

INSPECTION REPORT

Glendale Community Middle School

Wooler

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122352

Headteacher: Mr J N W Spowart

Reporting inspector: Mrs M Fitzpatrick
24326

Dates of inspection: 26 - 28 September 2000

Inspection number: 223744

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: 15 Brewery Lane
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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs S Burston

Date of previous inspection: 16 May 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Moira Fitzpatrick (OFSTED No: 24326)	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements.
			How well the school is led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Marion Howell (OFSTED No: 19343)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Raymond Cardinal (OFSTED No: 22695)	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
Elizabeth Charlesworth (OFSTED No: 19532)	Team inspector	Music	How well are pupils taught?
Rick Fuller (OFSTED No: 30553)	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered?
Mark Gill (OFSTED No: 13003)	Team inspector	History	
		Geography	
		Physical education	
Eileen Metcalfe (OFSTED No: 17868)	Team inspector	Art	
		Religious education	
John Mitchell (OFSTED No: 23246)	Team inspector	Science	
Les Schubeler (OFSTED No: 19404)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
		English as an additional language	
Pamela Walton (OFSTED No: 13189)	Team inspector	Design and technology	
		Information and communication technology	
		Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school, which is set in a small rural town, is much smaller than average with 206 pupils; it has an even number of boys and girls. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is in line with the national average. There are 37 pupils on the register of special educational needs. There are 18 pupils at stages 3 - 5 of the Code of Practice and eight of them have statements of special educational needs. 17.9 per cent of pupils are on the register and 3.8 per cent have statements. The proportion of pupils on the register is below the national average and the proportion of pupils with statements is above the national average. The majority of those on the register have moderate learning difficulties associated with literacy. There are no pupils from ethnic minority groups. The school's intake covers all abilities, though there are fewer higher attainers than are found in most schools. Overall, the attainment of pupils on entry is average.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Glendale School is a good school, providing a very happy environment in which learning is good. The headteacher and staff in the school have a very clear vision of what the school should be and, through good team work and good quality teaching, achieve the school's aims in all aspects of its work. The headteacher leads the school well, has a good understanding of its strengths and weaknesses and provides good support to all staff. Standards are high in mathematics and are rising in English and science. The quality of personal development in the school is very good: pupils are confident and well adjusted. Given the high standards achieved and the richness of the children's experience, the school gives good value for money.

What the school does well

- Sets and reaches very high standards in mathematics.
- Standards in the core subjects are rising faster than the national trend.
- Leadership is good and provides clear educational direction for development.
- Teaching is good throughout the school and is very good in Key Stage 2.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good; their very good attitudes support the high standards they achieve.
- Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good.
- Relationships at all levels in the school are very good. They make a strong contribution to learning.
- The range and quality of extra-curricular provision is very good. Pupils are given many opportunities to take part in sport and musical performances.

What could be improved

- Assessment procedures and their use to raise standards even further.
- The time allocated to some subjects, especially religious education.
- The time given to senior managers to discharge their responsibilities.
- The use of information technology in most subjects.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was last inspected in May 1995. Most of the issues identified at that time have been successfully tackled. There have been significant improvements in the standards achieved in mathematics, which are now well above the national average. Teachers' expertise has improved in all subjects and the quality of teaching overall has improved, providing a higher proportion of very good teaching in the school. The planning for information technology and design and technology has improved. The resources for information technology, though still not sufficient, have improved and pupils now have more access to computers. The improvements which have been made in assessment have not been extended to all subjects. Nor has the time allocated to subjects been resolved satisfactorily. Elsewhere in the school, high standards have been maintained, especially in the quality of relationships and the provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The role of governors has been developed and they now play a more effective part in the strategic management of the school. The school is now well placed to continue to improve.

STANDARDS

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

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

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

Standards in mathematics are high at the end of Key Stage 2, and these are reflected in the well above average results that pupils achieved in the National Curriculum tests in 1999. Pupils' performance in English and science is average in these tests, but results from the national tests in 2000 show a greater proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in both subjects. The trend in improvement in these subjects is rising faster than the national trend. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment is above the expected level in English and mathematics and similar to the expected level in science. In all other subjects of the curriculum, pupils achieve standards expected for their age, except in art, where, at both key stages, they achieve better than expected standards, and in physical education, where standards are above the expectation by the end of Year 8. In most subjects, pupils achieve well and are working at or near capacity in most lessons seen. The exceptions to this are seen in lessons that are too long, when, occasionally, pupils' concentration flags towards the end. The school set realistic targets for the national tests in 2000 and these were met, with a higher than expected proportion of pupils achieving the higher level in all subjects. The school has set similar realistic and attainable targets for the tests in 2001.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils of all abilities are enthusiastic learners. They quickly develop independence and confidence in their ability to succeed.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Standards of behaviour are very high in and out of classrooms. Children are courteous and considerate. They welcome visitors and are happy to engage in conversation about their work. There are no exclusions from the school.
Personal development and relationships	Pupils take responsibility for their learning and organise themselves well. Relationships are very good, supporting a harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in the school.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance is above the national average. There is no unauthorised absence.

The secure and stimulating atmosphere which pervades the school is one of its outstanding strengths. Wherever teachers and children are found working together there is harmony and enthusiasm, which makes a powerful contribution to the learning process. The high levels of respect reflect the headteacher's leadership, which is based on placing trust in fellow professionals.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged 9-11 years	Aged 11-13 years	aged over 14 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Good	N/a

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 teaching of mathematics is consistently good and often very good. Teachers place great emphasis on mental agility and keep up a brisk pace throughout lessons. In English, teaching is also good, with planning for learning well matched to pupils' needs. Science teaching focuses well on developing practical skills and a good scientific vocabulary for pupils. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are well taught, so that pupils are able to use them to help their learning in other subjects. There is particularly good teaching in art and music at both key stages and pupils achieve well as a consequence. While pupils with special educational needs achieve well, this is not always the case for higher attaining pupils, who occasionally mark time in design and technology and science lessons where they are not fully challenged. The quality of teaching underpins the goods standards that pupils achieve. In over three-quarters of the 61 lessons seen, teaching was good or better and in over one third it was very good. Only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen, where failure to build on pupils' previous learning led to unsatisfactory progress for most pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. Pupils' learning is greatly enhanced by field trips and extra-curricular activities. Time allocated to religious education and other subjects could be improved.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Identification of pupils' needs and planning to support them are both good. Pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Pupils are taught to reflect upon their experiences. They are taught right from wrong. They enjoy wide ranging activities which extend their social and cultural awareness.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Teachers know their pupils well and care for them accordingly. In some subjects teachers could improve how they assess pupils' progress and help them to improve.

Parents express strong support for the school. The vast majority value the quality of learning provided for their children.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good leadership and very good teamwork ensure that the school maintains high standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	All statutory requirements are met. Governors monitor the work of the school, including the work of the headteacher and the deputy headteacher. They show a good understanding of the school's strengths and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of	The headteacher and deputy headteacher monitor the school's performance and compare it with like schools. Governors are kept

its performance	informed of results and take action to make improvements when required.
The strategic use of resources	Spending decisions are based on improving provision to raise pupils' attainment. The impact of spending decisions is monitored.

The school has a good range of experience and expertise in its staff. While accommodation is adequate, there are constraints of space in the room used for teaching music.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the teachers expect their children to work hard. • That their children like school. • That the school is well led and managed. • That teaching is good. • That behaviour in the school is good. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The amount and quality of homework given to children.

Inspectors agree with parents' positive views of the school. They also agree with the parents who feel that there is not enough homework of the right quality. There is room to improve the regularity, frequency and purpose of homework, particularly for pupils in Key Stage 3, in order to prepare them for the demands they will meet in the high school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is broadly in line with the national average.
2. Standards in English, at the end of Key Stage 2, match the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the pupils' average point score was slightly above the national average and girls' performance in the tests was better than that of the boys. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level in these tests was below the national average. However, provisional results from the tests in 2000 show a significant improvement in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level, reflecting the impact of the National Literacy Strategy and of the improvements in the quality of teaching. Standards have risen in line with the national trend since the time of the last inspection. By Year 6, pupils have good reading skills; they read independently for pleasure and for information. Their writing is controlled and for the most part grammatically accurate and pupils show a good understanding of the different purposes of writing. Spelling is about average and the presentation of pupils' work is neat. Pupils at Key Stage 2 achieve at least as well as pupils in most similar schools and there are signs of some pupils achieving well, in terms of their prior attainment, owing to the increased demands of the work set.
3. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment in English is above the expectation for pupils of this age. This is due to the high quality specialist teaching they receive in Key Stage 3 and the very good planning which builds on the literacy strategy. In Year 8, pupils are fluent readers, are able to discuss their preferences and can explain differences in genre. Their writing improves well and shows good structure and a very well developed sense of audience. Because of their good reading habits, many pupils have an extensive vocabulary to support their writing. All pupils are working at their capacity and are achieving well in Key Stage 3. By the time pupils leave the school good value has been added in their English skills.
4. Standards in mathematics are high at the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils' average point score in the 1999 National Curriculum tests placed them well above the average for all schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was above the average. Girls performed much better than boys in the 1999 tests. Provisional results for the tests in 2000 show a similar pattern of above average performance at the higher level. Although performance at the expected level dropped in 2000, this was anticipated by the school in the targets it set. Since the last inspection, the school's performance in mathematics has risen much faster than the national trend. These results reflect the good quality teaching seen throughout Key Stage 2 and the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy on planning for progression in pupils' learning. By the end of the key stage, pupils have a considerable range of mathematical skills. They have very good mental skills; they solve complex problems mentally and are able to explain their mathematical reasoning fluently. They have a good understanding of the properties of shapes and their data handling skills extend to drawing and interpreting pie charts.
5. By the end of Year 8, pupils' attainment in mathematics is above the expectation for their age. They use negative numbers and identify symmetry in a range of shapes. Pupils in Year 7 show an understanding of rounding numbers to an appropriate number of decimal places. The majority of pupils are working at their capacity in lessons in response to demanding work and they make much better than expected progress in the subject at both key stages.
6. Standards in science are in line with the national average at the end of Key Stage 2. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, pupils' average point score was similar to that of pupils in most schools. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was below the national average in 1999, but provisional results for the tests in 2000 show a significant increase in the percentage of pupils achieving the higher level. There was no significant difference in the performances of girls and boys in the tests. Since the time of the last inspection, the trend in performance at the end of Key Stage 2 has been in line with the national trend. Pupils have a good scientific vocabulary, understand what is meant by a fair test and are able to plan and carry out their own experiments.

By the end of Year 8, pupils have good skills in scientific enquiry and are able to make predictions about experiments. By the end of Year 8, standards of pupils' work are broadly similar to those of pupils of the same age. Pupils make satisfactory progress and achieve at least as well as pupils in similar schools. They make particularly good gains in appropriate vocabulary and this allows all pupils to take a purposeful part in class discussion.

