcomes for pupils with MLD, SLD and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) and autistic pupils. Teaching is generally good in Years 1 to 6. In Years 1 and 2, pupils make good progress over time and explore plant life. They have opportunities to see, smell and feel the stem, roots, leaves and flowers of a variety of plants, both in the classroom and in their local environment. Pupils are introduced to the names of the main parts of plants and to observe changes. Higher-attaining pupils make their own class books with photographs showing themselves pushing and pulling cars and story sacks. These books have written text that is supported by symbols. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 make good progress over time and develop an awareness of mini beasts. Lower-attaining pupils listen to a story of 'The Very Lazy Ladybird' and have the opportunity to feel the toy ladybird, hear the sounds of a kangaroo jumping and see the sun and moon shining through day-and-night sensory rugs. Higher-attaining pupils make books about the life cycle of a butterfly and a book of poems inspired by a visit to a butterfly world.

145. In Years 7 to 11 a modular approach has been adopted which leads toward accreditation routes for some students. Teaching is very good for pupils in these year groups. In Years 7 to 9, pupils make very good progress. Higher-attaining pupils develop an understanding of features of healthy life styles and accurately identify fats, proteins, carbohydrates, vitamins and minerals. They know that calcium can be found in cheese and milk, that fluoride is in toothpaste, and they use a food pyramid to plan a healthy meal. They continue to increase their scientific vocabulary and understanding and can explain terms such as a fair test, refraction and life cycle. They understand the principles of a fair test, for example, how to change just one element when investigating the growing broad beans under different conditions. They understand the life cycle of plants; that fruit falls from trees, seeds are grown in the ground and established roots grow into trees and produce fruit. They know that fruits may have seeds or stones and that you must cut into a tomato, melon or avocado to see these. They understand that seeds are dispersed in a variety of different ways. By Year 9, the highest-attaining pupils have learned that the heart rate varies relative to the amount of exercise undertaken. They know that the heart is a muscle and acts as a pump and that smoking will damage the lungs and make the heart beat faster. They understand that the heart needs to be exercised to help it stay healthy. The lowest-attaining pupils use their senses to explore different textures associated with the beach. They feel sand and pebbles, finding hidden shells. They are helped to operate a switch to make the light in a lighthouse come on and off, and hear the sounds of seagulls and waves.

146. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 continue to make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding. For example they can show the position of the stomach, large intestine, small intestine and liver on a model body. They know that cells have three main parts and can draw a cell and label the cytoplasm, nucleus and membrane. They can label parts of the eye. They understand that light enters the eye through the pupil, travels through the lens,

which focuses on the retina, and that a message is then sent to the brain, where it is translated as an image. They can complete tests where they are asked to show the position of the foetus, cord and placenta on a body map and know that the sperm is produced in the testes. Pupils know and conform to the safety rules, relating to their science lessons, especially when using Bunsen burners. They know how to behave in the laboratory and how to dress safely.

147. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good for MLD, SLD, EBD and autistic pupils. Lessons are well planned and are made up of well-prepared activities that give classes well-structured opportunities for personal development. In Years 7 to 11 learning outcomes are clear and shared with pupils at the start of the lesson. The teacher has a very good scientific knowledge and understands the learning difficulties of pupils with EBD, MLD and SLD, which help in the selection of activities that match their needs. The teacher uses a very wide range of teaching strategies, which engage pupils of all abilities. Good use is made of praise to encourage pupils, who enjoy their learning and regularly become enthralled and excited. The teacher has high expectations for work and behaviour, and a calm and quiet approach which successfully defuses potential disruption. Skilful use of questions, together with clear explanations, aids pupils' understanding and recall; for example, when reviewing a previous lesson about the dispersal of seeds, the teacher praised individual pupils were praised for their individual recall of how seeds can travel in the wind. Very good use is made of time, with activities changed at appropriate intervals to maintain interest. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and make a positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they support a small group of lower-attaining pupils in an investigation or provide individual support to a pupil struggling to maintain appropriate behaviour. The relationship between adults and pupils is very good, and is based on obvious respect.

148. Pupils with PMLD do not have enough access to special equipment. The science co-ordinator has made a satisfactory start to pupils with the most complex needs having a wider range of opportunities for learning science, by recently teaching science to the secondary PMLD students in a therapy base. The co-ordinator is aware of the need for more detailed, specific knowledge and understanding of the teaching and learning styles to meet the very individual needs of this group of students. However, there are too few staff to support the PMLD pupils in their science lessons and this results in them spending too much time being waiting to take part. Throughout school not all of the staff are secure in their teaching of science and some have limited scientific knowledge and understanding. This affects their use of time, support staff and resources. The use of assessment for day-to-day planning is under developed and teachers' expectations of pupils with PMLD are often too low. The co-ordinator is aware of these weaknesses and is making a good start to address them.

149. Provision for, and use of science and information and communication technology (ICT) to enable PMLD pupils to develop scientific knowledge and understanding of the world they live in is underdeveloped. Too little use is made of switch technology in science lessons to enable PMLD pupils to control and make choices about their environment and experience both virtual reality and the real world.

ART AND DESIGN

150. Judgements about pupils' progress are based on lesson observations, pupils' work and examination of the school's documents. Pupils make good progress overall, with some very good progress being made by some pupils in Years 3 to 6. Although pupils' progress was at least satisfactory in Years 3 to 11, during the last inspection pupils made unsatisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils' achievements have improved since then. In Years 1 to 6 pupils use a range of materials to create tactile pictures and interesting collages. This work is linked to themes which include other subjects. In one lesson in Year 4 pupils worked conscientiously and at a very fast pace on a group wall hanging, linked to the mini beast theme. They had to learn how to control the bleed of fabric ink onto a length of silk. The excellent final product showed the quality of the pupils' teamwork. In Year 9 pupils were working hard and with prolonged concentration on observation drawings of boots. In the course of the lesson they improved the quality of their pencil lines, to apply shading and to show contrasts between light and dark changes in the images produced. They behaved very well and their work showed that they were making real efforts. The fired and glazed ceramics on display in the senior site show that the older pupils have made slab and draped mould pots. They have been able to work with clay as a sculptural material, fashioning pots resembling flowers in bloom. Senior pupils have been able to work on quite a large scale as well as making smaller items like tiles.

