

INSPECTION REPORT

TANFIELD SCHOOL

Stanley, Co Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114293

Headteacher: Mr A J Howat

Reporting inspector: Helena McVeigh
(OFSTED No: 32056)

Dates of inspection: 30 October - 3 November 2000

Inspection number: 223748

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11-16 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Tanfield Lea Road
Stanley
Co Durham

Postcode: DH9 8AY

Telephone number: 01207 232881

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr J Brown

Date of previous inspection: 25 September 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Helena McVeigh (OFSTED No: 32056)	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
			How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
			What should the school do to improve further?
Marvyn Moore (OFSTED No: 11041)	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?
Geoffrey Price (OFSTED No: 19214)	Team inspector	English	
Sheila Nolan (OFSTED No: 28097)	Team inspector	Mathematics	Assessment and monitoring of academic performance
John Mitchell (OFSTED No: 23246)		Science	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Graham Preston (OFSTED No: 1990)	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	Vocational education
		Business studies	
Clive Potter (OFSTED No: 4703)	Team inspector	Design and technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mark Gill (OFSTED No: 13003)	Team inspector	History	
		Geography	
Eileen Metcalfe (OFSTED No: 17868)	Team inspector	Art	Provision for pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development
		Religious education	
Judith Tolley (OFSTED No: 17404)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
John Morrell (OFSTED No: 23308)	Team inspector	Music	

Barry Simmons (OFSTED No: 14446)	Team inspector	Physical education	The school's use of strategic resources
Raymond Cardinal (OFSTED No: 22695)	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
		Equal opportunities	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Tanfield is a mixed comprehensive school for 603 pupils aged 11 to 16. The roll has fallen recently, partly because of increasing competition from other 11 to 18 secondary schools. The school takes pupils from a wide area that includes some quite high levels of deprivation, as measured by the low percentage of pupils from high social class households and low proportion of adults with higher education qualifications. There are no pupils from minority ethnic groups. Fourteen per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is in line with the national average. The school's view is that this figure does not reflect the extent of need. The attainment of pupils on entry to the school has been below average over the past few years, though is closer to the average this year. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is just below the national average, though a much higher proportion has statements. The school includes a designated resource base for 25 pupils with general learning difficulties, who are integrated fully into the school. The school has had to cope with very difficult working conditions following a major fire in May 1998, which resulted in the loss of 24 classrooms, school offices, and all the resources, equipment and pupils' coursework for English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology (ICT) and religious education (RE). Since that time there has been continuous building work, which is now in its last phase and is due for completion by next September, one year behind schedule.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Tanfield is in many respects an effective school. Its strengths lie in its very good support for pupils' personal development and in its work with the community. Much, though, needs to be done to raise standards in external examinations. The staff, which includes many talented practitioners, and the very supportive governing body are committed to the school and want to see it improve. The school is well managed and provides satisfactory value for money. Steps that the school has taken to raise standards are beginning to bear fruit and the quality of teaching is good. The fire and subsequent building work have set the school back, but the staff and governors are determined to move forward.

What the school does well

- The way the school provides for pupils' personal, social and health education
- The way the school uses its strong links with the community to enhance pupils' education
- The arrangements for integrating and supporting pupils with SEN
- The school's constructive curricular and pastoral links with other institutions
- Pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships with their peers and teachers
- The effective way in which teachers manage pupils' behaviour
- The resilience of staff in the face of the very difficult working conditions since the fire two years ago and the effective way that this has been managed.

What could be improved

- The rate of improvement in external exams
- Pupils' progress and achievement in science, particularly in Years 7 to 9
- The curriculum for ICT, which does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9
- Expectations of what pupils can achieve
- Provision for gifted and talented pupils
- Procedures for recording and monitoring accidents in school.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

Improvement since the last inspection in 1995 has been satisfactory, overall. However, GCSE results have not improved enough and pupils' progress in ICT has got worse. Science still has weaknesses, though teaching and management have got better. Pupils' progress in French and German is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Attendance remains just below average. Some aspects of health and safety are unsatisfactory and the school still does not provide a daily act of collective worship. There have been improvements in all other aspects of provision: for example, results for 14 year olds, with more pupils getting the higher levels; the quality of teaching; boys' achievement; and the teaching of

mathematics, history, geography, art, and RE. The curriculum has been broadened and made more appropriate for all pupils in Years 10 and 11. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has improved. English and physical education (PE) have maintained their good provision. The school has extended its already good involvement in the community and links with other schools. The school has also successfully managed the introduction of a resource base for 25 pupils with SEN.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
GCSE examinations	D	D	D	D	

The percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals does not reflect the deprivation in the area, the low educational aspirations and below average attainment of pupils when they start school in Year 7. Overall, therefore, the comparison with 'similar schools' is probably unfair. Even so, the school's rate of improvement in examination results is below the national trend and is not good enough.

Pupils do better in some subjects than in others. GCSE results in English are usually good, and were in line with the national average in 1999. The percentage of pupils getting GCSE grades A*- C in mathematics and science has been well below average. Few pupils obtained the highest grades (A and A*) in any subjects. GCSE results deteriorated in 2000, but this year group had a lower attainment on entry than others, and included a significant number of pupils with behaviour and attendance problems, several of whom started school after Year 7. The evidence suggests that the current Years 10 and 11 will do much better.

Results for 14 year olds in the National Curriculum tests for English have consistently been higher than for mathematics or science. This year (2000) the percentage of pupils who got level five and above was just below the national average in English, and in line with similar schools. Mathematics and science results were below the national average and well below the average for similar schools. The improvement in test results is in line with the national trend and the 2000 results were an improvement on 1999. Boys' results have improved significantly, as has the percentage of pupils getting the higher levels (six and above).

Based on the work and lessons seen during the inspection and given their prior attainment, pupils' achievements are nearly always at least satisfactory. Pupils with SEN make good progress. Pupils make good progress in English, art, design and technology (DT), history, geography and PE. Very good progress is made in RE because of the high quality teaching. Pupils achieve less than expected by the end of Year 9 in science and ICT, and in French and German by the end of Year 11. Pupils' progress in ICT has been adversely affected by the loss of equipment in the fire and long-term absence of the specialist teacher.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitude to their learning is generally very good in lessons. They concentrate, listen well and work hard.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Behaviour is nearly always very good in lessons and around the school. The very few examples of poor behaviour are usually dealt with effectively by staff so that it does not disrupt other pupils' learning.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships are very good. Pupils are tolerant of others' views and beliefs and respond well when given responsibility, for example, acting as mentors to younger pupils.
Attendance	Attendance is below average, mainly due to a high level of absences authorised by parents, such as taking pupils on holiday in term time. Unauthorised absences are around the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	Aged 14-16 years	aged over 16 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	

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

The teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of the lessons seen. In 59 per cent it was good or better and in 17 per cent it was very good or excellent. As a result of this good teaching, pupils work well in lessons and make good strides in their knowledge, understanding and skills. Teaching is good throughout the school in English, mathematics, art, history, geography, PE and business studies. The Award Scheme Development and Accreditation Network (ASDAN) course is taught very well in Years 10 and 11. Personal, social and health education (PSHE) is taught consistently well despite the many different teachers who teach it. RE is a strength and is taught very well; in some lessons it is inspirational. Teaching is at least satisfactory in all other subjects, apart from science in Years 7 to 9 and French and German in Years 10 and 11. The good teaching has not had sufficient impact on GCSE results, particularly in mathematics.