7. Standards in information technology are similar to those expected for their age for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 and the end of Year 8. At Key Stage 2, pupils use the computer controls effectively and are able to manage a range of software. By the end of Year 8, they can create databases and design web pages. The majority of pupils know the language of computers and use it accurately. Pupils learn at a good rate because of their enthusiasm and because of the good planning and teaching in the subject. Good use is made of information technology skills in science, where pupils record results in an attractive way, and in English, where word processing lends itself well to the layout of text in pupils' poems and stories.
8. In religious education, pupils are attaining what is expected by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Pupils at both key stages have a good understanding of Christianity. By the end of Year 8, pupils know and understand the significance of the Ten Commandments and relate these to social and moral standards in society. They have a basic knowledge of other world faiths, such as Islam and Judaism, and their associated cultural beliefs. Pupils' learning is good. They are taught to think for themselves and to express their opinions confidently.
9. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Pupils at different stages of the Code of Practice make good progress over time in achieving targets set in Individual Education Plans, including targets in reading, motivation and behaviour. Pupils with statements make good progress in developing literacy and numeracy skills during individual and small group tuition. One statemented pupil placed a series of pictures into the correct sequence for a story and created sentences to tell episodes from the story. Pupils at different stages of the Code of Practice make good progress in lessons. In mathematics, pupils with special educational needs use data on temperature and time to plot graphs. In English, pupils worked in a group to produce ideas for the opening scene of a play. In modern languages, pupils asked each other questions when working in pairs and, in science, pupils conducted experiments to find differences of weight in air and water.
10. Pupils learn at a steady rate and their achievements are in line with those expected for their age in design and technology, French, history, geography and music. Pupils have satisfactory skills in designing and construction, using a range of materials. In French, they are able to conduct simple conversations and have a sound knowledge of basic grammar. In geography, their understanding of physical processes and environmental issues is well developed. They have a secure knowledge of different periods in history and a good grasp of chronology. They sing at a good standard and understand the elements of music. In art, pupils' achievements are better than expected for their age. They acquire a good range of skills that are systematically taught and have a good understanding of the impact of colour. Pupils achieve expected standards in physical education by the end of Key Stage 2 and make better than expected gains during Key Stage 3. They achieve higher than expected standards by the end of Year 8. The overall fitness of pupils is good. They have a good knowledge of the rules of team games and sufficient skills to play them.
11. Literacy is well promoted by the teachers. There is a good emphasis on developing reading skills, with pupils being given opportunities to use these for their own research in subjects such as history and geography. There is good emphasis on speaking as a vehicle for developing thought. In all lessons, pupils are encouraged to listen closely and to follow a speaker with further suggestions or comments. As a result, children develop good listening skills, as well as confidence in proposing ideas to the class. The promotion of writing skills is being developed in some subjects, notably history and geography, and the standards of written work by higher attaining Year 8 pupils is high in these subjects. All teachers are successful in developing vocabulary appropriate to the subject and in encouraging pupils to use it accurately in class discussion. As a consequence, all pupils are able to understand the ideas under discussion and pupils with special educational needs are refreshingly confident about making oral contributions in class.

12. Standards of numeracy are well above the average and are well promoted in most subjects. In science, they are applied from Year 5 onwards as pupils measure, record and chart their readings in experiments. Younger pupils use scales calibrated in Newtons and mass is measured to two decimal places by older pupils. In design and technology and geography, numeracy skills are used to measure and compile graphs. In information technology, Year 7 pupils use formulae as part of their introductory work to spreadsheets. The concepts and terminology of numeracy are touched upon in other subjects, as, for example, in a Year 8 music lesson, where the sense of shape and balance and the significance of the name 'pentatonic scale' was emphasised. In summary, pupils' good understanding of all aspects of numeracy effectively helps them in their learning of other subjects.
13. The school has significantly raised standards in mathematics since the last inspection to well above the national average. There is evidence that standards are rising in English and, taken together, standards in the core subjects are rising faster than the national trend. There has been an emphasis on monitoring teaching and providing in-service training to support improvements in teaching. The success of these initiatives is seen in the improved quality of teaching across the school. The school met its targets for the national tests in 2000 at level 4 and exceeded them in all subjects at level 5. The school has set realistic and attainable targets for the tests in 2001.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

14. The quality of pupils' attitudes to work, their behaviour and inter-personal relationships have been maintained since the last inspection and continue to be very strong features of the school. The pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They are very well behaved at all times and there are very good relationships throughout the school.
15. Pupils show a keen and active interest in their lessons. They respond very well to their teachers and are willing to take part in discussions and to answer questions. They settle quickly to their work, with good levels of concentration. When working in pairs or small groups, they co-operate well together and are supportive of one another. There is very good support for the extra-curricular activities, which take place mainly during the lunchtime break. Well over half of all the pupils take part in one or more activities during the week and they enjoy the variety of activities they are offered.
16. The behaviour of the pupils is very good. They know and understand the school rules and feel that they are applied consistently and fairly by the teachers. Teachers expect pupils to behave well at all times and the pupils respond very well to those high expectations. Pupils move around the school in an orderly manner. They are polite and courteous, opening doors for visitors and are very willing to offer help. There is a pleasant and relaxed atmosphere in the dining room, which the pupils share on two days of the week with local pensioners. No litter or graffiti were seen during the inspection and the pupils show respect for the school premises and for the equipment and books they use.
17. Pupils with special educational needs behave very well. They have good support for their learning through the provision of classroom assistants and teachers plan well for their integration in all learning activities, including class discussion.
18. There are very good relationships throughout the school. Pupils work well together during lessons, offering support and help when needed. They listen well when their fellow pupils are expressing opinions or presenting examples of their work. A new pupil was immediately welcomed into a mathematics lesson and, at the request of a pupil, adjustments were made to birthday graphs to include the new class member. Incidents of bullying are very rare but, when they do occur, they are dealt with firmly and promptly. Pupils know they can turn to teachers or to the school nurse if they have any concerns or worries.
19. The school provides good opportunities for pupils to show initiative and to take responsibility. Pupils in Year 8 help in the library and in the school shop. They take part in assemblies and help in the distribution of house points. All year groups are given the opportunity to enjoy an annual residential visit, either in this country or abroad. The pupils take an active part in charity fund raising, including an annual sponsored walk, the Christmas shoe box appeal and the Mayor's

charity appeal. School productions involve many of the pupils and the whole school takes part in local events such as carol singing in the High Street. All of these activities help the pupils to mature and to develop independence.

20. The attendance rate is well above the national average, with no unauthorised absences. Pupils arrive at school on time, there being very few latecomers. Registration is completed satisfactorily.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching is good, overall, throughout the school. During the inspection, teaching was good or better in over three-quarters of lessons seen. In more than three out of ten lessons seen, teaching was very good. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory and one lesson seen was judged to be excellent. The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy was good overall, with examples of very good teaching in both subjects. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection when there was a lower proportion of very good teaching. This improvement follows the emphasis the school has placed on monitoring teaching and on providing in-service training to bring about improvements where they are needed. It is also due in some measure to the successful implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, where related training has enhanced the teachers' knowledge and expertise.
22. In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching overall is very good. In over eight out of ten lessons seen teaching was good or better and the remainder were satisfactory. In more than five out of ten lessons, the teaching was very good or excellent. The best teaching in Key Stage 2 is consistently found in mathematics, where teachers place great emphasis on mental agility and clear explanation of mathematical reasoning. Teachers make very good use of structured questions when building on pupils' knowledge in data-handling lessons. As a result, all pupils learn at a rapid rate and reach higher than expected standards. The teaching of English is good overall at this key stage, with teachers' good knowledge of grammar and punctuation promoting a good rate of learning as pupils work on direct and indirect speech. Teaching in art at this key stage is very good, resulting in high levels of skill in drawing amongst the majority of pupils, who learn at a good rate because of the teacher's very good subject knowledge.
23. In Key Stage 3, the quality of teaching was good or better in over seven out of ten lessons seen. In over two out of ten lessons teaching was very good. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen, in mathematics, where lack of challenge for the majority of pupils led to unsatisfactory learning. Very good teaching in art, with formal teaching of drawing and painting by a specialist teacher, leads to good attitudes to the subject by the pupils, who achieve higher than expected standards. In English lessons, teachers continue to make good use of the literacy strategy and this, combined with their high expectations, leads to accelerated learning for pupils, who achieve above the expectation by the end of Year 8.
24. Teachers' use their good subject knowledge in very good planning for information technology. Pupils are keen and eager to learn, are provided with suitable tasks and, as a result, make good progress within lessons. In science lessons, pupils learn practical skills rapidly because of the teacher's very good subject expertise and his understanding of their needs. Very good questioning by teachers challenges pupils to think hard in most mathematics lessons. Because of their good subject knowledge in mathematics, teachers ask demanding questions, assessing pupils' thinking and encouraging them to learn from each other as well as the teacher. In such lessons the pace of learning is rapid and pupils are delighted with their efforts and their success.
25. Relationships between teachers and pupils in all lessons seen are very good, giving pupils confidence to express their views and to answer questions. In drama, physical education and music, pupils respond to the praise and encouragement they are given. Teachers have developed very supportive relationships with pupils, which contribute significantly to most pupils' enjoying their learning and being keen to succeed. In nearly all lessons, teachers give strong encouragement to lower attaining pupils and to those with special educational needs to join in discussion. As a result, these pupils are confident participants, whose self-esteem develops well as a result of these opportunities to participate.

26. A dominant characteristic of the good quality teaching seen in many lessons is teachers' making it clear they have high expectations of pupils' involvement. They display their own enthusiasm and enjoyment: a very good example of this was seen in a physical education lesson with two classes of Year 5 pupils who shared the gymnasium. The teacher's enthusiasm and determination to make the best use of the time and space available led to good levels of challenge and enjoyment for pupils, who made good progress as a result.
27. Most lessons are well planned, with clear learning objectives shared with pupils at the start and good vigorous review at the end. In science, clearly stated aims and end-of-lesson reviews give pupils a clear idea of the progress they are making. Well-planned lessons with good pace in history, physical education, religious education, information technology, mathematics and music mean that pupils take part in a range of activities which help their learning. Not all teachers make the best use of time and, sometimes, momentum is lost in lessons of 70 minutes and the pace of learning slows. Examples of this occurred in some science and history lessons.
28. On a day-to-day level, teachers make good use of assessment. This is particularly so in mathematics, English, French, design and technology, music and science, where teachers assess learning at the ends of lessons, then plan effectively to build on this. Longer-term assessment and the matching of pupils' achievements to the National Curriculum attainment levels are not carried out consistently in all subjects. This results in some weaknesses in planning in certain subjects and there is not always a good match between the attainment levels of the pupils and the tasks they are set. Nor is pupil target setting developed as a way of informing improvements in their work. Where this does occur, as in mathematics and in English at Key Stage 3, the pace of learning is noticeably quicker and pupils achieve better than expected standards.
29. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. In individual and small group tuition, the work is well planned to focus on the development of skills. Management of pupils is very good, with positive relationships being established and praise and encouragement given. In the most effective class teaching, the work of support staff makes a significant contribution to pupils' good progress. In science, pupils are given clearly focused support to enable them to overcome difficulties in conducting experiments and in recording results. In mathematics, support staff work with small groups to guide pupils through each stage of constructing a graph. Whole-class discussion is particularly effective when pupils with special educational needs are encouraged to be fully involved in giving opinions, answering questions and participating in group presentations. A teamwork approach, with either teachers or support staff quickly responding to pupils in different parts of the classroom, enables a wide range of learning needs to be addressed in the course of the lessons. Clearly structured activities and the use of resources well matched to learning needs in literacy are other positive features of effective teaching. Teaching is less effective when full use is not made of support staff and when pupils with special educational needs are not involved fully in discussion work.
30. Parents feel that homework is not set consistently across the school. This was found to be the case during the inspection, when, in some subjects, notably music, none was set. In science and design and technology, homework lacks focus and tends to be merely completion of class work. Good quality homework is set in mathematics, English, art and religious education, which is relevant and extends work done in class. In mathematics, there is room to increase the frequency of homework for pupils in Year 8.