151. The teaching, overall, is good and in one lesson teaching was very good. In this Year 1 to 6 lesson the learning objectives were very carefully chosen they were achievable but represented real progress and effort by pupils. The teacher worked with a highly skilled visiting teacher and a very capable teaching assistant to help pupils make connections with their previous work on symmetry. The teachers demonstrated well how the special inks could be used on silk. All of the teaching staff kept focusing on techniques to improve pupils' skills in their comments to pupils. This concentration of effort led to very good quality learning. Pupils openly admired each other's work, they gained greater control over difficult materials, learned about different colour blends – they were confident and enthusiastic learners. The very good quality of this lesson was the result of effective planning and a sufficient number of capable staff with high expectations who worked intensely and closely with all pupils.

152. A new and very capable subject leader joined the school in February 2002. He has already put into place plans to further improve pupils' progress in art and design. He intends to enter some senior pupils for Art GCSE next year. The subject leader is currently overseeing the conversion of two rooms on the middle site into a ceramics studio. This will result in better facilities on this site. However, the teaching room furniture does not take account of pupils' different heights and builds. The art curriculum is planned to include progression across the school and it fulfils this function well. The subject leader has in place plans to improve the liaison across year groups in art and design and to undertake regular monitoring and evaluation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

153. Since the last inspection pupils' rate of progress has been maintained. In Years 1 to 6 pupils make satisfactory progress. In Years 7 to 11 the pupils' progress is good. Most lessons observed during the inspection were for classes of junior and secondary aged pupils. An examination of the pupils' work, teachers' planning and discussions with staff took place to inform judgements about the pupils' progress over time.

154. In Years 1 to 6, design and technology is taught through Themes for Living. The current minibeasts theme has resulted in some interesting and stimulating displays on walls and ceilings – including a textile mobile of a spider in a web. Pupils have learned to join fabrics in different ways while observing and replicating key features of a spider and its web. In Years 3 to 6 pupils with complex learning difficulties are given concentrated individual help by the teacher and support staff to enable them to construct their own minibeasts out of pipe cleaners, packaging and plastic pot-scourers. Pupils were given the opportunity to make choices about which materials to use and staff encouraged pupils throughout their model-making. Through body language and gesture pupils showed interest while working in this individual way. In Years 7 to 11 the school's status as a Technology College leads to close collaboration in teaching accredited courses with Abbey Hill Technology College and Darlington College of Technology. Pupils' progress in food technology is good. In a Year 9 lesson, pupils with MLD were keenly interested in and enthusiastic about the fruit crumbles which they were devising. They made good choices about the combinations of fruit and dry ingredients to use and used the mixing and measuring equipment with care. Pupils keep good notes about their work, their designs and their evaluations. In all lessons pupils work hard and put real effort into their work. There are further good examples of pupils' work around the school – 'Modroc' sculpture, mobiles and collage friezes linked to cross-curricular topics – although not enough work is labelled, named or dated.

155. The quality of teaching is good overall. In virtually all lessons it is at least satisfactory and the majority of teaching is good. There is consistently good quality teaching in food technology and this contributes to this aspect of design and technology being a particular strength. In a Year 7 to 9 lesson where the teaching was good, pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) were taught to construct clowns' hats. The teacher's very good use of a computer presentation led to pupils being clear about what they had to do. The teacher ensured that the three support staff were working well with specific pupils and, at the end of the lesson, the progress of all pupils was checked and the next steps were identified. Where teaching was unsatisfactory this was because some pupils were given very concentrated and apt teaching but, at the same time, half of this small class were left for too long without anything to do. Overall, teachers understand the need for pupils to be creative, they manage pupils well and they enable pupils to develop their skills. However, some are unclear as to how to organise and manage groups of pupils with the most profound learning difficulties.

156. The provision for design and technology has been disrupted for some time because of the long-term absence of the co-ordinator, due to illness. Temporary arrangements to cover and manage the subject are satisfactory. The recently appointed acting co-ordinator is a skilled, specialist teacher and is very capable of managing and leading continued development in the subject. The part-time technology technician provides good support to teachers working in the resistant materials technology room. He is increasingly taking on instructor duties in the absence of specialist staff. However, this has not been sufficiently formalised or planned. The school's specialist design and technology rooms provide suitable accommodation, although they need to be adapted to ensure that pupils in wheelchairs, in particular, can take a full and active part in lessons.

GEOGRAPHY

157. Pupils' achievements in geography are satisfactory across the year groups. Although only one geography lesson was observed, discussions with the subject co-ordinator and pupils, scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom display enable secure judgements to be made. There are no differences in the achievements of boys and girls. Pupils of all abilities make satisfactory progress with the exception of pupils with more profound learning difficulties, who are not provided with sufficient support to develop their learning.

158. By the end of Year 2, pupils have participated in a number of visits related to their topic work. These visits develop an awareness of different environments and included visits to a butterfly farm at Preston Park, pond dipping, visits to an old working mill and to look at bread making. In a visit to the farm, pupils recognised cows, ducks, a goat, a donkey, hens, pigs and sheep. In their topic on shopping, pupils identified different buildings. They know that a clothes shop sells dresses, coats, shoes, skirts and trousers. Pupils also experienced a coastal environment on their visit to St Mary's lighthouse in Whitley Bay, which followed on from their reading of 'The Lighthouse Keeper's Lunch' during the Literacy Hour. By the end of Year 6 pupils demonstrate a greater awareness of their environment. Pupils have visited Durham cathedral, Ellerton Park, Scorton and Richmond. On a visit to Tunstall reservoir, pupils walked around a lake and fed different kinds of ducks, using binoculars to explore this environment. Pupils then fed deer and identified differences between ducks and deer. They also learned about official signs, such as the rules for fishing in the lake and for keeping quiet in order not to frighten deer. Pupils identify different buildings in Darlington and know that the white building in South Park has a clock on it. Higher-attaining pupils access the Internet with help in 'asking Jeeves' to find a map of France. They used the desktop publishing software of the computer with their teacher to produce a very good book 'Our Book of Lighthouse Facts' which furthered their knowledge and understanding of lighthouses. They know that a lighthouse has a large light at the top and that there is a spiral staircase to climb in order to reach it.