Strengths of the teaching include very good management of pupils' behaviour, good subject knowledge, good planning of lessons and use of resources, good pace of lessons, and, in some subjects, good use of target setting. Marking is inconsistent in the quality of the teachers' comments and homework is limited in range and not always appropriate for all pupils. Literacy is taught well across the school, but numeracy is not taught satisfactorily, as there is not yet a whole-school approach. Pupils with special educational needs are taught well and they make good progress, particularly when support staff are present. The most able pupils are often not stretched enough. Teachers do not always cater effectively for the needs of all pupils in the large mixed ability classes.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and includes a wide range of work-related courses in Years 10 and 11. It is enhanced by a good range of interesting extra-curricular activities, including links with other countries and with primary and special schools. ICT does not meet statutory requirements in Years 7-9.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Pupils are integrated well into the school. The quality of the support is good. Pupils sometimes struggle in big mixed ability classes when there is no extra support for them. Good provision is made for older pupils through the ASDAN course.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory and strengthened by very good teaching in RE. Assemblies are of a very high quality and include a strong spiritual component. Provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development is good— through the very good PSHE programme and range of extra-curricular activities.

<p>How well the school cares for its pupils</p>	<p>The school is generally very careful about pupils' welfare and procedures for child protection are very good. There is a good and effective pastoral system and pupils' progress is monitored well. There are good procedures for assessment, though these do not do enough to identify work for gifted or talented pupils. Procedures for monitoring and recording accidents are unsatisfactory.</p> <p>The schools' links with parents are satisfactory: communication is good and some parents work in the school and even take part in art GCSE lessons. Not enough is done to encourage more parental involvement like this, though. Links with parents of resource base pupils are particularly good.</p>
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HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
<p>Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff</p>	<p>The school is managed well. The leadership has been very effective in promoting pupils' personal development but less successful in raising expectations and improving standards. Most departments are managed well. The way finances are managed is good. Development planning is good.</p>
<p>How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities</p>	<p>Governors are very supportive of the school and committed to its improvement. They are kept well informed. They play an effective role in managing the school budget and use their expertise to enhance the curriculum, for example through health education. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities. It fails to do so, though, in respect of ensuring a daily act of collective worship, aspects of health and safety, and providing an adequate curriculum for ICT.</p>
<p>The school's evaluation of its performance</p>	<p>Systems for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school are good and beginning to have an impact on the quality of teaching. Monitoring by departments could be more rigorous and challenging.</p>
<p>The strategic use of resources</p>	<p>Resources are used well for the benefit of pupils. The principles of best value are unusually well understood and applied. There are sufficient staff and resources in the school, although the long-term absence of the ICT co-ordinator has had an adverse effect on pupils' progress in ICT. The absence of the caretaker and financial administrator has also added to the already heavy demands on the deputy headteacher's time. The accommodation is far from ideal. Staff have made the best of the difficult conditions.</p>

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' progress, particularly for pupils with SEN • The way the school educates the whole person • The school expects pupils to work hard • Their children like school • Their children are being helped to become mature and responsible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour • Homework • Information for parents • Work with parents • Activities outside of lessons • Quality of teaching is inconsistent

The team does not agree with parents' views on behaviour, information for parents and activities outside lessons. The team judged behaviour to be good both in lessons and around the school. The team considered that the school offers a wide range of activities outside lessons and that information for parents is satisfactory. Although parents are involved in the life and work of the school, our judgement is that more could be done to encourage this. The inspection also confirmed the parents' views about homework. The team found that while there were inconsistencies in the quality of teaching, these were not major and, overall, teaching was good. Very few unsatisfactory lessons were observed.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards of attainment are below average overall and below those for schools with a similar percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals. Comparison with schools with similar proportions of pupils entitled to free school meals does not present an accurate picture of the deprivation in the area and the low educational aspirations (as measured by the relatively low percentage of adults with higher educational qualifications). The attainment of pupils on entry is below average as measured by their results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2¹ (though is close to average this year). The school includes a resource base for 25 pupils with general learning difficulties and has a higher than average percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs (SEN). Hence, the comparison with 'similar schools' is probably unfair.
2. **Results in National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds** have been below the national averages in English, mathematics and science, every year since tests were introduced. English results in Tanfield have always been better than mathematics and science. The improvement in test results is in line with the national trend and the 2000 results were an improvement on those of 1999.
3. The percentage of pupils getting levels five or above in English in 2000 was just below the national average and in line with that of similar schools. The proportion gaining the higher levels (six and above) significantly increased compared with 1999 and was close to that for similar schools. This is a good achievement, given the intake. Boys' results in English have improved but are below the national average, whereas girls are very close to average.
4. The percentage of pupils getting level five or above in mathematics improved in 2000, but was below the national average and below that of similar schools². There was an increase in the percentage getting level six and above, but this was still below the average for similar schools. Boys' results improved and have overtaken girls'.
5. The percentage of pupils getting levels five or above in science improved slightly in 2000, but was well below average and well below that of similar schools. The proportion of higher levels was also below that of similar schools. Boys' results have improved, but girls' have got worse this year.
6. Results in the 1999 **external examinations for sixteen year olds** were below the national average and below similar schools, in terms of the percentage of pupils getting five A*-C graded GCSEs (or their equivalent), and the average point score. The percentages getting either one or five A*-G grades were well below the averages for similar schools. Also, in relation to pupils' prior attainment (as measured by results at the end of Year 9), pupils' progress was below average. The rise in GCSE results was below the national trend and results in 2000 were worse than in 1999. The 2000 results show a decline in most measures of achievement. Few pupils gained the highest grades, A and A*, in any subject.
7. GCSE results for English in 2000 were significantly lower than in 1999, when they were above average in English and average in English literature. Mathematics and science results were well below average, in terms of the percentage of pupils getting GCSE grades A*-C in 1999, and deteriorated in 2000.
8. The school claims that the poor 2000 GCSE results can be accounted for by a particularly difficult group of Year 11 pupils last year. The year group included a number of pupils with behavioural problems. Ten pupils joined the school after Year 7, three of whom had attendance problems in their original school; one had been permanently excluded and five had history of exclusions. Three pupils were eventually educated off site (although they are still included in the GCSE roll).

¹ Key Stage 2 is for primary pupils aged 7 to 10 (Years 3 to 6); Key Stage 3 is for pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9; Key Stage 4 is for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

² At the time of the inspection, national and similar school comparisons were available for the end of Key Stage 3 tests in 2000, but not for the GCSE results.

The school claims that the cohort was particularly affected by the fire since it happened just before they started Year 10. In addition, the examination conditions were far from perfect; because of the building works examinations had to take place in the cold gymnasium close to a noisy main road. There is enough evidence to support at least some of the school's assertions: the pupils had lower Key Stage 2 results than other year groups; the high level of fixed-term exclusions last year confirms the behaviour problems; and staff and pupils comment on how the school's atmosphere has improved since 'those Year 11s' have left.