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

31. The report of the previous inspection stated that the school's curriculum provided suitably broad and balanced courses and included all National Curriculum subjects. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. It provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils, fully reflects the aims of the school and provides equality of opportunity. As a result, pupils transfer smoothly to their high schools at the age of 13.

32. There are some weaknesses in the time allocated to subjects. The single lesson (35 minutes) of religious education weekly is insufficient to satisfy the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Year 6 pupils are also allocated only one single lesson for each of history and geography, which is insufficient for meaningful study. The proportion of time allocated to design and technology at Key Stage 3, on the other hand, is fifty per cent more than is recommended. Besides these weaknesses, curricular time is not always used to best advantage. During the inspection, lessons were less effective when single lessons, at the beginning of day, were shortened by assemblies which ran on too long. In contrast, most double lessons (one hour ten minutes) are too long for some subjects, including the National Literacy provision at Key Stage 2. Although the time allocation for teaching French in Years 6,7 and 8 is adequate in total, its distribution, in one single and one double lesson weekly, militates against pupils' best chances of fluency in the language.
33. The strengths of the curricular provision include the enrichment of learning through field visits to local sites, including Vindolanda, Warkworth Castle and Ford Castle. All pupils take part in planned visits to enrich the curriculum each year and all have the opportunity to join a residential trip either in a local or national centre or, in the case of Year 7, in a visit to France. Pupils' learning in art and music is extended by visits to galleries and concerts and the school has a very active involvement in musical performances across the region. The many opportunities for music-making in the community include performing at Berwick May Fair, at the Wooler Festival and at Beamish. Recent participation in the 'Hallelujah Millennium Concert' and the '2000 Voices' project is typical of the wealth of pupils' musical experience. All of these experiences serve to develop pupils' confidence and self-esteem. Three-quarters of the pupils participate regularly in the very good range of extra-curricular activities. At lunchtime, at least a dozen different sporting activities are provided in the course of the year. There are inter-house tournaments and further activities, including cycle riding and orienteering, during school holidays, are very popular.
34. Curricular planning is excellent in information and communications technology; it is very good in many aspects of English, but lacks differentiation for higher attaining pupils in science and design and technology. Schemes of work for physical education vary considerably in detail; hockey and football are well described, dance and basketball less so. For mathematics, the scheme is more rigorous in detail for some years than for others. A positive feature of curricular planning is the allowance made for pupils with special educational needs. Provision for them is good. The provision for statemented pupils is particularly effective, with a clear focus on their needs. Pupils with statements attend whole-class lessons for most of the school week but, in addition, all receive individual tuition from a support teacher, when basic skills in literacy and numeracy are developed. The school typically achieves a level of support for statemented pupils above the provision outlined in their statements, with assistant support time being converted partly into teaching support time. The level of support staffing for each year group is good and well focused, with effective support given to pupils at different stages of the Code of Practice. Pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in extra-curricular activities, including drama productions and clubs. Suitably challenging work for higher attaining pupils is not always provided and, in several subjects, this is linked to the effectiveness of assessment procedures.
35. The school's vigorous implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy is very effective. This has improved the quality of teaching and pupils' attainment and has given an impetus to mathematics across the school. The National Literacy Strategy is also fully in place and this, too, is having a positive, though not so dramatic, effect on standards. Teachers skilfully extend the mathematics curriculum by encouraging pupils to use their numeracy skills when they are working in other subjects, such as in science, where they display results in tabular form and use bar charts and line graphs, in design activities and in music, where pupils learn about shape and balance. Literacy skills are similarly well promoted to aid pupils' learning in other subjects. Good emphasis is placed on the acquisition, use and correct spelling of subject vocabulary. Pupils are encouraged to enter into discussion and many develop good thinking skills in response to teachers' well structured questions.
36. The provision the school makes for personal, social and health education is good. The programme covers a wide range of topics including relationships, the concept of citizenship, responsibilities within the community and responsibility in respect of the environment. This is taught discretely at Key Stage 3, where lessons are enhanced by good preparation and are consolidated in tutorial periods. Visits to local sites of cultural and social importance, together

with presentations by those who work to the benefit of the local community, are an integral part of the well-established programme. Community police, local councillors and representatives of charities are among the contributors. There is no formal scheme of work. The immaculate planning for a visit to track the progress of the Battle of Flodden, together with the teacher's graphic, dramatic presentation, successfully inspired pupils, drawing on aspects of social understanding and leading to a piece of written work. Fortnightly 'drop-in' sessions and occasional talks by the school nurse are well planned and all Year 7 pupils have an interview. The programme covers aspects of health education, including sex education in accordance with the governors' policy, as well as giving pupils the opportunity to raise personal problems and queries.

37. The presence of the Glendale Youth Club at the school and the use of the premises by past pupils and adults provides a very good focal point for pupils in the broader community. Youth leaders contribute to the spiritual experience of pupils when taking assemblies. They support school visits and encourage pupils to develop a spirit of community.
38. Links with first schools ensure that appropriate curricular records are received by the Year 5 co-ordinator before the pupils come to the school. Some curricular links are developing between the school and its associated high schools. The Key Stage 3 mathematics results of immediate past pupils are provided to the school. There is a local liaison group for science teachers working in all phases of education.
39. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good, overall. All of these elements are well integrated in the life and work of the school. There is good provision for spiritual development in assemblies, where pupils are asked to reflect on virtues such as perseverance, endurance and determination and are helped to see how these enable people to rise to great heights. Pupils are given insight into the hidden talents that people, including their teachers, possess. There is good provision for spiritual development in religious education. Pupils explore the image of God and look at some of the great classical paintings, such as Grünewald's 'crucifixion', to examine the use and meanings of symbols in religious paintings. Pupils study the account of creation in Genesis and are given very good opportunities to reflect on the wonder of it all, including the scientific explanations. In music, there is good emphasis on how music makes one feel. Pupils are encouraged to express their feelings. There is also good reflection on the feelings evoked through the performance, creation and appraisal of music. In religious education, pupils are given insights to the spiritual beliefs of Christianity, Judaism, Islam and Hinduism and their associated cultures. In English, there are spiritual elements in the poetry studied. Pupils experience a sense of joy and wonder at their achievements and discoveries in information technology. The school is involved in the town's website.
40. Provision for moral development is very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. They are expected to be honest and hand in lost items, including money. They are rewarded for this honesty in assemblies. Moral issues are considered in good depth in religious education. The Ten Commandments are studied in good detail. Pupils are asked to devise their own set of rules that would be relevant today. This leads them to think about the consequences of their own and other people's actions. They make good links between moral and social issues. The personal, social and health education programme covers the controversial moral dilemmas that face our society. Physical education makes a valuable contribution to pupils' spiritual and moral development both in lessons and in the very good provision for extra-curricular activities.
41. There is good provision for social development. Pupils are encouraged to think of and respect each other. There is a very strong sense of appropriate behaviour in all lessons and throughout the school. There are very good relationships between pupils and between pupils and adults in the school. Pupils behave very well in lessons. They are quiet, calm, polite and composed. When they work together in groups, they share knowledge, expertise and resources very agreeably.
42. The personal, social and health education programme covers a wide range of topics including relationships, the concept of citizenship, responsibilities within the community and responsibility in respect of the environment. The school supports a very wide range of charities, such as "Save the Children", the NSPCC, the RSPCA, the RNIB and an Indian project led by a local doctor.

43. Music makes a very significant contribution to the pupils' social and cultural development. Pupils are given opportunities to work with pupils in other schools and with professional musicians. They have a real sense of the place of music in the community.
44. Provision for cultural development is very good. There is a wide range of visits to art galleries, theatres and museums. In music, there are visits to concerts and workshops and pupils perform as part of local and regional festivities. There are residential trips to Ford Castle, York, France and Winmarleigh Outdoor Centre. In modern foreign languages, pupils are given a good understanding of the extent of French speaking nations. Fieldwork in history, geography and the personal, social and health education programme makes particularly good use of the rich local environment.
45. Parents are impressed by the social and cultural development of the children and by the opportunities the school provides in extra-curricular activities, particularly drama, sport and residential visits. They are pleased with the moral ethos of the school and are confident about the emphasis the school places on teaching pupils right from wrong. They state that teachers give a good example in this respect by taking time to help children to reflect upon their actions and to see how their actions can affect others.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. The school provides a positive learning environment where pupils are known and valued as individuals. Effective policies are in place relating to child protection procedures and to health and safety matters. The school has a clear health and safety policy that is known to all staff. During the inspection, a number of health and safety matters were drawn to the attention of the school, including the need for training connected with risk assessments and the involvement of governors in reviewing the health and safety procedures in the school. The school has already started to address some of the concerns raised. Standards of cleaning and maintenance are good. Pupils are well supervised throughout the day and lunchtime routines are managed well. As a result, the school runs smoothly. The staff are aware of the school's policy in respect of child protection issues. Appropriate records are kept and teachers know which colleague has delegated responsibility for child protection issues.
47. Arrangements for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good and permeate all areas of school life. Pupils are genuinely valued and teachers place strong emphasis on building their self-esteem and making them feel important. Praise and rewards are effectively used to encourage effort and good behaviour and pupils' successes feature in assemblies. Information about pupils' conduct forms part of their annual written report and includes details about their attitudes to work and contributions in class.
48. Procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour are very good. They are securely underpinned by both class and school rules, which have been communicated to parents. The rules are well understood by pupils and ensure that they act thoughtfully and in a sensible way. Good pastoral care and support are provided by the school, including an effective anti-bullying policy. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and dealt with quickly. There were no exclusions during the last academic year and this has been the situation for the past ten years.
49. Attendance and punctuality are monitored thoroughly. Registers are completed properly at the start of lessons and absences are followed up.
50. The quality of on-going assessment and its use in daily planning is good overall. Teachers' planning shows that the majority accurately assess the achievement of different groups of pupils on a daily basis, even though these do not always form part of lesson evaluation. Teachers build appropriately on the previous learning of pupils during most lessons and ensure that learning proceeds at least at a satisfactory rate.
51. Procedures for assessment and the recording of pupils' progress are not consistent across the school. While there are good systems and effective practice in some subjects, these are not fully implemented for the benefit of pupils' learning in all subjects. In design and technology, history,

information technology and physical education, assessments are not always linked to National Curriculum criteria and judgements about pupils' attainment in these subjects are not always secure. In contrast, there are very good procedures in both English and mathematics, which inform pupils accurately about their attainment and help them to set targets for future learning. The impact of these sharp assessments is evident in mathematics, where the rate of improvement in attainment is high. Some subjects do not make enough use of assessments to guide curricular planning. This is the case for science, where the results of regular assessments are not used to track pupils' performance in relation to national standards or to set targets for pupils. In history, there is little use of assessment to match work to the needs of pupils, especially the higher attainers, and in geography, the new assessment system, linked to level descriptors, lacks enough data from which to plan.