159. By the end of Year 9, pupils consolidate their previous knowledge of the environment and identify physical and human features such as the sea front and the beach. They know that the sea wears the cliffs away and the wind blows the soils away from the land. In their study of farming, pupils know how crops are produced, harvested and turned into produce for sale. For example they know that crisps are made from thinly sliced potatoes, which grew on a farm. Pupils are developing an understanding of geographical terms, such as *forest, stream, village, bridge* and *mountain*. In their study of weather, higher-attaining pupils identify the symbols for rain, clouds and sunshine on a weather map. Lower-attaining pupils know which clothes to wear on a hot day and which to wear on a cold day.

160. Teaching in geography is satisfactory. Teachers make good use of resources to aid an understanding of geography. They work well as a team with support staff to ensure that pupils of different abilities learn equally well. For example, in a Year 2 lesson on animals in the jungle, higher attaining pupils worked with support assistants to find information about jungle animals and habitats, while lower-attaining pupils created habitats in sand. The teacher's use of questioning skilfully focused pupils' attention and extended their knowledge of different types of animals. A strength of the teaching is that teachers often set different tasks to help pupils of different abilities. Marking is used well by some teachers to inform pupils how well they have done and what they need to do to improve.

161. There has been satisfactory improvement in planning for geography. Geography is planned in such a way that the National Curriculum programmes of study are taught within the Themes for Living topics in the primary department. In the secondary department it is taught as a discrete subject, which alternates with history. The last inspection reported that

insufficient time was allocated to geography and this is still the case, resulting in geography not being taught in sufficient depth. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory. The co-ordinator has yet to monitor teaching and learning to ensure the subject is well taught. Learning resources are satisfactory and good use is made of the local environment to enhance pupils' understanding of geography.

HISTORY

162. It was possible to observe only three lessons in history, all in Years 7-9, during the inspection, but judging from the work pupils have produced, records of their performance, and displays their achievements are at least satisfactory in Years 1 to 6 and good in Years 7-9. The work they have completed shows a growing understanding of the passage of time between events and famous people in history.

163. In Years 1 to 6, history is taught as part of the 'Themes for Living' programme rather than as discrete subject. In this way pupils learn about the relationship between history and other subjects. By the end of Year 2 pupils develop notions of a time line in maths, know that the first Christmas was a long time ago, and are beginning to learn about the differences between 'now' and 'then'.

164. By the end of Year 6 pupils more able pupils can sequence events on a time line related to World War Two. They can discuss topical events from a long time ago, for example, Guy Fawkes Night and its origins. They are increasingly able to make comparisons between a particular period in history and the current day, including how and why developments have taken place. For example, while studying the development of Darlington they learn about George Stephenson and the development of the railway. They can identify differences between buildings from the industrial revolution and their more modern counterparts. By the end of Year 9 pupils can compare periods of history over longer time scales. They recognise the differences between clothing and housing in Tudor times and today. Links are made to other areas of the curriculum. For example, links are made to literacy and numeracy by producing a book about a journey by horse drawn vehicle in the 18th century, and calculating the time the journey took and the time span between the date of journey and 2002.

165. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on the quality of teaching, but in the lessons seen in Years 7 to 9 the quality of teaching was good. Good planning is clearly linked to National Curriculum programmes of study and this ensures progress and continuity in pupils' learning. Teachers make good use of carefully graded questioning. This ensures that pupils make gains in knowledge. This attention to detail means pupils are clear about what they are required to do and this supports their learning. For example, more able pupils can order pictures and text relating to a stagecoach journey from Edinburgh to London in the 18th century with little or no support.

166. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good. They respond well to praise, work hard and concentrate on the tasks set. The school makes good use of educational visits and borrows resources from a local centre to aid pupils' learning and sustain their interest in the subject. However, it would be useful if the school made a wider range of artefacts more readily available to pupils. This would enhance teaching in the school and extend the practical, hands-on approach to history.

167. The management of the subject is good. The co-ordinator carries out an audit of the subject annually and this review forms the basis for further development. The co-ordinator has had time made available to monitor teaching in history but, as yet, this has not taken

place. The policy and schemes of work follow all aspects of the National Curriculum. Pupils' progress is monitored through the use of a comprehensive tracking system. The annual review reports note the areas pupils have studied, and indicate what pupils know, can do and understand about the subject.

168. It is not possible to make an overall judgement on how far the subject has improved since the last inspection, as the subject was not reported on at that time.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

169. The improvement in ICT provision has been very good since the last inspection. The school became a designated technology college in September 1999. This has had a major impact on the improvement in ICT resources, the breadth of the curriculum and pupils' learning opportunities and outcomes. The commitment of the school to promote ICT as a recognised key skill supports pupils' very good achievement. The school aims to equip each pupil with essential ICT skills and has worked hard to secure this objective since the last inspection. The time allocated to the subject is in line with national recommendations and good planning ensures that pupils make progress through the school. The school's ICT policy meets statutory requirements and sets out its aims clearly. It is supported by a good Internet safety policy and a scheme of work, which ensures that the requirements of the programmes of study of the National Curriculum are met. The quality of provision is very good for moderate learning difficulties (MLD), severe learning difficulties (SLD), emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD) and autistic pupils.

170. Throughout the school, pupils make very good progress and achieve very well. Scrutiny of teachers' planning and lesson observations indicate that the majority of pupils make very good progress. The planning is good and ICT is used very well across the curriculum. Word processing is taught well and used effectively in many subjects to support learning outcomes. Pupils log, analyse and display data well, use word processing programs to present their work and the Internet to aid original research and to reinforce learning.