9. Even given all these mitigating factors, and putting the 2000 results to one side, the rate of improvement in external examinations for 16 year olds is still not high enough. The differences between subjects are significant. English results are better than those for mathematics and science and represent a good achievement. The reasons for the better results in English include the consistently good teaching (70 per cent is good or very good), the appropriate curriculum, the helpful, detailed and conscientious marking, the target setting for individual pupils, the useful analysis of exam results and use of revision classes. Mathematics and science are improving but at a slow rate. Initiatives that these departments have taken in order to raise standards, such as new GCSE syllabuses, have not had time to affect results.
10. Attainment in most subjects is below average throughout the school, apart from English which is average by the end of Year 9, DT by the end of Year 11, art, RE, PE, which are close to average at the end of both key stages. Standards in ICT are well below average, as are standards in French and German by the end of Year 11.
11. Based on the work and lessons seen during the inspection and given their prior attainment, pupils nearly always make satisfactory progress. By the end of Year 9 pupils achieve satisfactory standards for their prior attainment in mathematics, DT, history, geography, French, German and music. They achieve good standards in English, art, and PE. By the end of Year 11, their achievement is satisfactory in English, mathematics, science, history, geography and music, and good in art, DT and PE. Pupils make very good progress in all years in RE because of the good quality and imaginative teaching. The achievement in DT in Key Stage 4 is the result of the good teaching and emphasis on practical skills. Pupils make good progress in art using a wide range of media, including drawing and painting, graphics, design, printing, and ceramics. Of significance is the relatively high proportion of pupils with SEN who achieve well in art.
12. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress and achieve less than expected in science by the end of Year 9. Achievement is unsatisfactory by the end of Year 11 in French and German, because of weaknesses in the way these are taught. Pupils' progress in ICT is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, mainly because their experience of the subject was disrupted by the loss of equipment during the fire and because of the long-term absence of the ICT specialist teacher.
13. The school's approach to literacy is beginning to have an impact and has helped pupils to make satisfactory progress from a low baseline. Pupils' reading standards are generally high enough to enable them to cope with the demands of different subjects, although sometimes there is not enough support for weaker readers. The accuracy of pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar is often below average, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Pupils use a range of writing styles effectively in subjects such as English, science and history.
14. Although pupils enter the school with weak numeracy skills, by the end of Year 9 many reach at least satisfactory standards of numeracy. Higher attaining pupils are confident in their number work and rarely use calculators. However, other groups of pupils make slower progress in improving their number skills. Pupils with special educational needs still have difficulty in using money notation accurately. Pupils in the middle attaining range struggle with mental and written methods for multiplying without a calculator. Some pupils preparing for GCSE mathematics are still dependent on calculators, for example, when multiplying by hundreds and thousands in work on units. They still lack the appropriate mental strategies to assist their number work.

15. The process of setting targets is satisfactory and based on increasingly good evidence about individual pupils. The targets set for the 2001 Year 9 tests in English, mathematics and science were exceeded this year in English and mathematics. The targets for 2002 are much more challenging for mathematics and science but not for English. The GCSE target for 2001 is not very challenging, though is realistic. The 2002 target to have 39 per cent of pupils gaining five A*-C grades would represent a significant improvement but would still be way below the national average. The school needs to set its sights even higher.
16. Pupils on the register of special educational needs make good progress. There is a strong link between good progress and the presence of support staff. Pupils with statements in Years 7, 8 and 9 make good progress in writing for different purposes including letters, play dialogues and imaginative descriptions, and often present their work well using information technology. Older pupils with statements and those with hearing difficulties at Stage 3 of the Code of Practice make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. In the great majority of lessons, pupils with behaviour difficulties make good progress in achieving their targets. Pupils following the ASDAN course in Years 10 and 11 are developing a range of skills including literacy, numeracy and communication. Pupils with statements of SEN make good progress in developing their football skills in GCSE physical education lessons.
17. Pupils who are gifted or talented do not always make sufficient progress. The school has started to identify such pupils but the criteria are not clear and departments are not all doing enough to adapt their curricula or put on special provision. Some subjects are doing so, for example, in RE twelve pupils will take the GCSE short course examination one year early. Overall, expectations of the most able pupils are too low and teachers find it difficult to meet their needs in large mixed ability classes.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. The strengths of the school in promoting pupils' values and personal development, mentioned in the previous report, have been maintained.
19. Pupils have a satisfactory attitude to school and their relationships with each other and with school staff are good. They have a good understanding of the impact of their actions on others and empathise with those who may need help and assistance. Relationships promoted by the school are good and the positive views of parents, as expressed in the pre-inspection questionnaire, that their children enjoyed coming to school are confirmed by the inspection findings.
20. Behaviour in the school is good and pupils display mature and sensible behaviour both in the classroom and at break and lunchtimes. Pupils' attitude in lessons is often very good. They are interested and involved in school activities. There is a marked absence of oppressive behaviour, bullying is minimal and minor incidents when they do occur are swiftly dealt with by the school.
21. Pupils show a respect for their own belongings, those of other pupils and staff, and of school property. In lessons, pupils treat apparatus and property with care. There is an absence of vandalism and graffiti, which is all the more impressive given that large areas of the school are under reconstruction.
22. The way the school manages behaviour is effective. It is largely based around the use of the individual pupil organiser, in which pupils' behaviour, attitudes and attendance are recorded each day by staff. As a result, inappropriate behaviour is soon picked up and dealt with. The rate of permanent exclusions is very small. Last year there was an unusually high number of fixed-term exclusions, but this can be accounted for by the nature of last year's Year 11, which included a significant number of pupils with behavioural problems. There is good supervision by teaching and non-teaching staff at break and meal times. Despite the difficulties caused by the rebuilding programme and the large numbers of pupils using the dining hall, behaviour is well managed and is good.
23. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to display initiative and personal responsibility. The School Council is a lively forum where pupils from each year group are encouraged to give opinions and are involved in the decision-making process within the school. For example, the

recent change to the school uniform was first discussed by the Council and pupils' views were sought and ratified by the senior management team. Pupils assist the staff in many ways, such as helping in the library, reception duties within the school, helping with children in local primary schools, work in the community and participation in the Durham Youth Parliament. Year 10 and Year 11 pupils act as mentors to Year 7 pupils who wish it, and they help them settle in and encourage them to behave well.

24. The school's PSHE programme is very effective. PSHE lessons are treated as a high priority by the school and quite a lot of teaching time is devoted to this subject. The school puts a lot of emphasis on the need for pupils to develop social awareness and an appreciation of the different cultures and sub-groups in society. Pupils are helped successfully in PSHE lessons to realise the impact of their actions upon society. The good relationships which pupils have with the staff and one another enable them to contribute to discussions in a mature and sensible manner. For example, in a Year 7 lesson, pupils discussed the effects of bullying on others and the attitude of society towards ethnic issues.
25. Attendance at the school is, at just under 90 per cent, below the national average. This is mainly due to the high level of absences that are authorised by parents, usually when they take holidays in term time. The rate of unauthorised absence is close to the national average.
26. The school has a number of appropriate ways of dealing with poor attendance and is making efforts to address the problem. Good attendance is encouraged through rewards and prizes. The school uses the services of an education welfare officer for half the week, but has chosen not to buy in any more of her time. Although the school's procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are sound, there is a lack of urgency about this; for example, non-attenders could be followed up more promptly. The school has also not been successful in discouraging parents from taking children on holiday during term time. Efforts to make parents appreciate the impact on their children's learning must be continued.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