52. Identification and assessment procedures for pupils with special educational needs are good. Pupils entering the school in Year 5 are tested in the first few weeks of the school year and results are well used to inform placement on the school's register of special educational needs. Monitoring procedures are very good, with termly reviews of targets for all pupils above stage 1 of the Code of Practice. Reading and spelling tests are well used to inform these termly reviews. Targets in Individual Education Plans are well matched to pupils' needs.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

53. The parents are very supportive of the school. The returned questionnaires show that the parents are particularly happy with the high expectations the school has of their children, both for their work and behaviour. They also like the way the school is led and managed and feel that the teaching is good. Some concerns were raised about the amount of homework set and the information parents receive relating to progress being made. The inspection team shared the parents' positive views of the school. The previous inspection had mentioned the need for a more structured approach to homework. The school does not have a homework timetable and the team found that there is still no structure to the setting of homework. The school provides satisfactory information relating to the progress pupils are making.
54. The school holds regular parents' evenings and these are very well attended. In addition, the teachers are available to see or speak to parents should any concerns or problems arise. Parents receive an annual report on their children's progress and this provides them with satisfactory information. Regular newsletters are produced by the school and these keep parents up to date with forthcoming events and staff news.
55. There is a very active Parents-Teachers Association, which organises social and fund raising events. These are very well supported and raise significant sums of money for the school. Parents and other adults from the community regularly help in the school. They work with Year 8 pupils in the library, assist at the lunchtime reading clubs and help with sports activities. Parents are involved with the school's drama productions and provide additional help when trips and outings are arranged.
56. The support that the school receives from the parents and the local community makes a significant contribution to the pupils' learning. Links with the parents of pupils with special educational needs are very good. Parents are kept fully informed of the outcomes of termly reviews and are given information on new targets set. The termly reviews and termly communication with parents are very effective means of ensuring that parents, as well as pupils, have up-to-date information about current targets. Parents are appropriately involved in annual reviews of statements. In addition, parents of pupils at stages 2 and 3 of the Code of Practice receive a specific invitation to parents' evenings with extra time allocated.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

57. The headteacher leads the school well. He shows a strong commitment to the raising of standards through close monitoring of teaching and the analysis of test results. His knowledge of his teachers is very good. He values their contribution to the work of the school and is active in

promoting the development of their professional expertise. The high level of trust which the headteacher places in his colleagues has succeeded in releasing their considerable talents to the benefit of the pupils. The richness of the curriculum enjoyed by the pupils is a result of the headteacher's careful nurturing of the teachers' talents and enthusiasm. The high value he places on all members of the school community - pupils, teachers, support staff and parents - is evident in the quality of the school environment and in the emphasis given to respectful, supportive relationships.

58. The headteacher is ably supported in all his work by the deputy headteacher and the senior teacher. They both have a good understanding of the school's strengths and of the areas needing support and development. Similarly, both are well versed in their delegated areas of responsibility and possess high levels of expertise on which other teachers are able to draw. Currently, the responsibilities of the deputy headteacher are onerous, when set against the heavy teaching load she carries. There is an urgent need to review her responsibilities and the time available to discharge them if the school is to get the best from her considerable management skills.
59. The headteacher has effectively delegated responsibilities to subject managers, taking account of their subject knowledge and experience. As a result, all subjects are effectively managed and some, notably information technology, English and art, are very well managed. The subject managers for English and mathematics have responsibility for monitoring standards of teaching in those subjects and have successfully implemented the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The head of department for mathematics also manages the information technology provision in the school. Like the deputy headteacher, his responsibilities, combined with his teaching commitment, create conflicts of demand upon his time and the implementation of his vision for IT is being slowed as a result. The headteacher takes a lead in monitoring standards of teaching in all subjects and maintains an overview of teachers' medium-term plans.
60. The school is very good at translating its aims into action through the implementation of its well thought out policies. Throughout the school, a high value is placed on hard work and enjoyment in learning. The headteacher and the teachers produce a secure, well-structured and happy environment in which pupils are happy to learn. The teachers have a conscientious approach to their role, they know their pupils well and care for them accordingly. The evidence from the parental questionnaires and from the parents' meeting shows that the parents are very happy with the way in which the school promotes its aims and values. Teachers and pupils work hard with a firm sense of purpose.
61. The role of the governors, including their involvement in the strategic planning for the school, has improved since the last inspection. They have become more efficient by reorganising their working practices and by forming a number of committees to deal with various aspects of the school's governance. Each committee has clearly defined responsibilities for gathering information about the school's performance and for relaying it to the full governing body. As a result, governors are now better informed about standards and provision and have a good understanding of what the school's priorities should be. The relationship between the headteacher and the governors is good. The governors share the headteacher's commitment to high standards and are well aware of what the parents want for their children. While the governors have improved their knowledge and understanding of their role since the last inspection, there is still a need for them to develop a greater insight, through training, so that their knowledge and expertise keep pace with the development of their role.
62. The monitoring of standards, achievements and provision in the school has developed well since the last inspection. The headteacher and governors monitor test results, comparing the school's performance with that of other schools. They take account of information received from associated high schools in respect of those pupils who have left Glendale Middle School. In particular, they consider the sets in which the pupils have been placed for English, mathematics and science and how they perform in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. All of this information is used to assess the impact of the school's provision on the raising of standards for pupils and to decide what further improvements are needed. The current targets in the School Improvement Plan are appropriately focused on improving provision and raising standards. There is some unevenness in the quality of departmental plans and the school could look to the good practice in some departments to rectify this. The governors are careful to seek a number of

estimates for the supply of services and resources and to ensure that the school's funds are used effectively.

63. The staffing of the school has been stable since the last inspection. The school is remarkably successful in providing good, and sometimes very good, subject specialism in most areas of the curriculum. Where teachers' subject expertise needs support, this is provided very effectively by subject managers in English and mathematics and by in-service training. The staff have a good understanding of their roles and, while subject managers are often the only teacher of the subject, they maintain rigour and respond actively to national and school initiatives.
64. There is a whole-school approach to special educational needs. There is a detailed policy in place, which includes criteria by which success is to be judged. Governors have been fully involved in developments in special educational needs, although, at present, there is no designated governor. Staff are kept fully informed of pupils' needs. A file is distributed which contains appropriately detailed and up-to-date information about all pupils on the school's register. Staff are regularly consulted during the termly review process and through weekly staff meetings. The special educational needs co-ordinator has regular contact with the headteacher. The co-ordinator's role is enhanced by having additional responsibility as head of Year 5, which helps the process of gaining an overview of pupils' special educational needs on entry. Records are up to date, with regular reviews of progress. Individual Education Plans contain clear targets appropriate to pupils' needs. Links with outside agencies are good. Since the last inspection, there have been improvements in meeting individual needs, including a focus on literacy and numeracy, in Individual Education Plans, in methods of assessment and in levels of support.
65. The school's accommodation is spacious and suited to the needs of the curriculum. However, the shared accommodation for music and some lessons in mathematics noted at the last inspection still persists and is detrimental to the provision of a good quality environment for music. The classrooms are well maintained and kept scrupulously clean. Displays of pupils' work and learning materials further enhance the pleasant environment the school provides. There are ample playing fields and a good sized gym for physical education.
66. Resources to support learning are satisfactory, except in information technology, where, despite recent improvements, a shortage of computers prevents the application of skills in other subjects.
67. Financial planning in the school is sound. Spending follows the priorities in the School's Improvement Plan and spending decisions are linked to raising attainment. Specific funding for special educational needs is very well used, enabling good progress to be made by these pupils. The school makes appropriate use of technology, computer software and electronic communication, both in and out of the classroom, as far as limited resources allow. Taking into account the standards pupils achieve and the quality of educational provision, the school gives good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to raise standards further, the governors, headteacher and staff of Glendale Middle School should
- Improve assessment procedures and their use in raising pupils' attainment by sharing the existing good procedures that are used in some subjects to all subjects in the school; (paragraphs 51, 52, 84,92, 103, 110)
 - Make better use of curricular time by providing sufficient time for the teaching of religious education and reviewing time allocations to other subjects so that time is used more effectively to raise standards in all subjects; (paragraphs 32, 106, 110, 139)
 - Provide time for the deputy headteacher to discharge her management responsibilities more effectively; (paragraph 58)
 - Seek ways to improve provision for information technology so that all subjects have access to computers and can plan to support the application and enhancement of pupils' skills. (paragraphs 100, 119)
69. In addition to the areas for improvement that have been identified above, the following should also be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:
- Encourage and support governors to take up training so that they improve their knowledge and skills for their role; (paragraph 61)
 - Improve teachers' planning in some subjects so that they make better provision for higher attaining pupils; (paragraph 103)
 - Produce a homework policy which guides teachers' planning for this aspect of their work and ensures that pupils are well prepared for the next stage of education. (paragraphs 86, 91)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	61
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1.6	34.4	43.5	21.3	1.6	-	-

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	206	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	21	

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	37	

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.71
National comparative data	6.0

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	Nil
National comparative data	0.4

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	22	20	42

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	14	17	19
	Girls	18	17	16
	Total	32	34	35
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76(70)	81(71)	83(75)
	National	70(65)	69(65)	78(76)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	15	17	13
	Girls	18	18	16
	Total	33	35	29
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79(68)	83(70)	71(69)
	National	68(65)	69(65)	75(72)

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

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	206
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	10.2
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.2

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	67

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	86.6
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	28.0
Key Stage 3	19.1

Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	478757
Total expenditure	480237
Expenditure per pupil	2298
Balance brought forward from previous year	-
Balance carried forward to next year	-1480

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	170
Number of questionnaires returned	100

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64	33	1	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	45	48	3	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	53	44	0	0	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	24	57	9	1	8
The teaching is good.	53	43	1	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	45	44	4	3	4
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	32	5	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	72	28	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	47	43	5	4	1
The school is well led and managed.	65	31	3	0	1
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	59	36	0	3	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	56	35	4	0	5

Other issues raised by parents

Parents concerns about homework were supported by inspection findings. Homework is not always rigorous or regular enough in Key Stage 3.

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

ENGLISH

70. Standards in English at the end of Key Stage 2 are average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven-year-olds, the pupils' average point score was in line with the national average and with that of similar schools. Girls achieved a higher score than boys and this difference has been sustained over the last four years. The percentage of pupils achieving the higher level was below the national average in the 1999 tests. However, the proportion of pupils reaching the higher level in this year's tests shows a significant improvement - from 12 per cent to 35 per cent achieving level 5. Standards of attainment have risen in line with the national trend in English in the last four years. The attainment of pupils in Year 8 is above the national expectation, with the majority of pupils already working at, or close to, level 5. This acceleration in achievement is due to the quality of specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8 and to the very good planning for the development of knowledge and skills learnt through the National Literacy Strategy.
71. Standards of listening are very good among Key Stage 2 pupils. They are attentive to teachers and classmates and show that they follow ideas closely by answering or asking relevant questions during discussion. Pupils in Year 6 made very good progress in the development of their ideas for first scenes in their plays about 'The Pied Piper' through rapid response to the teacher's questions and very well focused group discussion. All pupils recognised the benefits of listening to and developing the ideas of others through talk. Pupils at Key Stage 2 also have very good speaking skills in both formal and informal situations. They are confident and use their knowledge well to explain ideas or their own viewpoint. By Year 8, pupils have developed their speaking and listening skills and can expand their own ideas in response to the questions of others and explain their reasons for making certain choices in their writing. In a very good lesson where pupils were making first drafts of an information leaflet about their town, they were able to assess, through discussion, how appropriate different kinds of information would be to the reader. This ability to plan through talk proved a very good asset when pupils reached the writing stage, because they had made the decisions and already had a frame for their writing.
72. Pupils in Year 5 are competent readers, who have a good understanding of phonics and an extensive sight vocabulary. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils read fluently for both information and pleasure, with higher attainers selecting more challenging books and explaining why they prefer certain genres or authors. All pupils have satisfactory skills of reference and can explain how they would find information from books in a library. By the end of the key stage, pupils have good skimming and scanning skills which they use effectively in history and geography lessons. In one history lesson seen, Year 7 pupils could discover information much faster than they could organise it for paragraphs, owing to their good reading skills. By Year 8, pupils read independently for a range of purposes and higher attaining pupils show a good response to their reading in either critical or imaginative writing.
73. Standards in writing are average by the end of Key Stage 2. Pupils write neatly with correct punctuation for different purposes. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of audience and are able to adapt the tone and language of their writing to suit. Pupils' writing in other subjects, such as history and geography, is developing well, giving pupils the opportunity to extend their writing for different purposes. By Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of the conventions of text layout. In a group writing session, pupils worked quickly and effectively to produce play scripts with stage directions and character notes. They were delighted with their results and with the impact their scenes had on an audience. Pupils in Year 8 have good writing skills. They have a good understanding of structure and tone in writing. Very good teaching in a lesson about information leaflets meant that pupils made rapid progress with the tone and content of their text. The teacher's skilful explanation of ways to catch the reader's attention led to some very good writing in a short space of time. Those pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, both by the class teacher and by the special needs teacher, to achieve much higher than expected standards in their writing. Evidence from scrutiny of previous pupils' work suggests that they attain above the expected level for their age in writing by the end of Year 8. Literacy is well promoted by all teachers. They place good emphasis on developing vocabulary

appropriate to each subject and encourage all pupils to take an active part in class discussion. Displays of key words for specific topics ensure that pupils' writing is supported by accurate spelling of unfamiliar words.