171. The current assessment procedures provide good support in ensuring that all elements in the Programme of Study are covered and that learning is continuous and progressive. The school's three sites are networked with multimedia PCs, there are dedicated suites and each classroom has access to at least one PC. A range of peripherals is available to meet pupils' specific needs and customised software is available. However, pupils with profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) do not have enough opportunities to operate simple switches to aid mobility and communication. Access to all sites, including the virtual reality classroom, and ICT suites is presently not available or planned for all pupils.

172. In the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 to 6, ICT is well integrated into the *Themes for Living* planning. Termly ICT targets are set and evaluated on English and mathematics IEP's. Teachers produce short-term planning which sets out different learning outcomes for MLD, SLD, and autistic pupils. Teaching is good overall in Years 1 to 6. Most pupils in these year groups make good progress over time and can press a switch to make a noise or cause an effect. They have opportunities to make connections between control devices and information on screen, and to operate simple computer programs. Higher-attaining pupils can log on and off and access their own interactive programs. These support the development of their number recognition and values or reading programs. They are confident when using the mouse to navigate the screen and respond well as they are guided through the program. They use the mouse to drag numbers and images to the appropriate

icons. Higher-attaining pupils can identify words shown on screen to support their literacy programmes and order these to make a simple sentence. They successfully drag the correct word of a *rat*, a *robin* or a *ring* and locate it under the correct image. Higher-attaining pupils have begun to develop e-mail friendships and correspond with other schools electronically. They can carry out a variety of matching, sorting, addition and subtraction tasks on the computer, using headsets while following the instructions given.

173. In Years 7 to 11 specific scheduled lessons are taught as part of the curriculum for EBD, MLD and SLD pupils. Teaching for these groups is very good. Pupils learn to use ICT for a range of purposes including leisure, information finding, recording, programming and data handling. They use a variety of ICT tools including video recorders, editing suites, web authoring and digital cameras. The achievements of pupils in Years 7 to 11, and the progress they make, are very good. By the time they are in Year 9, the highest-attaining pupils load and save files from CD ROMs and floppy discs, access the network and the Internet. They open and close programs and create and delete files. Word processing skills are good. For example, pupils confidently change font type and size; underline and bold text; and use italics when required. They import information into a word processing file from other locations such as the network or the Internet. Higher-attaining pupils begin to use a bookmark to insert images from their chosen website to use in their design. They can 'fan' an image to create a circular transformation. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 ICT is taught as a discrete subject leading to the Edexcel Certificate of Competence in ICT. Some higher-attaining pupils created multimedia presentations about their recent visit to Hardwick Hall using photographs they had taken with the digital camera. The presentation of their final work was innovative and showed clearly what can be achieved. The lowest-attaining pupils can control the screen through the keyboard or mouse and, with considerable help, follow the process of collecting data to its presentation. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 extend their knowledge of software packages. The very good knowledge of teachers and support assistants and the very good behaviour management make a considerable contribution to the very good standards they are achieving.

174. Overall, the quality of teaching is very good for MLD, SLD, EBD and autistic pupils. Lessons are well planned and are made up of well-prepared activities. These give classes well-structured opportunities for personal development and ICT skills. Teachers use a very wide range of teaching strategies, which engage pupils of all abilities. Praise is well and appropriately used and pupils are enthusiastic in their learning, showing confidence and excitement. Lessons build well on what pupils already know, and clear explanations aid pupils' understanding and recall. For example, staff remind pupils how to log on, navigate a web site and not to surf further than is necessary for that lesson. Very good use is made of time in lessons with no time wasted. The use of ICT to support all curriculum areas is very good. Teaching assistants are very well deployed and make a very positive contribution to pupils' learning, especially when they provide individual support to a pupil struggling to maintain appropriate behaviour. The relationship between adults and pupils is very good, being based on trust and respect.

175. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. Over a number of years, the co-ordinator and technician have worked hard to establish a resource base of hardware and software that is particularly suited to meeting the wide range of pupils' learning needs. Similarly, over many years, the action plans for the subject have charted sensible development. Most recently, this has included the siting of a virtual reality suite, interactive white boards and relevant training of all staff. A few staff are still under-confident, however, about dealing with programs which crash or present problems.

176. Cross-curricular long, medium and short-term plans are under development through the *Themes for Living* curriculum and, at present, are insufficiently challenging for the pupils with PMLD. Together with the lack of teacher knowledge, this results in these pupils making insufficient progress overall. A shared understanding of different and effective teaching and learning styles, along with the identification of individual targets to enable pupils with profound and complex learning difficulties, to move more independently, communicate and make choices more readily will improve equality of opportunity for all. The appropriate introduction and implementation of 'P' Scale assessment, especially for the younger pupils and those with PMLD, should help to improve standards further.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

French and Spanish

177. French is a significant strength of the school. The school's provision has been strengthened since the last inspection. Technology College status has meant an increase in information and communication technology (ICT) provision in the subject, and the use of the interactive white board in lessons, is transforming the way pupils respond and learn.

178. Resources for learning are excellent and are of very high quality. The pupils continue to make very good progress in French overall. The pupils' progress is sometimes excellent on the Beaumont site due to the teacher's high degree of competence in teaching the subject and the entertaining and dynamic way the activities are presented to the pupils. Spanish has been recently introduced. It is being trialled by the school as an alternative to French for lower-attaining pupils and is taught by the Beaumont modern foreign languages teacher and a specialist from a local secondary partner school. The school's joint visits to France with the pupils from a local secondary school and college students (skiing in Les Alpes) make a significant contribution to pupils' understanding of French culture, as well as to their social development.

179. Pupils make very good progress in French. This is because of the highly systematic way the language is taught and the highly detailed planning which builds very well on what pupils have learned before. Despite the wide variation in the attainment of the different special educational needs groups which the school has, all the pupils consistently make very good progress. This is with the exception of the profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD) pupils, who have only just begun to be taught French by the specialist language teacher. Little evidence of their previous work, or opportunities, was available to make a judgement on their past progress.