27. Teaching is good in Tanfield. The teaching was at least satisfactory in 94 per cent of the lessons seen; in 59 per cent it was good or better and 17 in per cent very good or excellent. The teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in six per cent of lessons. Teaching has improved since the last inspection, when it was less than satisfactory in 20 per cent of lessons. During this inspection there was also a much higher percentage of good and very good teaching. The percentage of good or very good teaching was slightly higher in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 9, 10 and 11. Year 9 had the highest proportion of unsatisfactory teaching and this was closely linked with the slightly worse behaviour and response from pupils.
28. This good teaching is having a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils work hard in lessons and often make considerable gains in knowledge, understanding and skills in subjects, as well as in their personal development. The impact on GCSE results is less obvious, particularly in mathematics, but improvements in the tests at the end of Year 9 are encouraging.
29. Teaching is good in English, mathematics, art, history, geography, PE and business studies. Teaching is consistently good and sometimes excellent in PSHE lessons, which is all the more impressive given that it is taught by such a large number of different teachers.
30. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory in music, ICT, and science in Key Stage 4. Science teaching has improved since the previous inspection but is still unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3, mainly owing to insufficient teaching of basic scientific skills and the inflexible use of a commercially produced scheme of work. DT is taught satisfactorily in Key Stage 3 and well in Key Stage 4. The teaching of French and German is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, but unsatisfactory in Key Stage 4, mainly because pupils are not given enough opportunities to participate or to practise using the language in class.
31. RE is taught particularly well and in some cases it is inspirational, with imaginative use of visitors, practical exercises and visual aids. As a result of this very good teaching, pupils' interest is

captured and sustained. They are learning about other faiths and cultures and gaining confidence and experience in analysing opinions.

32. Teaching in the ASDAN programme is very good and is mostly good in the other vocational courses. The ASDAN lessons are characterised by detailed planning with frequent changes of activity that sustain pace and involve pupils throughout. The teachers make excellent use of praise and self-reflection, which encourages pupils and helps them appreciate their developing skills. The very good use of group work gives pupils responsibility, enabling them to improve their social skills. In the leisure and tourism course, teachers make good use of local tourist facilities. In the recently introduced General National Vocational Qualification (GNVQ) Part 1 courses in manufacturing and engineering the pupils benefit from specialist teaching, particularly in engineering, where the pupils develop their practical skills using the good facilities in the local college. Pupils are less well challenged in health and social care, and business studies lessons. For example, a Year 11 health and social care lesson included some good resources and enabled pupils to find out about careers in the industry, but there were no visits that would help pupils to understand the work context.
33. The school has invested time and energy in trying to improve the quality of teaching through its Quality in Classroom initiative, which helpfully sets out principles of good practice. In addition, there has been systematic monitoring of aspects of the work in different departments. These strategies are beginning to pay off: lessons are nearly always planned carefully and objectives are made clear to pupils who know what they have to do in most cases. The pace of lessons is generally good and helps to keep pupils working hard, sustaining their motivation and concentration for 60 minutes.
34. Teachers are enthusiastic and knowledgeable about the subjects they teach and this comes across to the pupils. Most teachers use their good subject knowledge to plan lessons well so that they build on earlier work and question pupils effectively. Their questioning is open-ended, and encourages pupils to articulate their ideas and develop their understanding. Mathematics teachers are skilful at asking pupils to explain to the class how they worked something out. On a few occasions the questioning was less effective because the teacher did not make sure that all pupils were listening or participating, which allowed some pupils to avoid having to think or be involved.
35. Pupils work at a good pace in most lessons because teachers use a variety of activities and sometimes helpfully give time limits for the completion of work. The Year 10 pupils in an ASDAN literacy lesson worked extremely well when asked to write down a long list of speedily dictated words. Not only were they motivated by the task, they presented the writing well and were making good progress in their learning.
36. Teachers often help to extend pupils' skills and maintain interest through the good use of a variety of resources. The RE lessons, for example, often involve visitors, such as a mime and dance artist and faith group, who used sign language and music to exemplify the learning points. Some subjects make good use of ICT. For example, computers were used in a Year 10 English lesson to help pupils gather information about (appropriate in the circumstances) the play 'An Inspector Calls'. Pupils use computer-aided design packages in art lessons, as well as the Internet and CD-ROMs.
37. The way teachers manage pupils' behaviour is a real strength. Teachers are firm, yet friendly, and have good relationships with pupils who respond well. Pupils are respectful and courteous to each other, to their teachers and visitors. They listen well and concentrate in lessons. Their behaviour around the school and in classrooms is usually very good. A few pupils present challenging behaviour but teachers manage this unobtrusively and effectively. The general ethos in the school and good behaviour are all the more impressive in view of the disruption caused by the building work and generally unsatisfactory environment.
38. Pupils are being helped to develop a good understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses and relationships, particularly through the PSHE programme. In one PSHE lesson, for example, pupils had to identify their own and one another's ambitions and strengths and weaknesses. Pupils are encouraged to set individual targets in all subjects. This is good practice, although it is not always sufficiently subject-specific and is often concerned more with attitudes to learning,

such as 'hand in work on time', or 'concentrate more in lessons'. The practice in art is good: pupils are involved in their own assessments, helped by an excellent assessment booklet for GCSE. PE includes a good self-assessment component that ensures that pupils are clear about their attainment and what they need to do to improve.

39. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and enables them to make good progress. The work of support staff is very good and a significant factor in enabling pupils to participate fully in lessons. Support staff collaborate well with subject teachers so that they know the lesson objectives and how best to help pupils make progress. The paired activities in many lessons are particularly effective in building the self-esteem of pupils with SEN and encouraging their participation. Support staff are well informed about pupils' special educational needs and they use this knowledge to help pupils participate with confidence in discussions. In mathematics, support staff are deployed particularly effectively in a small class that includes several pupils with SEN. A support assistant helped a Year 9 pupil with a statement of SEN to make good progress in word recognition. In a science lesson, a support assistant helped pupils to complete experiments on testing food.
40. Pupils with SEN make less progress in lessons where there is no support or when there are no specific planned tasks for them. As a result, they sometimes flounder, do not complete tasks and get de-motivated. For example, some SEN pupils did not complete experiments in a science lesson because their needs were not considered in the lesson planning and organisation.
41. The main weakness in the teaching, even in otherwise satisfactory lessons, is that the work is not always well matched to the range of pupils' needs and prior attainment. Teachers often find it difficult to cater for the wide range of needs in the mixed ability classes and too often the highest attaining pupils are not stretched enough. Pupils with low prior attainment, who make good progress when support staff are present or in small sets, struggle and do not always finish work in some of the large mixed ability classes. Teachers' expectations of what the most able pupils can achieve are not always high enough.
42. Other weaknesses include marking and homework. Marking is carried out very well in some subjects— for example RE and English— with detailed comments to show pupils how to improve. Project work in business studies is marked well; the examination assessment criteria are used so that pupils can identify areas for improvement. Marking is not consistent, however, and the school has recognised this through its own monitoring of pupils' books. Too often, comments relate only to pupils' effort and sometimes praise is unwarranted.
43. Homework is not used as well as it could be. Teachers appropriately identify homework in their planning, but the range given is often limited. Too often it consists of completion of classwork and is not tailored to the skills and abilities of the pupils, so that it is too hard for some and too easy for others. Pupils consider that they could be given more homework. The use of the organisers to record homework is a good idea but the limited space available makes it difficult for pupils, especially those with large handwriting, to record it tidily. Some parents expressed their concern about homework at the parents' meeting and in their responses to the questionnaire. The inspection team support these parental views and judge homework to be an area that needs to be improved.
44. Literacy is taught well across the school and this is helping pupils to make good progress from a relatively low baseline. The school has worked hard with some success to encourage reluctant readers, especially boys, to develop the habit of reading for pleasure. In art and religious studies pupils read challenging material from a variety of sources, including the Internet. All departments display key subject words and in history, geography and French, teachers use flash cards to reinforce vocabulary work. Writing frames are also well used to support pupils' writing in history and geography, where pupils in Years 8 and 9 write for a variety of different purposes. In mathematics, art and religious studies teachers expect pupils to use a range of writing styles.
45. Numeracy is not yet taught in a systematic way across the curriculum, though it is taught well in some subjects. There is an increasing emphasis within mathematics on developing pupils' numeracy skills, particularly in Years 7,8 and 9, which is proving effective. Pupils are taught sufficient numerical skills in science to support their learning and as a result they measure accurately using variables such as length and temperature. When presenting their results they