74. Teaching is good overall. Over half of the teaching seen was very good and no unsatisfactory teaching was seen. All teachers have secure, and some have good, subject knowledge and a good understanding of the National Literacy Strategy. Where teachers' subject knowledge is very good, then planning is very detailed and ensures very good learning within the lesson. Examples of this were seen particularly in Year 5, where the joint planning by teachers led to good coverage of direct and indirect speech for all pupils. Teachers' brisk and well formulated questions are a feature of most lessons; they make a significant contribution to the pace of learning. Through good questioning, teachers quickly assess pupils' previous learning and, from this, decide on appropriate starting points for new learning. A very good Year 6 lesson on play scripts had pupils creating scenes at a good rate because they had recalled all of the techniques they needed to use through recapitulation of previous learning. Most teachers use an interesting range of methods to engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm. In a Year 7 lesson about figurative language, pupils moved quickly to an understanding of the power of adverbs through acting out sentences they have prepared for homework. They were delighted to see the results of their writing in action as other pupils performed simple sentences, brought to life through powerful adverbs. Through good example, teachers develop supportive and respectful relationships in all of their pupils. These relationships, in turn, create a harmonious learning environment, in which pupils are able to rise to teachers' high expectations of effort and behaviour. As a consequence, pupils work hard and, when necessary, support each other in their efforts. Examples of this are often seen as pupils work together in group reading or writing activities, or when they sensitively evaluate each other's work.
75. Day-to-day assessment by teachers is effective and they use praise appropriately to encourage pupils in lessons. Wider assessment, such as levelling pupils' work against criteria, needs further development in Year 6, where teachers' expertise could be improved, especially for the benefit of higher attaining pupils. Although teachers make good use of time in lessons, through careful planning and the staging of learning, there are instances, particularly in Key Stage 2, where the time allocated to the lesson is too much. In some lessons, the work covered in seventy minutes could be managed just as effectively in an hour, without pupils slowing in the last ten minutes or starting to clear up early. Teachers are very good at supporting pupils with special educational needs through providing them with work that is carefully planned to help them overcome their difficulties. They also make good use of special educational support teachers and classroom assistants, who are very effective in promoting the learning and confidence of pupils with special educational needs. Consequently, their learning is good and they achieve better than expected standards.
76. Leadership in the subject is very good. The head of department has very good knowledge of the subject and is able to assess the training needs of colleagues very well as a consequence. She has been very successful in appropriately deploying subject specialists and those with less expertise, and is careful to monitor their teaching to gain an insight into the strengths and weaknesses in the department. She gives good support to colleagues who are non-specialists and, through this, is able to maintain good standards in the subject. Her team approach is very effective in encouraging teachers to learn from each other and to call upon her for assistance and advice. As a result, the department maximises the use of all the expertise available within it and benefits from an open and supportive atmosphere among colleagues.
77. The head of department has a commitment to raising standards in the subject. She keeps national developments in view when reviewing provision in the school. Her very good understanding of the impact of the National Literacy Strategy has led to modifications in the work presented to pupils and some work, previously done in Year 8, has been moved into the Year 6 scheme of work. Since the last inspection, the quality of teaching has improved. There is now a higher proportion of good and very good teaching. This is due, to some extent, to the National Literacy Strategy and related training, but also to the efforts of the head of department in monitoring and sharing good practice. Although the proportion of pupils achieving level 5 in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 2000 showed a good improvement, the

head of department is aware of the need to develop more demanding tasks for higher attaining pupils, especially in Year 6.

MATHEMATICS

78. Attainment in mathematics by the end of Key Stage 2 is well above the national average. In 1999, 81 per cent of pupils achieved levels 4 and 5 in the mathematics National Curriculum tests, a standard which is above both the national average and the average for similar schools. In that year, girls achieved a standard equivalent to being nearly two terms ahead of the boys. This was in contrast to the previous three years when boys' and girls' performances, overall, had been close to each other. Standards have improved at a rate above the national trend, from well below schools nationally in 1996 to the national average in 1997 and well above by 1999. Provisional figures for the year 2000 show a further slight increase in the percentage of pupils achieving level 5, but a drop from 52 per cent to 35 per cent at level 4. Attainment at Key Stage 2 is in line with expectations based on pupils' standards at the end of the previous key stage.
79. In the work seen during inspection, higher attaining pupils near the end of Key Stage 2 manipulate fractions, solve problems involving percentages and multiply and divide without the use of a calculator. Other pupils use imperial measures appropriately and can manipulate metric units. Data handling skills extend to drawing and interpreting pie charts. The work of lower attaining pupils covers a similar range of topics, but work in arithmetic and algebra is suitably graded, with an emphasis on less complex questions. Data handling and spatial topics, such as symmetry, calculation of area and use of coordinates, are of a similar standard for all pupils, but less substantial in quantity for lower attainers. There is little evidence in pupils' books of investigative work in which pupils apply mathematics to practical situations and explain their reasoning. The standard of pupils' work at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with their test results.
80. In Key Stage 2 lessons, pupils, including those with special educational needs, rapidly increase their understanding of a topic in response to the excellently planned questions asked by teachers. Pupils in Year 5 are gaining a good knowledge of multiplication tables, they know when to use them and some can lucidly illustrate that multiplication is the same as repeated addition. They extend their knowledge of data representation by considering data presentation in newspapers and by comparing the use of bar charts for discrete data with the use of line graphs for representing continuous data. They show perceptive thinking in their interpretation of the graphs they draw. Pupils with special educational needs are given just sufficient guidance to ensure that they can participate fully. A large proportion of pupils currently at the beginning of Year 6 are numerate and are working at a standard and pace above the national expectations. Pupils know a wide range of number facts and recognise how to use them to solve problems, maintaining pace and always working enthusiastically. They can explain their methods and reasoning, using appropriate terms. They also learn by listening carefully to the teacher and to the ideas of other pupils.
81. At Key Stage 3, there is a contrast between the standards observed in the two year groups at the school. The work of Year 7 pupils does not build on the pupils' achievements of the previous year. They can use simple formulae, but often do not complete their working. Work with fractions contains many errors and lack of simplification. Pupils use negative numbers in context and can identify the symmetrical properties of a range of shapes. Generally, pupils are doing insufficient work and higher attaining pupils are not being extended. Year 8 pupils are working at a high standard. Higher attainers can apply their understanding of the general terms of a sequence to problems in context. Pupils show understanding of rounding answers to an appropriate number of decimal places for a particular purpose and can explain upper and lower limits when measuring. For some pupils with special educational needs, the pace is too fast. The file of homework tasks, which are to be completed in the course of the year, is substantial and differentiated. It covers all of the level 6 attainment targets well, with some more demanding work. Standards of numeracy are well promoted in most subjects. In science pupils measure, record and chart readings in experiments. In geography and design and technology, numeracy skills are used to measure and compile graphs.
82. Typically, pupils are engrossed in their studies throughout lessons. They settle immediately at the beginning with the necessary materials ready. They participate enthusiastically throughout

the class teaching, when working individually and right to the end of the summary, one hour and ten minutes later. Pupils of all levels of attainment are eager to answer questions. Their enthusiasm facilitates a very brisk pace. Pupils listen thoughtfully to the mathematical ideas expressed by their peers. They are confident in what they do, whether explaining a concept, giving an opinion or contributing to work on the board in front of the class. A Year 5 pupil showed concern for a pupil new to the class by pointing out that she had not been included in the bar chart of pupils' birthday months. When marked work is returned to pupils who have been advised to seek further guidance they decide for themselves whether to book time at the lunchtime 'maths clinic' – most do so.

83. The standard of teaching at Key Stage 2 is very good, with some excellent aspects. In data handling lessons, teachers build on pupils' knowledge by asking a carefully structured range of factual, interpretative and open-ended questions. Work of pupils of all levels of attainment is displayed to illustrate good practice. Teachers explain the importance of high standards by relating to pupils' experiences. Referring to 'dot to dot' pictures, a teacher suggested that the care required for the best result was the same that would ensure that 'a graph is a visual delight'. A range of thoughtfully prepared materials and equipment is effectively used to reinforce pupils' learning. This is particularly effective where the teacher uses a whiteboard well to develop a summary of various stages, as in a lesson about fractions. Teaching at Key Stage 3 was good in three of the four lessons observed. It was unsatisfactory in one Year 7 lesson where only the lower attaining pupils, with the help of a classroom assistant, were making sufficient progress. The context of the work was well chosen to stimulate pupils' interest, but most of them were not sufficiently challenged to make satisfactory progress in developing their ideas or increasing their understanding by designing questionnaires. When teaching is good at Key Stage 3, the pace of learning is rapid. In a short lesson, a well-judged, differentiated exercise on number investigation was carefully outlined by the teacher for homework. The previous lesson's classwork was returned, purposefully marked, and the teaching of this lesson was modified in the light of the pupils' responses. Although lower attaining pupils were hesitant, they gave accurate answers to oral questions and could explain their reasoning.
84. The strengths of teaching, generally, include teachers' knowledgeable use and emphasis of appropriate mathematical vocabulary. Teachers mark almost all of the pupils' work and, as a result, good use is made of assessment from day to day. Numeracy skills are given a high priority, being skilfully integrated into the teaching. Pupils' work reflects the care in presentation that teachers take in all aspects of their work with pupils. Classroom assistants give excellent support to pupils and, in particular, to those with special educational needs. Teachers plan with the assistants in preparation for each new topic and they work as a successful team in the best interests of developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. An excellent example was observed when an assistant knew exactly which pupils would have difficulty in working with fractions and very skilfully provided unobtrusive support to individuals throughout the whole classwork session.
85. All requirements of the National Curriculum are met. Implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy very effectively underpins Key Stage 2 teaching, resulting in good standards at the end of Year 5. A small group of higher attaining pupils are likely to achieve level 6 and will be entered for that level in the national tests in 2001. Assessment related to National Curriculum levels is an integral aspect of departmental work throughout Key Stage 2. It is used well to monitor the learning of individual pupils. Reports at the end of each year give some detail of pupils' achievements, but do not refer to national standards. Assessment is less well structured or systematically used at Key Stage 3. Although all attainment targets are covered, too few opportunities are provided for older pupils to work through substantial tasks and relatively complex problems. Information technology is used only very occasionally as an integral part of mathematical experience. Eight higher attaining Year 8 pupils enjoyed success in the National Mathematics Challenge; two achieved gold standard. Pupils in Year 7 will also be given this opportunity in the next round.
86. Leadership of the teaching of mathematics by the subject co-ordinator during his first year has been effective. Rigorous, comprehensive schemes of work are being developed and policies implemented which are well judged and designed to raise standards even further. Resources are good and have been supplemented as a result of providing post-graduate teacher training in the department. There is a shared commitment, earnestly directed by the subject co-ordinator, to

continue to develop teaching and learning. In order to do this to the benefit of pupils the co-ordinator needs time to monitor and evaluate teaching, particularly at Key Stage 3. Much of the good practice evident in teaching should be shared by all teachers and used to promote the highest standards. The attainment of Year 7 pupils could be raised significantly if they were taught by a specialist teacher of mathematics.