180. The youngest pupils learning French know the names of a range of body parts; some are beginning to use the correct gender article to preface the noun, such as *la main*, while others just use the noun itself. They are very quickly increasing their vocabulary of colour and numbers and are beginning to link two utterances concerning their new vocabulary about items in a pencil case, such as *onze règles* and *quatre crayons*. As they progress through the school their understanding of questions increases and they respond appropriately to *qu'est-ce que c'est ?* Pupils' understanding of grammar rules develops very well in Year 9 and they cope admirably with plurals and link three ideas together in a phrase, such as *huit poissons rouges*. Older pupils in Years 10 and 11 build on their knowledge producing simple sentences that include negative forms. Higher-attaining pupils in the mainstream school base produce written correspondence showing very good attention to grammar, punctuation and spelling. Pupils with severe learning difficulties (SLD) started learning Spanish very recently but have responded remarkably and are making very good progress.

181. The quality of the teaching in modern foreign languages is very good overall and sometimes excellent. The majority of the teaching of French is undertaken by the co-ordinator who is a specialist French teacher who has very good knowledge of the subject. She is partnered by a specialist Spanish teacher in Spanish lessons and some team teaching takes place. In the secondary mainstream provision, French is taught by the class teacher. Provision there is satisfactory and in the one lesson seen, the teaching was good, maintaining the pupils' interest well, despite the considerable disruption taking place outside the room.

182. The teaching is very lively and the pace of the lesson is brisk. Activities change regularly, but build extremely well, linking together the ideas learned in the lessons. The high-quality teacher-made visual aids and challenging questions, with an insistence on pupils supplying an answer, stimulates them to think and respond, trying their hardest. The teacher is very adept at ensuring that pupils are not disheartened if they get the wrong answer; every encouragement is given, without telling them the answer. The teachers' style is particularly successful with autistic pupils and those with emotional and behavioural difficulties. The pattern of the lesson is well known by them, they know what to expect and what will be expected of them. The teacher is very sensitive and knows well how to approach the pupils and how far to 'push' them. There is always an element of challenge, however, which takes them one step further.

183. The use of the computer based interactive white board is extremely successful and activities are highly prepared. The co-ordinator has produced all the software and the very high standard of materials is the main reason why even the most disaffected pupils maintain their interest and respond positively. The teacher is gaining a very good knowledge of websites which can be used with the range of needs in the school and the pupils participate readily in the reinforcement activities. The teacher uses French as much as possible and provides role-play exercises for the pupils. Occasionally, pupils work with a partner, but too often it is with the teacher. Although support assistants provide valuable help in groups where there are emotional and behaviour difficulties (EBD) pupils, reminding them of their targets, for instance, they are little involved with the language content of the lesson. From time to time, however, the teacher includes them as 'pupils'; this is very successful as the pupils, especially the more reluctant learners, see that adults also have to learn.

184. Although the provision of modern foreign languages is a significant strength, and pupils make very good progress, they have no opportunity to gain any awards in the subject. Not enough time is provided for learning in Years 10 and 11 in order to undertake Certificate of Achievement or GCSE course.

MUSIC

185. During the inspection, only a limited number of lessons were observed involving pupils up to age seven. Work seen involved primarily pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD). However, discussions with staff and pupils and examination of pupils' work and records support the following judgements.

186. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. There is now a qualified music specialist in post and the school has invested significantly in developing the skills of learning support assistants to improve the access of pupils to the music curriculum. Pupils now have improving opportunities to engage with music, for example through the 'Themes for Living' strand of the curriculum in respect of primary age pupils. Resources have been strengthened. There is now a purpose designed music therapy suite and a wider range of

instruments available for pupils. A joint venture with a special school in a neighbouring authority means that older pupils now have access to a well - equipped music studio for group rehearsal and performance under the guidance of a professional musician.

187. Pupils achieve well. By the end of Year 6, pupils gain in confidence in the use of sound and in responding to music individually and as a class. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties can model music produced by the teacher / accompanist, using a widening range of instruments, for example drums, acoustic guitars and electronic keyboards. They are prepared to persist and concentrate well. The resources provided, for example through the joint venture involving a professional music studio, are treated with respect. Within Years 7 to 10, pupils make good and very good progress. The playing of guitar, drums and keyboards is more controlled and pupils can now harmonise their performance with that of others. Independent learning is good. Year 11 pupils accept others' evaluations of their work more readily and act constructively upon it. For example, in one lesson where, although texture was satisfactory, the tempo was inappropriate.

188. Pupils with PMLD make small, but significant gains in this area when they are taught in the music therapy room and have good opportunities to respond using switches. They listen to and make choices about the music they experience. By the end of Year 9, some of these pupils play simple pieces and accompaniments. They explore, create and select sounds, using technology aids to produce simple compositions. Music therapy makes a strong contribution to the assessment of PMLD pupils' communication skills in the widest sense when they learn about and respond to sound, through biofeedback and switch control.

189. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. In the lessons seen, planning was consistently effective and the use of resources, especially information and communication technology was excellent, as, for example, in the lessons observed for pupils in Years 7 to 11 with severe learning difficulties (SLD). Teachers know their pupils well and this acted as a powerful motivator in lessons observed with severely disabled pupils, who were recognised as individuals. Expectation is high and within each age group, pupils' response was positive. The careful targeting and co-ordinated delivery of lessons by both teaching and non- teaching staff enabled each pupil to participate fully.

190. Pupils are being further motivated by a modest, but increasing, range of accreditation such as GNVQ. This also includes local education authority (LEA) achievement rewards. The music curriculum is enriched by a range of activities, including a thriving music technology club which engages pupils, teaching and non – teaching staff and parents. Younger primary-age pupils enjoy a number of opportunities for dance and music alongside their mainstream peers. For pupils in Year 9 and above there are activities which can enable them to explore vocational opportunities, and be supported under the direction of practising musicians. The school's involvement in wider initiatives, such as the Amicus project, is to be commended; though the benefits for pupils will need to be continually monitored, however, against the commitments required of staff outside the normal school timetable.