draw graphs accurately, choosing their own scales. Art also enhances pupils' measuring skills in their work on cylindrical pots and in pattern making. Pupils use scale and distance satisfactorily in maps in geography. Data-handling skills are encouraged appropriately in geography and science so that pupils can tabulate data and display their results using charts and graphs. In modern foreign languages, pupils practise counting and use simple operations with whole numbers. The main weakness is the lack of a co-ordinated whole-school programme to support and enhance pupils' numeracy skills, across the curriculum. The school has identified this as part of its school development plan and begun to find out what is done in each department.

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

46. The curriculum is generally broad and balanced in both key stages and the school has responded successfully to the weaknesses identified at the time of the previous inspection. The provision for PSHE is very good, although two periods per week is generous, particularly when the time allocated to art, DT and science is below average in Key Stage 4. Overall, the curriculum provides an appropriate range of opportunities for all pupils including those with special educational needs.
47. Statutory requirements are met in all subjects apart from ICT, where aspects such as measurement, modelling and control are not covered adequately in Key Stage 3, either in specific ICT lessons or through other subjects. Also, pupils' progress in ICT is adversely affected by the lack of a lesson in Year 8. The school's efforts to provide an effective ICT curriculum have been seriously hampered by the loss of equipment in the fire and prolonged absence of the ICT co-ordinator.
48. The curriculum for pupils in Year 7, 8 and 9 builds effectively on the links with the primary schools from which it draws its pupils; these curricular links are a strength. Planning is effective in most subjects. Pupils are taught mainly in mixed ability groups and in many cases, particularly in English, mathematics and science, teachers find it difficult to cater for the wide range of needs, particularly if there is no support for pupils with SEN. The result is that, too often the most able pupils are not stretched enough. Support for pupils with special educational needs is well co-ordinated and overall is good in Years 7 to 9. The support provided for older pupils is very limited.
49. The curriculum in Key Stage 4 is appropriately broad and generally allows pupils to choose a programme that suits their needs and interests. The addition of GNVQ vocational subjects is a positive move for pupils who might prefer or be more suited to this type of course; for example, there is a GNVQ course in intermediate engineering, which is operated in liaison with the local further education college. However, a significant number of those taking the foundation level GNVQ have sufficient basic skills to attempt the intermediate level and so are achieving less well than they might.
50. The PSHE programme, which also covers sex and drugs education, provides pupils with a number of good opportunities to prepare for working life. There are good programmes for careers education and work experience. The Industry Day for Year 9 pupils, which involves local firms, is a positive arrangement. The management of the work-related education courses is good; the different course leaders show considerable enthusiasm and dedication. However, liaison between the different staff is weak, which limits the sharing of good practice and development of stronger links with industry in some of the vocational courses. The school's commitment to vocational education is clear, but the current curricular arrangements restrict the number of GNVQ part 1 courses, particularly at intermediate level, and limit the opportunities for pupils to gain nationally recognised qualifications.
51. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. In Key Stage 4 this includes the ASDAN bronze level course, a key skills course for pupils who have been disapplied from modern languages. Those pupils are clearly meeting the required standard in communication, numeracy and ICT as well as in their problem solving and group work, evident in one lesson where they were planning and costing a holiday. Progress in the course is very good both in terms of the improvement in basic skills and in personal development. There is also a well-organised reading programme for Year 8 pupils to help them develop their literacy skills.

52. The curriculum is enriched by a good range of extra-curricular activities that are popular with pupils, often linked with class work and help to increase pupils' interest in school. The activities include the successful, 'Schools' Engineering Challenge 2000', involving Year 10 pupils within the DT department. Support staff and subject teachers willingly help pupils after lessons or during lunch breaks with work that they find difficult to complete during school time or at home. A number of after-school clubs also provides additional support in subjects, such as the art master club and German role-play activities. Geography field trips are organised for pupils in both key stages. Pupils visit museums and other places of cultural and historical significance. The school helps pupils to be environmentally aware through an environment club.
53. The school has very strong community links. It has recently been given a Schools Curriculum Award for its involvement with the community as well as becoming a "Lighthouse" school, one of only nine in Great Britain, in recognition of existing good practice in citizenship. The school has also been recognised for its strong international links by being awarded an International Schools Award last year. Links have been developed, and pupil exchanges taken place, with France, Sweden, Germany, Russia and Slovakia. The links help promote pupils' learning in most subjects. For example, work in textiles is going on as part of a joint venture with French and Swedish students. Pupils have exchanged food recipes over the Internet in food technology lessons. Science has included an international project about the quality of water. Pupils write to foreign pen friends in English lessons and have exchanged videos in media studies lessons. A party of pupils and teachers recently visited Colorado, USA, to strengthen cross-cultural ties.
54. The school enjoys very close links with its partner primary schools, special schools, other secondary schools, and colleges of further education. Links with the four main contributory primary schools are effective not only in ensuring that pupils' pastoral well-being is looked after, but also in helping to ensure better continuity in the teaching of subjects. For example, there is some joint work with the primary schools in physical education, religious education, mathematics and English. In addition, Tanfield School is involved in a Pathways project with the primary schools, based around the use of the school organisers and the setting of targets. This good co-operation helps to ensure that pupils settle quickly into Tanfield School and can build from where they left off at the end of Year 6. The SEN department's links with outside agencies are very good as are its links with local special schools. These links provide a valuable forum for sharing expertise and good practice.
55. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good, overall, which represents a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school does not, however, provide for a daily act of collective worship.
56. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. It is strengthened by very good teaching in religious education. The religious education lessons provide a highly spiritual content encompassing the spiritual elements of Christianity and all the major world religions. Although pupils attend assemblies only once a week, these too provide good spiritual experiences. One of them, involving mime and dance, was inspirational. Spiritual development is enhanced by work within the community. A programme of community-based experiences is being established throughout Key Stage 3, culminating in the development of a community radio station. This initiative is being developed with a primary school, the local Training and Enterprise Council and community organisations. The RE department has forged close links with faith groups who come into school and use their expertise for the benefit of pupils.
57. The extensive PSHE programme makes very good provision for pupils' moral and social education. The subject of citizenship is well covered. There is a firm moral code underpinning the rules for pupils' behaviour and pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong. This was seen in practice in their good relationships and behaviour around the school despite the difficulties encountered with the extensive building works and the very bad weather at the start of the inspection. Moral and social values are studied in religious education, geography and history. In these subjects pupils consider issues such as wealth and poverty, conflict, social conditions, race, and intolerance. In English lessons, texts such as 'Macbeth', 'Of Mice and Men', and 'New Sky in the Morning' raise critical moral, spiritual and social issues.
58. Social development is good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility in all areas of the

school. They demonstrate social concern through their involvement in charitable causes. They share agreeably in class and on field trips. They are offered a wide range of experiences through the Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme.