87. Since the last inspection, better use has been made of accommodation by teaching both Year 8 classes in the room that houses the appropriate resources. Conceptual development is now a strong feature at Key Stage 2. Extension work at Key Stage 3 is being developed well, though homework should be set more frequently than once a week for older pupils. The most significant development is the impact of very good teaching on overall standards by the end of Key Stage 2, rising from well below the national average in 1996 to well above in 1999.

SCIENCE

88. The standards reached by pupils in science are in line with national expectations. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests taken by pupils at the end of Key Stage 2, 83 per cent reached at least level 4, above the national average of 78 per cent. Level 5 was reached by 19 per cent of pupils, below the national average of 27 per cent. There was no significant difference between the performances of boys and girls. Compared with the other core subjects in the school, pupils' performance in science was similar to that in English, but below that in mathematics. The proportion of pupils reaching level 4 or better was similar to that achieved by pupils at similar schools, although fewer achieved level 5 or better. The trend in performance at the end of Key Stage 2 is in line with the national trend. In the 2000 Key Stage 2 national tests, 81 per cent achieved at least level 4 and the percentage of pupils reaching level 5, 37 per cent, was significantly higher than in 1999, with more girls than boys reaching the higher level.
89. Standards of work seen in lessons and in the work done by pupils cover a wide range, but are broadly similar, overall, to the national average. By the end of Year 8, for example, all pupils have acquired good skills in scientific enquiry. From Year 5 to Year 8, they plan and carry out their own experiments on a range of topics. Pupils in Year 5 understand what a fair test is, make simple measurements, chart the results and draw simple conclusions related to their readings. They use computer technology to present results in an attractive way. An investigation by a pupil in Year 7 on using a range of supermarket kitchen towels in a chromatography experiment showed a confident grasp of all the skills which make up a successful investigation. By the end of Year 8, high-attaining pupils had made predictions about a bouncing ball experiment and checked their readings by repeating and averaging. High-attaining pupils in Year 8 know the chemical symbols for a number of common elements and are beginning to understand the formation of simple compounds, knowledge gained from their experiments involving burning elements in air. Most pupils in Year 7 know the difference between vertebrates and invertebrates and can give examples of each. Some pupils with high attainment can draw good diagrams of arthropods from observations made through a microscope. All pupils, including those with low prior attainment and those with special educational needs, develop a scientific vocabulary good enough to allow them to take a full part in all lessons. Many pupils feel sufficiently confident to propose theories of how things happen. A group of pupils with low prior attainment in a Year 6 lesson on floating and sinking were keen to propose why objects should weigh less (or more, as they thought) in water than in air. Pupils accurately use scientific terminology and they have sufficient skills in numeracy to support their work in science.
90. All pupils make satisfactory progress from their arrival in school at Year 5 to leaving in Year 8. For example, they achieve the results in Key Stage 2 national tests which are predicted from their attainment on arrival to the school. Satisfactory progress continues in the first two years of Key Stage 3, where they continue to develop their knowledge, understanding and skills in all of the attainment targets, particularly in scientific enquiry and investigations. By the end of Year 8, pupils with high attainment successfully answer questions about the particle structure of matter, calculate speeds and understand what is meant by a pH scale. Pupils with lower attainment, although they show limited understanding and poorer retention of facts, have acquired a sound scientific vocabulary and make at least satisfactory progress. All pupils contribute much to their own progress by their positive attitude to science and by their ability to concentrate on and

persevere with their tasks in lessons. Effective use of question and answer techniques by the teacher during lessons, to test knowledge and understanding, ensures that lessons move on from one point to the next with pupils feeling confident in their knowledge and understanding at each stage. The sound teaching of practical skills from the beginning of Year 5 promotes a spirit of scientific enquiry and is a positive aid to learning in the other attainment targets. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress owing to effective support from additional staff who give specifically targeted help with, for example, those who have difficulty in writing down the results of their experiments or who might find difficulty in using a complex piece of apparatus, such as a microscope.

91. Pupils are interested in science and are particularly enthusiastic about their practical work. They move safely around the laboratory and handle apparatus, such as bunsen burners and microscopes, with care. For example, they took a very responsible attitude to the potentially hazardous experiment of heating elements such as magnesium and iron in air. They work well together when in groups and can concentrate for long periods when working either individually or together. They are prepared to think for themselves when given the opportunity. A class of Year 6 pupils keenly debated among themselves whether an object would weigh more or less in air or water and pupils in Year 8 came to their own conclusions as to whether chemical reactions had taken place as a result of heating elements in air. Most pupils speak confidently and articulately about their work and have a good grasp of general, as well as subject specific, vocabulary. Relationships with each other and with their teacher are good. The standard of presentation of the work of some pupils is very high, particularly from some of those who are fluent users of computer technology, who can combine word-processing with spreadsheet and graphics work in a single piece of work.
92. All of the teaching seen was at least satisfactory and one third of it was good. The subject co-ordinator is well-qualified and experienced and has a good understanding of the needs of the pupils. The teaching of basic skills is good, particularly in the development of practical skills from Year 5 onwards. In all lessons seen, the planning was effective and expectations were generally appropriate to the pupils' needs. Lessons contain a variety of strategies and activities sufficient to keep pupils actively involved and to maintain their interest. Resources needed for lessons are always prepared before the lesson and are ready to hand. In lessons judged to be good, such as in a lesson for Year 7 pupils on forces, a good pace was maintained. In this lesson, there was a mixture of effective questioning at the beginning and end of the lesson, a simple demonstration of a class experiment to be done, followed by a brisk practical session in which pupils had to make some readings of weights in air and water, as well as come up with some possible explanation of the results. With additional staff supporting pupils with special educational needs in this lesson, all pupils achieved good gains in practical skills and understanding. Pupils' interest was maintained and they were called upon to make an intellectual effort to make sense of their results. In one or two lessons, opportunities were missed to use the long 70 minute lessons to full effect. For example, in a lesson for Year 8 pupils on chemical reactions, a practical session went on for too long, leaving work to be finished at home which could have been done more effectively in class. The use of day-to-day assessment in lessons is good. Effective use is made of focused questioning, particularly at the beginning of a lesson, to establish the general baseline knowledge of the class, usually making good links with previous work. Homework is not satisfactorily used to reinforce learning or to extend pupils. It too often requires pupils to complete work not finished in the lesson, which means that those who work quickly have none, while slower workers may be left with tasks to do at home which are too difficult for them. Marking is done regularly, but the information it gives to pupils is mainly related to their effort and gives little guidance about gains in knowledge or understanding, or about what pupils have to do in order to improve.
93. The department has recently made a sensible decision to adopt the new scheme of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and is making effective links with partner schools in matching its curriculum to that of the feeder schools and the high schools which pupils attend on leaving. The provision for pupils with special educational needs is developing well, with classroom support for some of the time. This is effective in helping pupils to achieve where specific individuals or groups are targeted for support, but works less well when a classroom assistant is present just to act as an additional pair of hands. Procedures for assessing attainment are satisfactory. Pupils are assessed regularly by the use of end-of-unit tests and school examinations and the department keeps good records of the results. The results are not

used to effectively track individual pupils' performance in science in relation to national standards and there is no target setting. There is no consistent procedure for analysing external test and examination results in order to inform teaching and curricular development in such a way as to improve performance.

94. The science co-ordinator manages the subject effectively. Working without any technical support, he ensures that the resources of the recently refurbished and attractive laboratory are efficiently deployed. The work of the department reflects the values of the school in aiming to provide a good education in science for its pupils. Work using information and communications technology is being developed and data-logging is about to start this term. Computer skills are further developed with pupils showing the ability to search a database in a lesson and to use word-processing and spreadsheets as routine tools in the presentation of their work. Developmental planning is rudimentary. There are neither costings nor priorities set for annual plans and no criteria by which the success of plans can be evaluated. Some good displays of pupils' work are mounted on the laboratory walls and on the corridor walls immediately adjacent, providing an attractive learning environment.

ART

95. Standards in art are high at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 8. In Year 5, pupils quickly gain confidence in their drawing skills; they can scale up their drawings of still life quickly. They also gain in knowledge of colour and its impact. In Year 6, pupils achieve good results in their studies of people in action, with a lively use of line and tone. In Year 7, pupils explore their personal identity, creating paintings with symbols to reflect ideas of their own self-image. In Year 8, pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of cubism. They are able to interpret still life compositions in the cubist style very successfully in charcoal and pencil, but not as impressively in paint.
96. Pupils make very good progress in this subject. The skills of drawing and painting are taught formally from Year 5 onwards. Pupils gain a clear understanding of what constitutes good composition. The use of line, shape and tone are well explored. Colour theory is taught formally. Pupils build on these skills and on their knowledge and understanding as they move from year to year. Pupils with special educational needs get appropriate individual attention and make very good progress. Many pupils on the special educational needs register have average and above average abilities in art.
97. Pupils have very good attitudes to learning in this subject. They are attentive to the teacher and work seriously in all lessons. Pupils can be entrusted with selecting their own resources such as fabrics, paints, glue and water. There is no need for the teacher to remind them to be careful. This aspect of their behaviour is very impressive.
98. Pupils' standards and progress are directly related to very good teaching. All pupils are taught by a specialist teacher, who has very good knowledge and expertise in the subject. She has very good class-management skills and discipline. This teacher is newly appointed, now in her third week in school. The skills of drawing and painting are taught formally, with very good demonstrations and illustrations by the teacher. Good use is made of the works of major artists to inspire pupils and help them to be imaginative and creative in their own work. Assessment is done at the end of all lessons and pupils are involved in evaluating their own work and that of others. This helps to make pupils aware of the potential for development in their work and so raises standards.
99. There is very good leadership and vision for this subject. Planning is done in good detail, with scope for development in a range of media. There is adequate time for the subject and pupils are taught in a large, specialist room. There is a very impressive range of good quality natural objects in the classroom to help and inspire object drawing. During the last term there has been an artist in residence, who has helped Year 8 pupils to construct an impressive three-dimensional light sculpture, with good exploration of shape and space. There are plans to continue this practice of having an artist in residence again this year.