191. Leadership and management in the subject are very good. The co-ordinator has a very clear vision for the future development of the subject. In particular, strategies for exploiting the use of technology for composing and the means by which pupils can learn within and outside the normal school curriculum are very strong. During the inspection, pupils with PMLD were making final preparations for a musical production to be performed at the nearby prestigious Bowes Museum. The school is at the forefront of developments in switch technology for use with pupils who have significant physical and intellectual disabilities in music. This has succeeded both in enthusing staff and also attracting substantial additional resources to develop socially inclusive projects such as Amicus. The

self-esteem of pupils has been enhanced by the improved opportunities to meet with pupils from a range of other schools and by well-planned occasions when performances occur outside the school. A structured programme of staff development has enabled several learning support assistants to be trained in music therapy during the last two years. As a result, pupils have had more effective individual support both within and outside music lessons.

192. Although development planning for the subject is very good and the capacity for further improvement is considerable, particularly in the acquisition of additional resources for learning, assessment arrangements, to evaluate pupils' progress are not fully developed. This means that measures for evaluating the progress of learning are not fully in place for each age group. This weakness is recognised by the school and a strategy has been devised to ensure that such progress is more coherently monitored in the future within the framework of the pupils' records of achievement, using nationally-comparable 'P' scale measures.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION (PSHE)

193. Pupils achieve well in personal and social education lessons throughout the school. The new scheme of work is being implemented effectively and is helping to raise standards in the subject. This is an improvement since the previous inspection, when pupils' achievements were satisfactory overall. The clear rationale that states that the subject is integral to all areas of school life is evident in the good behaviour exhibited by the vast majority of pupils, and in their confidence and self-esteem as they undertake their tasks.

194. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 develop curiosity about themselves and others as they undertake early learning activities about 'themselves'. They learn to look after their own belongings and where things are kept. They develop some personal autonomy as they use symbols to make choices. For example, pupils in Years 1 and 2 were observed using the picture exchange communication system to ask for a particular snack and drink. They help to put their own things away and help to tidy classrooms from the youngest age.

195. In Years 3 to 6, pupils learn about helping others and about people who help them. For example, they have completed worksheets about people who help in the home. They have made presents for others, and show that they can work well together. Photographic evidence of past work shows that social skills are developing well. During the inspection, many pupils were observed working and playing together in a friendly way. They shared resources and helped each other to succeed.

196. In Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well as they follow a structured personal and social education programme. They develop awareness of themselves and their bodies and learn about personal hygiene. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties were observed discussing their own feelings about personal issues. They were able to work well, in twos, to develop their own response to questions linked to help them express their views on popular discussion topics, and for instance, their response to drugs issues. The approach used helped them to negotiate and understand the other person's point of view and the impact of addictions. Pupils in the outreach provision at the local comprehensive school made effective gains in their understandings about citizenship as they discussed issues linked to environmental pollution and the recent revelations about the ozone layer. They showed good understanding of the need to improve the environment, and made valid suggestions as to how this could be accomplished.

197. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, build on their prior learning as they learn about the role of local government and the local mayor. They begin to undertake some work-related and careers education linked to the 'World of Work' module. Good use is made of the good facilities for home management. Work is well documented and presented, using effective literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills. They learn to become confident and responsible young people, due to the good provision and resources. The facilities for home management are good

198. The quality of teaching and learning in personal and social education is usually good. In particular, teachers make good use of the planned curriculum to present a progressive range of activities in Years 7 to 11. Relationships are very good, and play a positive role in the success of the pupils. Teachers make good use of literacy and communication skills to teach the subject. For example, very good and highly sensitive questioning is a real feature of the provision. Teachers give pupils time to think and respond. This makes possible high quality discussions that help pupils to make their own decisions and draw conclusions. Occasionally, the disruptive behaviour of a small minority of pupils affects the learning of others in the class. The impact of support assistants is particularly good. They spend time talking to pupils and helping them to solve their own difficulties. Good systems are in place to ensure that there is always an adult for pupils to talk with and feel secure with.

199. Leadership of the subject is new, but there is a clear vision for the development of the skills and knowledge needed to improve achievement further. The scheme of work is effective and having a positive impact on teaching and learning. There is a well-established curriculum in place for Years 1 to 6 and this is built into the *Themes for Living*.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

200. There has been a considerable improvement in physical education since the last inspection, notably in the progress made by the pupils and the quality of teaching. Overall, pupils make very good progress in physical education.

201. In Years 1 and 2 progress is good, with some very good examples. By the end of Year 2, pupils' co-ordination and movement has improved, through a variety of activities including gymnastics and swimming. Pupils can jump using two feet on a trampoline, use swings, slides and frames appropriately, and traverse a beam using a variety of techniques. In swimming they make very good gains in confidence and can cross the pool, walking, running and jumping. In Years 3 to 6, pupils make very good progress. By the end of Year 6 they have built on their prior achievements and knowledge and are able to make choices and evaluate their own performance. They are beginning to refine their movements in gymnastics, and are developing their skills as team members. More able pupils are able to swim up to 10 meters without support aids. Less able pupils make very good improvement in the ball pool, where the lesson is linked well to literacy. They learn to move 'go under', 'sit on', 'go behind' and 'in front of' apparatus.

202. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 make good, and sometimes very good progress. By the end of Year 9 more able pupils are making very good progress in the pool. They can swim 25 metres using both front and back crawl techniques and jump into the water using a straddle style. They are developing skills in athletics across both track and field events. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 make very good progress especially in outdoor education. For example,

by the end of Year 11, when using a climbing wall, they are aware of necessary safety precautions and can climb using appropriate grips for both hands and feet. Pupils are given the opportunity to take part in a range of after-school clubs and to represent the school in a range of competitions. This further promotes their personal and social skills.

203. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. During the inspection all teaching was at least good and some of it was excellent. Teachers pay particular attention to the health and safety aspects of physical education. They have established clear routines to ensure a settled start to lessons and the monitoring of health and safety during lessons. Pupils respond well to these routines. Teachers' planning is thorough and includes the development of the key skills of communication, collaboration and problem solving which serve to make the pupils more independent in their learning. Planning is finely graded to meet the needs of all pupils and this ensures that pupils make very good progress. Teachers make links to other subjects of the curriculum. For example, during the warm up, teachers make links to science by drawing attention to changes in heart rate. Very good use is made of technology. For example, computers have been used to plot heart rate and support assistants make video recordings of lessons, challenging pupils to evaluate and improve their own performance. Pupils respond well to this challenge. Support staff make a very strong contribution to lessons. They help teachers in coaching, encouraging and praising pupils. This maintains pupils' interest, helps to improve their performance and ensures that they behave very well in lessons.

204. The curriculum is appropriate to the needs of the pupils. The swimming instructor and outdoor education co-ordinator make a positive contribution to the development of physical education in the school. In addition, the school makes very good use of links it has with Newcastle United Community Football Programme and Newcastle Falcons Rugby Union Club. Coaches from these clubs attend the school on a regular basis and this makes a very strong contribution to the development of pupils' skills. The co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator carries out an audit of the subject annually and has been given time to observe colleagues teaching physical education. The subject co-ordinator leads a skiing trip to France each year. Pupils' achievements are celebrated through the presentation of certificates from a wide range of validating bodies across all sports. They enjoy receiving these certificates and work very hard to reach the required standards. Pupils' progress is monitored through the use of a subject tracking record. Annual review reports note the range of activities pupils have taken part in but do not consistently report what pupils know, can do and understand about the subject. The school makes very good use of local facilities to support its own resources, which are good, and its accommodation which is adequate.

POST 16

205. The last inspection did not report separately on Post 16 provision. However, an examination of the comments and judgements made in the different parts of the report, indicate that satisfactory improvement has been made in provision for Post 16 students since the last report.

206. The Post 16 department has significant strengths and the provision is good overall. Relationships are very good between students and with staff. Students care about each other, help and respect each other. The good quality of teaching enhances learning and prepares students well for moving on from school to college or to their next step in life. Students have good opportunities to develop their numeracy, literacy and information and communication technology (ICT) skills, as well as their personal and social skills. Links with the local community and the local college of further education are very good. More than half the Post 16 students attend college and pursue accreditation. The school is working closely

with the college to develop further courses suitable for the other students, who have very high dependency needs and cannot be catered for at college at this time. Attainment on entry to the Post 16 department is lower than for the rest of the school, since the provision caters for students who, because of their low level of attainment, are not yet able to take up places at the local college.

207. Although there is a discrete Post 16 curriculum, students also integrate into the main school for certain lessons and physiotherapy, when this is appropriate. This is done through the Integrated Learning Group system. An excellent example of this was when Post 16 students joined Year 10 and 11 pupils for an interactive music session. Students also join for other lessons, such as science. This works well and students and pupils benefit from these lessons.

208. The main accommodation is in one classroom; in addition, a house in the grounds is used for activities relating to pupils' independence. Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, there are strengths and weaknesses. The door into the classroom is narrow and difficult for non-ambulant students to manoeuvre independently. There is only one adjustable table in the classroom, creating difficulties when students in wheelchairs need to write and record work. The kitchen in the house gives students an opportunity to operate in a normal domestic kitchen and improve their food technology and daily living skills. However, the size of the kitchen limits a group to a maximum of four students at the same time. There is one computer in the class base and students also have the use of a small ICT suite close to their base.

209. Students use the common room at breaks and lunchtime, mixing freely with the pupils from the secondary department of the school. Pupils from the secondary department of the school are also invited into the Post 16 base to play small board games at lunchtime. This works well and provides good social opportunities.

210. Accreditation through the Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) is in place for the more able students involved in the Youth Award Scheme (YAS). Last year, 2001, 10 students passed the Youth Award Bronze award.

211. All students achieve well while attending the Post 16 provision. In literacy, the policy is to teach the learning objectives within the ASDAN framework of modules. Students achieve well in these sessions. The emphasis is on practical work which students undertake well and with enthusiasm. The most able communicators are confident with visitors, ask questions and talk about topics of interest to them, such as their trip to France or skiing. Students listen well to staff and to each other, taking turns in talking and listening and demonstrating good awareness of their own and others' needs. More able students read social signs and recognise a range of public signs such as those for toilets and for fire exits. They enjoy reading magazines. More able students in the course of their work, are reading and writing, using text and symbols on the computer. They write short sentences using a vocabulary bank built into the program. Lower-ability students use a touch screen showing text and symbols to help them write short sentences. Students use the local library and choose books to bring back to school. The students who attend the local college have access to the main library when they are at college.

212. In numeracy, students make good progress and have a good understanding of the use of money. This is reinforced by the extra work they do in the Bistro where they handle money, add up bills and give change. They have opportunities to go shopping in the local supermarket. They plan, prepare their shopping list and buy their ingredients, for example when planning to prepare a meal in the 'house'. When preparing food, they weigh and measure, and some estimate with accuracy. They understand how to set the oven to

different temperatures, and use the gas rings safely. Students follow recipes well. These are set out in text and symbols. For the least able, the recipes are prepared in a series of photographs which make it is easier for students to follow the correct sequence.

213. Students make good progress in their personal, social and health education, which is well supported by their experiences in college, the community and residential experiences. As part of this programme, they take care of their personal daily needs, prepare simple meals and snacks, carry out basic shopping and cleaning, and know how to spend their leisure time. Through their out-of-school experiences, they show they are making good gains in social competency, such as ordering food at McDonalds, helping others within school, asking questions of others, holding social conversations and having a good awareness of socially acceptable behaviour. Good use is made of the start of the day when, as part of student's personal development, staff discuss the students' timetable. Text, symbols and photographs are used well to ensure that all students understand what is required of them for the day.