59. Provision for cultural development is good. Pupils are exposed to multi-cultural influences in art, religious education, textiles and geography. The school is involved in the Comenius project and has links with schools in Sweden, Germany and Spain. There are plans for video conferencing by Christmas. Visits to the USA, Trinidad, France, Germany and Sweden and to museums, churches and synagogues contribute effectively to pupils' cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

60. In most respects, the school is very careful about pupils' welfare and safety. Regular fire drills take place, all electrical equipment is inspected, and regular health and safety audits occur. The school has an appropriate number of first aiders, all of whom are qualified and are known to pupils and staff. Procedures for administering medicines and first aid are well documented and teachers are fully aware of the school's policy and correct practice. The local health authority nurse visits the school regularly and holds "drop in" sessions where pupils are able to consult her on a confidential basis on all aspects of their personal care. Her work is much appreciated by the pupils and the school. The staff handbook gives good information and instructions to staff on protection and care of pupils, and pupils know to whom they can relate in cases of need.
61. The way that the school undertakes its responsibility for pupils' health and safety is unsatisfactory in one important area. Accidents are not monitored or recorded efficiently or correctly. Procedures do not seem to have improved after an accident last term in a science lesson. During the inspection pupils were not working safely in one science lesson: they were not wearing safety goggles when carrying out experiments involving naked flames and their potentially dangerous misbehaviour went unchecked by the teacher.
62. The school has very good child protection procedures. The school uses the comprehensive Child Protection Policy of Durham County Council and excellent procedures are in place to ensure that child protection and welfare of pupils are carried out. The child protection officer is known to all members of staff and pupils and there are excellent links with the relevant child protection agency and statutory bodies. The school's strategy for dealing with matters of concern is sensitive, well ordered and appropriate. Liaison between the governing body and school staff over health and welfare issues is good.
63. The organisation of the pastoral system, whereby form tutors and learning co-ordinators remain with the same group of pupils throughout their school life, works extremely well. The good relationships formed between pupils and tutors in Year 7 are maintained and continued until the time that pupils leave school. This enables pupils to develop confidence and firm relationships with staff, which enhances the progress that they make. Pupils' personal development is well monitored and the system of pupil care, which is tracked by regular meeting with form tutors, learning co-ordinators and senior management team, is effective. Staff know individual pupils well and the support across both key stages is of a high standard.
64. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment. Progress since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Good use is made of information about pupils' attainment when they arrive in order to provide a sound basis for future assessments. Subject departments build on this by adding their own results of tests, progress checks and examinations. The whole-school policy of 'quality assessment tasks' is helping to improve the practice in departments. Subject departments have introduced planned tasks that contribute to good quality portfolios of exemplar material, which helps to ensure consistency in standards. There is particularly good practice in English and history. Pupils are successfully involved in assessing their own progress in several subjects, such as physical education and geography. However, teachers' day-to-day marking is not carried out consistently within and across subjects.
65. Results of examinations and assessment tasks are analysed and used appropriately to set and review targets for pupils. Teachers do not make enough use of their assessment findings to decide how to plan work for pupils of different abilities. This is particularly the case with mixed

ability groups, where too often the gifted and talented pupils are not given work that is challenging enough.

66. Procedures for monitoring pupils' progress in different subjects are satisfactory. The existing progress reviews assist the co-ordinators of learning in monitoring the progress of pupils in their year groups. Many subjects have individual education plans for all pupils, who are increasingly involved in monitoring their own progress towards their agreed targets. Not all of the target setting is rigorous enough. Pupils' progress in RE is very well recorded through a comprehensive assessment package. Mentoring and the targeting of underachieving pupils in Year 11 and help through extra-curricular classes contribute to the support of pupils preparing for the GCSE examinations.
67. The procedures for identifying Year 7 pupils with special educational needs are satisfactory: good use is made of information from primary schools. Early contacts are established with the schools and good links are built over time, including support staff attending reviews. The school has not established its own systems for using data to inform subsequent identification and placement of pupils on the SEN register. Class teachers are also not fully involved in monitoring the placement of pupils on the SEN register. The SEN support teachers and assistants try to meet the needs of all pupils, not just those with statements or on the register. To a certain extent, they obviate the need to place pupils on the register by providing support in lessons. This partly explains why the numbers at stage 1 and 2 of the SEN register are comparatively low. Although this approach has merit, it ultimately results in the school receiving lower funds for SEN than it probably merits.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

68. Parents are generally satisfied with the school. The majority of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire had positive views of the school and feel that the school has good expectations of pupils, relates to them well and helps them to make progress.
69. A minority of parents expressed the view that the school does not keep them fully informed about the progress their children are making. The evidence gathered during the inspection does not support this view. The school regularly reports to parents regarding their children's progress by annual written reports, "snapshot" mini reports, letters of commendation for good work, and letters of concern about lack of progress, when appropriate. The annual reports are appropriate and parents can contact the school to discuss their children's progress either at formal parents' evenings, or at any other time by prior arrangement. In addition, the school regularly communicates with parents to give them notice of special events in the school and the school has produced a lively newspaper, "Tanfield Matters", which is distributed to the whole community.
70. Parents of pupils with special educational needs receive good support. Staff keep regular contact with them and the school encourages parents to attend annual reviews of their children's progress and to contribute to the decisions regarding the targets in their individual education plans.
71. The school has produced a very attractive brochure that gives full information to parents and carers about the curricular and extra-curricular opportunities that are available for pupils. It does not particularly stress or encourage parents to come into school to help. A small number of parents do help in school; for example, they supervise on school trips and help with school theatre productions. Parents work alongside pupils in GCSE art classes, where they make a very good contribution to pupils' learning by the standard of their work and the breadth of their experience. Also, a parent comes in for one day a week to support all aspects of art. A small number of parents are members of the Parents Association and raise valuable funds for the school.
72. The introduction by the school of the home-school agreement and the use by pupils of the organiser/diary ensure that parents are fully involved in the education of their children. Those parents with comments or concerns are seen by the school and their concerns are noted. Several form tutors write personal letters to the parents of pupils who perform particularly well in examinations or whose behaviour is poor. Parents appreciate this additional information and are therefore able to work with the school to improve their children's education.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