100. There is an art club and good links with the adult education provision for art. Pupils visit art galleries and exhibitions; a Year 8 visit is made to the art galleries in Paris. Little use of information and communication technology was seen during the inspection, but there are plans to use the digital camera and video. There has been an improvement in teaching and standards since the last inspection. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

101. Standards in design and technology are average and pupils' achievements are satisfactory, both at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8. In making, in Year 6, pupils use tools correctly and safely when making a lettering pen. They build on satisfactory measuring and marking skills in this work and show a satisfactory control of the tenon saw and sanding machines. They show a sound knowledge of the technical language associated with the subject. Pupils in Year 8 have an extensive range of making skills, which they apply to different materials. They design and make a teapot stand, for which they successfully make joints. In textiles they use a sewing machine effectively to stitch their appliqué designs onto a backing cloth. By the end of Year 8 pupils have the design and construction skills to work in a wide range of materials in construction, food and textile technology. A weakness in their learning is in the use of computers to assist their work, because of the lack of the appropriate hardware in the school.
102. Rates of learning and pupils' achievements are satisfactory in both key stages. As a result of the consistent and precise use of the language of materials and processes by the teachers, pupils' progress in the use and understanding of appropriate language is good. All pupils make at least satisfactory progress in their handling of materials and tools. Pupils with special educational needs learn at a satisfactory rate because of their confident attitudes and the skilled and well-focused support provided by the school. In Year 8, with effective support from the teacher in textile technology, they show skill in investigating materials and in design drawing. Higher attaining pupils successfully share their knowledge of conductors and insulators when working with electric plugs.
103. The quality of teaching in lessons seen was always satisfactory and in one third was good. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection and pupils' learning now builds more successfully on earlier work. The incorporation of graphics work has improved pupils' skills in designing and lettering. Teachers have good subject knowledge, which supports pupils to improve their skills, as seen in a Year 8 textiles lesson where pupils developed control over the sewing machine to stitch appliqué designs. Teachers set objectives for lessons, share them with pupils at the start and then help pupils assess their progress towards these objectives at the end of the lesson. In this way pupils have some idea of their learning. The good relationships that teachers foster create a supportive atmosphere, which adds to pupils' enjoyment of the subject. They also allow pupils to make mistakes and understand that it is possible to learn from them. Pupils respect their teachers because of the strong working relationships and the interesting activities provided. They work safely and steadily through all lessons, showing both enthusiasm and pleasure in their learning.
104. In the previous inspection report attention was drawn to the incorrect pitch of some work. While this is still the case in some instances for higher attaining pupils, detailed planning of work has improved considerably in all courses. The National Curriculum is in place. The current portfolio of pupil's work needs to be updated in order to guide teachers tracking of standards and progress. While the steady progress that pupils are making and their satisfactory levels of attainment are as a result of improvements in teaching and planning, there is a need to strengthen this work and improve assessment procedures in order to improve standards in the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

105. Attainment in geography is in line with national expectations both at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8. The pupils' understanding of physical processes and environmental issues is well developed. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on water, pupils demonstrated good knowledge and understanding of the infrastructure that brings water from catchment areas in the hills to the taps in their homes and Year 7 pupils have a good understanding of both the physical factors and

human actions that cause flooding. Year 6 pupils can construct line and bar graphs and offer simple interpretations from them. Able older pupils use geographical terms satisfactorily in describing distribution patterns and can draw generalisations from climate graphs. Less able Year 8 pupils can construct simple questionnaires appropriate for gathering data on people's holiday choices. They present their results through simple graphs and brief descriptive notes. Able pupils, undertaking the same task, collect more and more precise data and present their findings through neatly produced graphics, including pie charts, accompanied by fluent notes which interpret as well as describe the data. Map skills and knowledge of place are less secure. For example, only three pupils in a Year 5 lesson knew the location of Egypt and Year 8 pupils, using atlases to gather information on Brazil, have only a hazy impression of the relative sizes of Brazil and the British Isles. The research skills of the girls are generally better developed than those of the boys.

106. In lessons observed, teaching was good overall and never less than satisfactory. A good range of teaching and learning styles are employed, largely well matched to the abilities of pupils. Lessons start very briskly with a clear statement of learning objectives. Teachers' questioning to confirm pupils' recall and understanding is skilful. These strengths were well demonstrated in a Year 8 lesson where pupils were embarking on research projects on the geography of Brazil. Lessons are supported by detailed planning and, for most lessons, by teachers' very good subject knowledge. Management of pupils is positive and very effective. Pupils are highly motivated to contribute to discussions. They work hard, particularly in the early stages of lessons. In some lessons though, the initial good pace is not sustained, either because the pupils' efforts slacked towards the end of a double lesson or because the teacher talked for too long and pupils had not enough time to consolidate or develop their learning. Pupils collaborate very well in pair and small group activities and listen well to each other. Less able pupils are well supported and learning materials are largely well matched to their ability.
107. The curriculum has both strengths and weaknesses but is satisfactory overall. It is enriched by a good range of learning materials and by good fieldwork experiences in Years 5, 6 and 8. Learning is also enhanced by the systematic use of information technology in Years 7 and 8. The time provided for study in Year 6 is insufficient for pupils to sustain the rate of progress expected. The schemes of work are largely comprehensive and well organised. Not enough emphasis is given to a foundation of basic map skills in Year 5 and to their consolidation and further development, particularly in Year 7. Procedures for assessment are just satisfactory. A new system, linked to level descriptors, is being developed, but currently, data are insufficient to track pupils' progress over time. Resources are well managed, professional relationships are strong and support for lessons taught by other staff is good. The areas for development identified in the School Improvement Plan are very broad and the plan lacks specific targets to work towards.
108. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved. The curriculum has been improved by revisions to the schemes of work and by better structuring of the use of information technology at Key Stage 3. Resources to support learning have improved, particularly for less able pupils.

HISTORY

109. Attainment in history is in line with national expectations both at the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8. Pupils in Year 5 build up a good knowledge of the Tudor kings and queens, which is reflected in neatly presented pieces of extended writing, particularly by more able pupils. Pupils display good skills in interpreting quite complex family trees of this period. Year 6 pupils demonstrate satisfactory understanding of some significant differences between their lives and those of ordinary people in Ancient Egypt - for example, why infant mortality was so much higher then. As their learning on a topic progresses, most pupils make notes that include the key learning points, with the work of the girls being more detailed, clearer and better organised than that of the boys. A class of Year 7 pupils demonstrated a good grasp of chronology and the great majority can place the periods that they have studied in correct order. As learning progressed, all pupils acquired an understanding of how and why BC and AD are used to place events from the past. Most Year 7 pupils can distinguish between primary and secondary sources, though some have difficulty in articulating this understanding. In a Year 8 class, pupils displayed good knowledge of how the American Indian peoples migrated from Asia and how evidence of these

movements was gathered. The study skills of some pupils in this year, particularly boys, are not well developed. However, able pupils are producing fluent, detailed and neatly presented pieces of extended writing. Pupils' skills in learning from written sources and images of artefacts vary considerably but are satisfactory overall.

110. In the lessons observed, the standard of teaching was good overall and never less than satisfactory. Planning is clear, often detailed and based on satisfactory subject knowledge. Overall, a good range of teaching and learning styles is employed, though within some teaching there is too much dependence on text book based learning. Pupils are very effectively managed and lessons invariably get off to a brisk start, with clearly stated learning objectives. For example, in a Year 6 lesson, a small collection of artefacts that could be used to help mummify bodies was displayed, which claimed and held the pupils' attention very effectively. The role play and interactive questioning that followed continued to sustain their interest and ensured that all pupils made good progress, building their understanding of Ancient Egyptian culture. In some lessons, after a lively start, interest was not well sustained as pupils had only limited opportunities to contribute actively or the follow-up tasks lacked purpose. The pace of learning sometimes flags towards the end of lessons, even when the tasks set are appropriate. Pupils collaborate well when given opportunities to work in pairs and small groups. Support for less able pupils is very good in some lessons and good overall. Invariably, they are given individual support when undertaking written tasks. Questioning of the class is usually inclusive, ensuring that all pupils contribute. There is an improving range of resources to support their learning. Where additional staff are present in the classroom, their support is very good.
111. The curriculum is satisfactory and has good features. It is enriched by fieldwork in all years and the use of information technology is structured to support learning in all years. Schemes of work differ in quality and detail from year to year. Not enough time is provided in Year 6 and this reduces the pace of progress and continuity in learning. Assessment arrangements are unsatisfactory, as judgments linked to the National Curriculum descriptors of attainment are currently only used in Year 7 and insufficient data are gathered and held to build a picture of pupils' progress over time. Professional relationships are good and the management and co-ordination of resources to support learning are efficient. Developmental planning is broadly focused and lacks specific targets to aid action planning.
112. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection. Teaching standards have improved; there is more extensive use of information technology. There have been some improvements in resources particularly to support the learning of less able pupils.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

113. By the end of Key Stage 2 and at the end of Year 8, pupils' knowledge and skills are typical of their age group. All pupils make good progress and the well-targeted support provided by the school ensures that pupils with special educational needs achieve success in the management of their work.
114. At Key Stage 2 pupils are competent in managing software. They use the mouse, icons and tool bars successfully. At Key Stage 3 pupils use software effectively for the creation of databases and for the design of web pages. As they move into Year 7 good gains are made in using spreadsheets for investigating costs. In Year 8, pupils organise and refine their work satisfactorily, using word processing skills appropriately. By the end of the key stage pupils are confident in communicating their ideas and handling information. Higher attaining pupils in both key stages are skilled in the management of software. For example, in Year 6 they are confident in their understanding of how to evaluate an information page for a multi-media page design. The technical language of computer applications is used correctly by pupils in both key stages and clearly demonstrates their understanding. There are sometimes difficulties for pupils with special educational needs, who find the complexities of following instructions for designing a web page very challenging. The creation and use of a formula in a spreadsheet also presents particular problems for these pupils.
115. The good progress that pupils make is due to the effectively planned courses, good teaching and the very positive attitudes of pupils at both key stages. Progress in software management is rapid

for pupils as they move through Key Stage 2. Year 5 pupils steadily consolidate skill through activities planned to match their needs and interests. Numeracy skills are being increased for all pupils as they use a formula for making calculations for costing ingredients. By Year 8, pupils are learning new skills of collating and presenting information as well as considering the use of web pages and the internet. Lower attaining pupils are making comparable progress because of technical sheets matched closely to their needs, well-focused support and their own enthusiasm and motivation. Progress for higher attaining pupils is also good, as they quickly grasp how to use spreadsheets for effectively working out costs. The progress being made at both key stages in acquiring basic skills is directly linked to the expertise and confidence of the specialist teaching and the high expectations of pupils. Since the previous inspection, much planning has taken place to ensure that all strands of the National Curriculum as well as national guidelines are firmly in place. The inadequate quantity of hardware and software provides difficulties for teachers in the planning of work in National Curriculum subjects: it makes for slower progress for pupils.

116. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Pupils enjoy their lessons. They are enthusiastic and well motivated. They work well together, sharing facilities fairly. The majority of pupils are keen and concentrate on the tasks.
117. In the lessons observed, all teaching at Key Stage 2 was good. At Key Stage 3, in 50 per cent of lessons it was good, and in the other 50 per cent it was very good. Teaching is highly skilled and produces confident attitudes to the subject in pupils. Objectives are clearly set in all lessons and used effectively by pupils to guide their work, allowing them to work well together, sharing facilities fairly. The guidance given by teachers encourages pupils to make judgements and arrive at sensible decisions. There are good working relationships between pupils and teachers. This provides an atmosphere in which pupils can ask questions and confidently discuss their work. Independent working skills and taking responsibility are developing for some pupils who make use of home computers and who, for example, bring in CD-ROMs to enhance class work, as a result of these strong relationships and the enthusiasm that is developing for the subject. Pupils respond well to the teaching and the challenges set by the tasks; they are keen and concentrate on the work set. Teachers are beginning to make use of information technology in other subjects of the curriculum: in, for example, English, during work on poetry and prose; in history, where research tasks and the presentation of data are enhanced by the use of computers. In science investigations, Year 8 pupils make excellent use of software to support their work.
118. Assessment of pupils' work using National Curriculum level descriptors does not take place, although day-to-day assessment is effective for planning the level of activities. In basic skills lessons pupils demonstrate skill and knowledge but are unable to apply them in all subjects. There is sparse evidence to show that information and communications technology is used consistently and in a planned way to support work in all subjects. However, the ratio of pupils to computers is well above the national average and insufficient to meet the demands of the National Curriculum for the subject. This has a detrimental effect on achievement and attainment.
119. National guidance for planning is appropriately incorporated into all schemes of work. Detailed planning is in place to meet the needs of the curriculum in both key stages. Control activities are still limited. The previous inspection report drew attention to the need for a co-ordinated assessment system. No progress has been made on this point. Assessment procedures following the level descriptors of the National Curriculum are not in place. There is no folder of levelled work to guide pupils or to support teachers. There is a need for effective assessment procedures if pupils are to continue to make progress at a good rate.
120. Management by the co-ordinator, who also has other whole-school responsibilities is good. The excellent planning of the co-ordinator has had a positive impact on the standards in the basic skills being taught. Long term planning is effective and sharply focused. Since the previous report the integration of information and communications technology into other subject areas has made little progress, mainly because of lack of computers in the school. The school requires a strategic purchasing policy for hardware and software to meet the demands of information and communications technology across the curriculum. Attention was also drawn to the lack of technical support at the last inspection. The situation has not changed.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

121. At the end of Key Stage 2 and during Key Stage 3, standards in French are satisfactory. At the end of Year 8, most pupils are likely to meet expected standards at the end of Key Stage 3. They are able to engage in short, structured conversations and adapt previously learnt language to suit their own ends. Listening skills are a little further developed than those in speaking, reading and writing. The majority of pupils can identify the main points of passages of French consisting of familiar language. Knowledge of basic grammar, such as common verbs and adjectival agreements, is sound. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. With support, they respond appropriately to clearly spoken classroom instructions and take part in short, simple exchanges about themselves.
122. Pupils' attitudes are good. They work hard and with enthusiasm. They sustain concentration throughout the lessons and co-operate well with each other when working in small groups or in pairs.
123. Teaching is of a uniformly high standard: it was good in three of the four lessons observed and very good in the other. Lessons are well planned and, at the beginning of each lesson, pupils are made aware of what they are going to do. A lively pace helps to engender enthusiasm among the pupils, who are expected to work with rigour-and they do. Extensive use of spoken French sets an appropriate challenge for all pupils. Sometimes, however, more care could be taken in modifying the language in order to ensure that all pupils clearly understand the nature of the task set. Pupils' understanding of grammar is strengthened when the teacher encourages them to recognise the patterns in language for themselves. Class control is good and relationships between the teacher and pupils are very secure.
124. The subject is well managed. The curriculum is well planned and is appropriate for learners of all abilities. However, the development of pupils' skills in information and communication technology need to be strengthened; they are currently neglected in French. Procedures for tracking the performance of individual pupils are good and increase pupils' motivation. The distribution of time allocated to the subject needs to be reviewed. Too long a gap between lessons slows pupils' making quicker progress.
125. Continued good teaching has ensured that, overall, standards have been maintained since the last inspection. A rigorous approach to the teaching and learning of grammar has enabled higher attaining pupils to develop their writing skills to a level where they are able to write short paragraphs and adapt memorised language to suit their individual purposes.

MUSIC

126. Standards at both key stages are similar to those expected nationally. Pupils understand the elements of music and can describe vividly what they hear with expressions such as 'the music travelled upwards' used by a special needs pupil referring to the opening of Barber's 'Adagio for Strings'. Year 8 pupils produced some good ternary form compositions, displaying solid rhythmic and tonal sense. Singing heard in assembly and choir practice was of a good standard. The choir, drawn from boys and girls in all year groups, sings confidently in rounds and part-songs with a clear tone and well-defined parts. About 60 pupils perform in school and take part in musical events throughout the region.
127. Pupils enjoy music lessons, responding enthusiastically to the example set by teachers. Concentration is good and pupils make reasoned responses to listening activities. They work very well with one another, sharing ideas and behaving sensibly, finding spaces around the school to work on group composition. When playing to each other they listen supportively and this has a definite effect on their progress.
128. All class teaching seen was very good; instrumental teaching was satisfactory. Pupils are inspired by the high standard of musicianship, which both sets an example and supports their own music-making. Lessons are well planned and take account of the pupils' capacity for

concentration, allowing for ideas to be explored in depth. When the class is working as a whole, the contribution of every pupil is valued and this gives them confidence to make suggestions and consolidate their learning. Relationships are very good. Although the pupils' abilities are well known to their teachers, no regular records are kept of attainment. Pupils are not given a clear idea of what they need to do to improve. This is particularly noticeable in instrumental lessons and is hampering progress. Too little guidance is given on how to practise; homework activities to support learning in class are not regularly set.

129. The curriculum covers statutory requirements but does not allow for pupils to work with computers for composing and recording. There is joint planning with the high schools to which the pupils move, but this has not extended to assessment. The music co-ordinator is aware of the need to make recordings of practical music-making in order to assist the linking of assessment with the new National Curriculum levels in music. Classwork is greatly enriched both by extra-curricular opportunities and through work with professional musicians. Involvement with 'Folkworks' has resulted in the ceilidh band playing at Beamish Museum and pupils taking part in a 'From Cheviots to the Coast' production staged in Berwick. There are strong links with the Northern Sinfonia and both pupils and the local community benefit from their workshops at the school.
130. The department is very well led by an experienced and enthusiastic musician, who uses her talent to plan a lively curriculum, offering pupils a variety of music-making both in lessons and out of school. Arrangements for instrumental teaching are well organised, giving an added dimension to the musical life of the school. There are no arrangements for the regular monitoring of instrumental teaching. The deficiency in accommodation identified at the previous inspection has not been addressed and the subject is still taught in a classroom which is too small to allow instruments to be spread out and has too few electrical points for keyboards. This has a detrimental effect on standards, particularly at Key Stage 3, when pupils spend valuable time setting up instruments. They are severely constrained in their practical work by poor instrumental resources and restricted accommodation. Tuned percussion instruments are more suited to younger children and there is no bass instrument other than the piano. Pupils have no access to computers to enable them to record and refine their composition.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

131. Attainment is in line with national expectations at the end of Key Stage 2 and above average at the end of Year 8. It is particularly strong in netball and gymnastics and the results achieved in area competitions indicate that attainment is high in athletics and tennis. The work of a mixed class of Year 5 pupils, completing a series of individual and paired tasks involving skipping, forward rolls along a box, racket and ball practices and work on beams and with ropes, demonstrated satisfactory strength, agility and hand-eye co-ordination. Girls in Year 6 are able to model push passes and to trap the ball successfully in hockey skills practices, but only the most able can produce these skills in competitive situations. Year 7 girls have a very good understanding of the positions and rules in netball and all pupils can demonstrate chest, shoulder, bounce and overhead passes in practices. They can explain the circumstances in a game when each of these should be used. In competition, they pass fluently and maintain good attacking and defensive patterns. By Year 7, the great majority of pupils can measure pulse rates accurately and they have a sound grasp of the link between pulse rate and exercise. Able boys in Year 8, practising skills in football lessons, can use their feet, knees and head to keep the ball under control and airborne for up to half a minute at a time. In practice games, they use the flanks well to attack and their crossing is often quite accurate. The overall levels of fitness of pupils are good.
132. In the four lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in three lessons and in the fourth it was very good. The knowledge and understanding of staff are good and complementary, assisting the effective support of pupils across a wide range of activities. Much planning is very detailed and good, learning objectives are clear and well communicated. All lessons are well structured to aid progress and are conducted at a brisk pace. The management of pupils is excellent, being both firm and very good humoured. These skills were very effectively demonstrated in a Year 5 lesson where, owing to poor weather, 47 pupils shared the gymnasium and enjoyed a varied and challenging lesson that made excellent use of the limited space available. In this lesson, as in all others observed, pupils were very punctual, attentive and keen, sustained very good concentration

and, when required, worked very co-operatively in pairs and small groups. Teachers encourage and praise the achievements of pupils of all abilities generously and, through sensitive grouping and carefully chosen tasks, pupils of lower ability develop very positive attitudes to learning and make good progress. Extra-curricular opportunities to participate in sport are enjoyed by pupils of all abilities.

133. The curriculum is broad and balanced and supported by a very good range of extra-curricular sports and outdoor activities in and outside term time. Pupils' participation is excellent, with more than three quarters of pupils taking part. The curriculum is making a very good contribution to the pupils' moral and social development. Pupils are systematically assessed at the end of each unit of work and the data are efficiently managed. However, judgments are not based on National Curriculum criteria and the levels recorded at the end of Year 8 are not necessarily valid. Professional relationships are very strong, aiding close co-ordination of the boys' and girls' learning opportunities. Learning benefits from the very good quality of the accommodation, which is well maintained, and resources, which are very well managed. Wall displays do not do justice to the range of achievements of pupils.
134. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. The overall standard of teaching has improved, particularly in respect of the support for pupils with learning difficulties. Accommodation has been improved by the construction of the multi-sports playing area and extra-curricular opportunities have been enriched.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

135. Standards in religious education match the expectation of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of Key Stage 2 and when pupils leave school at the end of Year 8. Some aspects of the pupils' work are of a high standard - for example, Year 5 pupils' knowledge of the use of symbols and, in Year 8, pupils' understanding of the incarnation. Standards are similar to those reported at the time of the last inspection.
136. Pupils have a good knowledge of the main stories in the life of Jesus. In Year 5, pupils understand the symbolic use of colours to show feelings and, in particular, how they are used to create emotion and feelings in religious paintings. In Year 6, pupils learn the biblical account of the Creation. They consider whether the scientific explanations of the 'big bang' theory and evolution can be compatible with the story in Genesis. In Year 7, pupils know and understand the significance of the Ten Commandments. They can relate these to moral and social standards today and can devise their own sets of laws to create a harmonious world. They are able to order these laws according to their priorities and explain why they have made their choices. In Year 8, pupils can research the stories of the birth of Jesus as told in the gospels. They can analyse and compare these accounts. They have a good understanding of the culture and life in Palestine at the time of the birth of Jesus. The spiritual aspects of the subject are dealt with in good depth in all years. Pupils have a basic knowledge of the beliefs and festivals of Judaism, Islam and Hinduism and their associated cultures. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
137. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. They are able to think for themselves and can use the knowledge gained to form opinions and discuss issues. Their written work is well structured and shows a good depth of study and a steady improvement from year to year. They gain a good insight into abstract ideas, such as eternity, and the themes of darkness and light are understood well. Pupils with special educational needs get appropriate individual attention and help; good progress is made in both key stages.
138. Pupils are well motivated in this subject. They have a quiet, calm composure in lessons in both key stages. They work well together in groups, sharing knowledge and resources very agreeably. These very good attitudes to work are directly related to good teaching which provides well structured and interesting lessons.
139. Teaching is good, overall. In one of the four lessons seen it was very good, in two it was good and in the other it was satisfactory. The subject is taught by one teacher throughout the school.

This teacher has very good class-management skills. Good discipline, exercised in all lessons, is achieved with apparent ease. Lessons are planned in depth and are well structured in short steps to help pupils to focus clearly on each aspect. The teacher makes good use of a range of resources to interest the pupils and to support their learning. Pupils' learning is checked at the end of all lessons by appropriate questioning. They are encouraged to report on their learning, which consolidates both this and their confidence in the subject.

140. Leadership in the subject is good. It is helped by good planning, including detailed lesson plans. Not enough time is allocated to the subject at either key stage. Pupils have only a 70-minute lesson every two weeks. This is likely to have a detrimental effect on standards over time. Resources are adequate, apart from a lack of computers that would be useful for research. This situation remains similar to that reported at the time of the last inspection. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.