214. The quality of teaching in Post 16 classes is good overall and is sometimes very good it is never less than good and often has very good features. The quality of the teamwork with support assistants is high; sensitivity to the needs of students ensures they have positive learning experiences. An example of this was in an art class where the teacher wanted some background music to set a quiet working atmosphere, and gave the responsibility to a lower attaining student in the class. She had to press an ICT switch linked to a CD player to start the music. Very good use of praise and encouragement was made every time the student pressed the switch.

215. The quality of teaching and learning seen on the inspection ranged from good in mathematics and food technology, very good in English, religious education, ICT, and, occasionally, excellent in music. Learning resources are satisfactory overall, and very good in music where very good use of ICT switches allows students to access to play a wide range of instruments. The use of homework is limited, but is used appropriately where students can benefit. As a result of high quality teaching, relationships in class are very good, students respond very positively and their behaviour is very good. Students enter their base with very good attitudes, keen to participate and work hard at all times. There is a purposeful working atmosphere; praise and encouragement and humour are used particularly well encourage students to persevere and complete their work. Skilled questioning ensures that students understand what is required of them. Resources are organised well in advance, easily accessible and used very well.

216. An appropriate curriculum is offered. It is broad, balanced and very relevant to the needs of the students. Key skills in literacy, numeracy, ICT and personal and social development are stressed appropriately in Post 16 provision. Strong links with Year 11 work are made and this supports continuity and progression. Although the Post 16 co-ordinator is a representative on the governing body, the governors do not receive an annual or termly report on the work on Post 16 students and no governor is designated to monitor the work of the department.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

217. Pupils' achievements in religious education are good throughout the school. Pupils make good progress in their understanding of Christianity and world religions such as Sikhism. As they progress through the school, pupils increase their knowledge of bible stories and religious festivals. However pupils with more profound additional needs in some classes do not make sufficient progress because insufficient use is made of signing, symbols and support to ensure they have the same access to learning as other pupils.

218. By the end of Year 2, pupils have a basic knowledge of Christianity and world faiths such as Buddhism. They know the story of the brave Monkey King who saved his friends. Higher-attaining pupils draw a monkey face and perform the role of the monkey king in giving mango fruit to others in the class. Lower attaining pupils taste the fruit given by the 'Monkey King'. Pupils listen to reflective music at the end of the lesson as they lower their heads and think about the kindness of the monkey king. By the end of Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of Old Testament Bible stories. In the story of Moses, they know that he was a Hebrew and was different to the Egyptians. Higher attaining pupils recount the story well. In the story of Jonah, pupils with more profound difficulties, look at the display of dolphins and fish, listen to music and feel the parachute over them, as they develop a basic understanding of what it would be like inside the belly of a whale. Most pupils draw Jonah in the belly of the whale and higher-attaining pupils know that the whale swallowed Jonah because he offended God.

219. By the end of Year 9 pupils develop an understanding of miracles, they know familiar New Testament stories and develop further knowledge of world religions such as Sikhism. In the Christian story of Zaccheus, pupils know he was a tax collector who stayed in a tree to see Jesus. They select appropriate words in sentences to write the story of Zaccheus and sing a song about him with enthusiasm. They know that Jesus performed a miracle when he calmed the storm and walked on water. Pupils also begin to understand the Sikh religion. Higher-attaining pupils write about their visit to the Sikh temple in Middlesborough. They know it is called the Gurdwara and the Holy book is called the Guru Granth Sahib. Most pupils understand the religious meaning of the Sikh flag. Lower-attaining pupils write about the Sikh flag. Pupils also know the main events of the Christian story of creation and begin to understand the story of Adam and Eve. Higher-attaining pupils know that Eve was tempted by a serpent and lower-attaining pupils know that Adam was the first man.

220. By the end of Year 11, pupils have a deeper understanding of religious festivals associated with world faiths. Some pupils retell stories about people in biblical times and others achieve a certificate of merit for their work on Noah's Ark. Students in Years 12 and 13 communicate their knowledge of bible stories, such as Jesus calming the storm, using signs and symbols. They understand the power of the wind, the storm and the waves.

221. The overall quality of teaching is good with examples of very good teaching. Tasks are planned for the different abilities of pupils and support staff are very deployed effectively in most lessons to ensure that all pupils are learning at their full potential. Teachers also deliver lessons at a lively pace, so that pupils work productively. All pupils whatever their ability learn equally well in these lessons. However in a few lessons signing and symbols are not used sufficiently to ensure that pupils with more complex additional needs have full access to learning. This was seen in a Year 4 lesson where pupils were learning the story of Jonah. Although the teacher made very good use of resources such as a Jonah doll, taped music and pictures of the whale, insufficient attention was given to the use of signing for pupils with sensory difficulties and not enough support was given during the lesson to ensure good progress. Pupils learn well because teachers make good

use of well chosen resources selected from the excellent range of high quality religious artefacts of major world faiths in topic sacks. This adds interest and vitality to the teaching and focuses pupils' attention on lesson activities. They try hard in lessons, listen carefully and take a pride in their achievements.

222. Since the last inspection there have been very good improvements in the provision for religious education. The curriculum is now very good. The co-ordinator has very successfully reviewed the religious education policy and the school is now working from a newly Agreed Syllabus with the local educational authority (LEA). There are schemes of work to provide guidance for teachers about the skills and knowledge to be taught in each year, which ensures that pupils are provided with activities in an appropriate sequence that builds upon their previous learning. The extensive range of well thought out planned visits to places of worship, such as the Gurdwara, enrich the religious learning experiences of pupils. There are very good opportunities to enhance spiritual and moral development in lessons, where pupils are given the opportunity for reflection on religious or moral values, such as being kind to others, or when they say a prayer at the end of their lessons. Procedures for the assessment and recording of pupils' progress are good. The leadership and management of the subject is very good and there are good procedures for the effective monitoring and support of teachers' planning which includes the monitoring of teaching and learning within the subject. The quality of learning resources is very good. These included topic sacks containing artefacts for teaching and learning of particular religious topics and excellent different laminated books to enable pupils of different abilities to access learning. Most teachers use these resources very well in religious education lessons.