73. The leadership of Tanfield School is very effective in promoting pupils' personal and social development and in widening their horizons through links with the community. The headteacher has been successful in advancing the reputation of the school by gaining nationally recognised awards such as the Schools Curriculum Award, International Schools Award, Sports Mark Award, Princes Trust XL Award, Healthy Schools Award and Lighthouse School.
74. The leadership has been less effective in challenging low expectations and raising standards in the school, particularly for 16 year olds. However, the senior management team and governing body are now clearly intent on improving teaching and learning and have introduced a number of useful ways to achieve this. Good systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of departments. The Quality in Classroom initiative has helped to create a shared understanding about what constitutes good teaching. The heads of year have changed their title and emphasis to that of learning co-ordinators, which reflects a determination to give pupils' academic as well as personal development a high priority. These initiatives are beginning to bear fruit and have helped to improve the quality of teaching.
75. The school is managed well by the headteacher, his deputy and members of the senior management team. They handled the traumatic time and events that followed the fire of May 1998 extremely well and maintained morale and sustained pupils' good behaviour. Along with his other duties, the deputy headteacher has assumed responsibility for overseeing the building work over the past two years. He has done this skilfully. He has helped to ensure continuity, particularly in view of the changes of contractor, and has made sure that curricular needs are given due consideration. The headteacher and deputy have had to devote a lot of time and energy to the building work and related problems, such as flooded classrooms and impassable walkways. This has inevitably diverted their attention from the school's other priorities and slowed down progress in the school.
76. School development planning is generally good and clearly linked with the budget. The school's priorities are appropriate and relevant and include: 'raising pupils' learning and achievement', professional development, links with the community, and improving the learning environment. They give due emphasis to improving the quality of teaching and the curriculum. The focus on raising standards in external tests and examinations is not, though, sufficiently explicit and is in danger of getting lost amid the many other activities. Subject departments plan well and have their own development plans. Most departments are well led and have begun to monitor teaching and learning. This is a positive development, although the monitoring is not always rigorous enough.
77. The senior management team is unusual in that it involves a significant proportion of school staff who are given subject and/or whole-school responsibilities. The team works well together and meetings are purposeful and focused. A disadvantage is that responsibilities are fragmented and there is too much onus on the headteacher to carry line management responsibility, particularly given all the other demands on his time. The curriculum development group is a useful initiative as it helps to draw the various curricular strands and activities together. The school has appropriately identified the need to review its senior management structure.
78. The governing body is very supportive of the school and plays an active role through its various sub-committees and focus groups. Individual governors have also made a valuable contribution to the school's curriculum by using their expertise by, for example, promoting health education. Governors are committed to the future success of Tanfield and are beginning to be more proactive by, for example, challenging the school to raise its targets. Although there is no curriculum committee, the governing body is kept well informed of curriculum developments through regular presentations by staff and even sometimes by pupils.
79. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory responsibilities. However, it fails to meet statutory requirements in respect of ensuring a daily act of collective worship, some aspects of health and safety, and providing an adequate curriculum for ICT.
80. The management of special educational needs and, in particular, the integration of the resource

base are very effective. There is a suitable whole-school approach to special educational needs with a detailed policy in place and designated members of the governing body appropriately involved. All staff are kept well informed of particular special educational needs. The school's approach to special educational needs takes full account of the Code of Practice, though the governors' annual report to parents does not contain sufficient information on the implementation of the school's policy. The SEN co-ordinator (SENCO) is also a member of the senior management team, which helps to ensure that SEN issues are given a high priority. There are no formal structures to help ensure good communication between subject departments and the SENCO, although support staff do this informally.

81. Financial management is good. The governing body has a finance sub-committee, which is closely involved in how the finances of the school are used and managed. Governors receive comprehensive reports of where the resources are being allocated and are quite prepared to challenge senior management's proposals. The last auditor's report found all features of accounting to be in good order and the suggestions for improvement that were made have been implemented.
82. The senior management team plans well ahead, with proposals for spending closely tied to the demands of the school development plan. In spite of having to contend with the results of the fire, and a major rebuilding programme, the school has been able to set aside money to maintain the buildings, buy new furniture, and support curricular development. Funds received for projects to improve the basic skills of pupils who find it difficult to attend regularly and for those who are underachieving are very well used.
83. The school has an unusually good understanding of the marketing principles of best value. Governors and senior staff are astute in handling contracts and agreeing arrangements for maintenance, caretaking and cleaning staff.
84. The school has enough teachers and support staff to meet its needs for most subjects. The deployment of staff is well organised by the deputy headteacher, who has, for example, produced a useful three-year forecast of staffing needs. Teachers are well qualified and there is a good range of experience in most subjects, although a newly qualified teacher is in charge of the music department. The induction of the newly qualified teacher is good but lacks subject-specific support.
85. There have been staffing problems in a few areas, which have had an adverse effect on pupils' learning. For example, the number of instrumental teachers visiting the school is insufficient and restricts pupils' opportunities. Pupils' progress in ICT has suffered because the co-ordinator has been absent for more than a year. There is also no ICT technician, though the school has plans to appoint someone from next term. The caretaker and financial manager have both been absent for several months and aspects of their work are being undertaken by the deputy headteacher and another member of the administrative staff. This places additional burdens on the deputy in particular, who is also responsible for the supervision of the extensive rebuilding programme.
86. The school environment is far from ideal because of the building work. However, the teaching accommodation is satisfactory, overall, although much of it is temporary until the rebuilding programme is complete. The English, mathematics and science departments have been located in demountable units since September 1998 and, although these present some problems of heating and ventilation and some leakage in bad weather, they are well-cared for by the subject departments and present an acceptable working environment for pupils. The quality of display is good; it interests pupils and enhances the otherwise sterile classrooms. In spite of being some distance from the main building, teachers and pupils make good efforts to ensure that lessons begin as punctually as possible. Teaching spaces are generally adequate, though some are cramped when full classes are taught in them. In modern languages, teachers have their own rooms and benefit from having a department base for the storage and preparation of materials and for meetings. Rooms for history are spacious but are cold and draughty, with poorly fitting windows that need replacing. DT and art are well equipped with specialist rooms and there has been some recent redecoration. Accommodation for music is unsatisfactory because there is insufficient rehearsal space and inadequate ventilation in the main music room.
87. The aftermath of the fire in 1998 continues to disrupt the work of the school. The main library has

been out of use because of the building work, and much of the stock has been spread around subject departments because the temporary accommodation is too small. Because of the building work, there is no social area for pupils and the school now has only one dining room and kitchen. GCSE examinations in June 2000 had to be taken in the gymnasium, which was a very poor environment for the purpose and is situated alongside a busy main road. Immediately after the fire, work in several subjects suffered because of the lack of specialist rooms and resources. For example, there were no facilities in ICT for several months and science lessons were taught in corridors. The rebuilding programme is now some 12 months behind schedule and there have been difficulties in linking consecutive phases of the programme because the local authority has chosen to use a different contractor for each of the three main phases. The problems with the accommodation have undoubtedly had an adverse impact on the progress that the school has made in raising standards.

88. Spending on learning resources is above average and most subjects are adequately equipped, apart from music and modern foreign languages. For music, there are too few percussion instruments, although the head of department has bid successfully for additional funds. There are too few textbooks and equipment such as listening centres in modern languages to allow pupils to work independently and at their own pace. Resources for geography, art and history are good, overall, with materials to suit all ages and abilities. There is a good range of illustrations in art as well as access to images stored on computer and there is an excellent video library in the history department.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

89. In order to further the improvements already made, the school should now:

- ***Improve the results of 16 year olds in external exams by**
 - making this a more explicit goal in the school's plans
 - ensuring that monitoring of lessons is rigorous and providing training for teachers if necessary
 - ensuring that all departments set challenging targets
 - reviewing the way pupils are grouped throughout the school
 - continuing to look for the most suitable syllabuses used for GCSE and other courses and for ways to raise the grades of borderline C/D grade candidates

(See paragraphs 6, 9, and 48)

- ***Improve pupils' progress and achievement in science, particularly in Years 7 to 9, by**
 - revising the curriculum so that scientific knowledge, skills and understanding are taught to the appropriate depth and in a logical order
 - ensuring that the needs of all pupils are met, by reviewing, if necessary, the way pupils are grouped
 - raising teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve

(See paragraphs 12, 110-117)

- ***Ensure that the curriculum for ICT meets statutory requirements in Years 7 to 9 by**
 - making sure that measurement, modelling and control are taught either in the ICT lessons or in other subjects
 - monitoring pupils' progress more effectively
 - increasing the use of ICT in other subjects

(See paragraphs 47, 79, 145)

- **Raise teachers', pupils' and parents' expectations of what pupils can achieve by**
 - refusing to accept excuses for underperformance from pupils or staff
 - setting more challenging targets

- providing more demanding work in lessons, particularly for the gifted and talented pupils (see below)

(See paragraphs 15, 41, 48, 74)

- *** Improve provision for gifted and talented pupils by**

- producing clear criteria for what is meant by ‘gifted and talented’
- identifying such pupils in each subject department
- preparing more programmes (such as in RE) to enable these pupils to excel
- ensuring that work is sufficiently challenging for them in all lessons

(See paragraphs 17, 41, 48, 171)

- **Improve procedures for ensuring health and safety and the way the school monitors and record accidents in school by**

- improving the way accidents are recorded
- ensuring that all staff follow safety procedures

(See paragraph 61, 79)

Other weaknesses that should be considered by the school

- Pupils’ progress and achievement in French and German in Years 10 and 11 (see paragraphs 152-155)
- * Attendance (see paragraphs 25, 26)
- Homework (see paragraphs 42, 43)
- Marking (see paragraph 42)
- * Numeracy across the curriculum (see paragraph 45)
- * Provision for a daily act of collective worship (see paragraph 55)

Those issues marked with * have been identified by the school in its development plan.

OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES

The school’s resource base for pupils with special educational needs

90. Twenty-five pupils with statements of SEN currently attend the resource base. These pupils have mainly general learning difficulties. The school has been very successful in developing its links with parents so that they have full confidence in sending their children to the resource base. Prior to entry, parents and pupils visit the school and the special educational needs co-ordinator visits each pupil’s school.
91. The school’s resource base has a distinctive character in that pupils attending are fully integrated into the curriculum. The base does not exist as a place in the school and instead pupils attend the full range of lessons in all subjects with other pupils of all abilities. The school has successfully achieved its objective of integrating pupils into the whole curriculum. Pupils’ self-esteem and motivation have been considerably enhanced through not being taught separately. Resource base pupils benefit directly from the presence of higher attainers through, for example, paired activities. However, resource base pupils do not always make much progress in large mixed ability classes when there is no support staff present.
92. Pupils work hard and make good progress. They are well motivated by the integrated environment in which they are taught. In Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils apply themselves well to challenging tasks in mathematics, including exercises in rounding two-digit and three-digit numbers. Pupils confidently participated in discussions to suggest ideas for writing poems on a given theme in an

English lesson. In Years 10 and 11, they participated fully in paired activities in PSHE lessons to identify and discuss their own ambitions, strengths and weaknesses. In GCSE English they again worked with partners to match the different characters in a play with a variety of personality characteristics. Pupils following the ASDAN course worked through a series of exercises on the 24 hour clock and displayed good initiative by checking their own work and correcting errors.

93. The resource base has quickly established itself as an integral part of the life of the school. The involvement of all staff in its development, including training, has been a major factor in its success. Support staff are an important feature of the resource base provision and they play a full role in the learning process, which has a positive impact on pupils' progress. The additional funding which the resource base provides enables the school to recruit the current level of support staff and their presence enhances opportunities for all pupils on the register of special educational needs. The very good links with local special schools enable good practice to be shared and teaching skills to be further improved.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	144
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	57

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2.8	14.6	41.7	34.7	5.6	0.7	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	603	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	87	

Special educational needs

	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	37	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	102	

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	20

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	10.5
National comparative data	7.9

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.2
National comparative data	1.1

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 3

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	74	62	136

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	31	35	33
	Girls	44	37	27
	Total	75	72	60
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	55 (63)	53 (47)	44 (51)
	National	63 (64)	62 (59)	55 (56)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (32)	27 (18)	7 (19)
	National	28 (34)	38 (35)	23 (27)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	36	32	35
	Girls	48	41	38
	Total	84	73	73
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	62 (52)	54 (51)	54 (56)
	National	64 (62)	64 (63)	60 (61)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (21)	30 (25)	22 (22)
	National	31 (30)	37 (36)	28 (31)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4

Number of 15 year olds on roll in January of the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	66	87	153

GCSE results		5 or more grades A*-C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	19	51	58
	Girls	36	80	83
	Total	55	131	141
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	36 (32)	86 (90)	92 (98)
	National	46.6 (46.3)	90.9 (87.5)	95.8 (93.4)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	33.1 (31.8)
	National	38.0 (36.8)

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

Vocational qualifications		Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	48	52.1
	National		

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	603
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	126	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: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	36.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	16.4

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	222

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	77.1
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.5
Key Stage 4	19.5

Financial information

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	1754505
Total expenditure	1795808
Expenditure per pupil	2806
Balance brought forward from previous year	119455
Balance carried forward to next year	78152

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	595
Number of questionnaires returned	221

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	35	55	7	3	1
My child is making good progress in school.	43	50	4	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	27	52	10	5	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	54	15	5	1
The teaching is good.	30	56	7	2	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	45	16	4	3
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	45	43	7	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	42	2	1	0
The school works closely with parents.	29	47	15	2	7
The school is well led and managed.	28	52	7	3	10
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	39	49	7	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	28	43	14	4	11

Other issues raised by parents

Some parents expressed concerns about pupils' behaviour, both in the parents' meeting and in their response to the questionnaire. The team does not share these concerns. The team judged behaviour to be good both in lessons and around the school. A number of parents consider that there are too few extra-curricular activities. The team considers that the school offers a wide range of activities outside of lessons, including team games, revision clubs, art classes, visits and links with the community. The team also found that information for parents is satisfactory, contrary to the views of some parents in the meeting and responses noted above in the questionnaires. Parents would like to be more involved in the life and work of the school. The team's judgement is that whilst this is happening, more could be done.

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

ENGLISH

94. Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds have been below the national average in the past few years. The percentage of pupils who gained level five or above went up in 2000 to just below the national average, and in line with levels achieved by pupils in similar schools. The overall trend has been upward in the last five years and at a rate of improvement similar to the national trend. The percentage of pupils achieving the highest levels (six and above) has increased and now equals the national average. Standards are just above those achieved in mathematics and well above those in science. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, boys performed less well against boys' national levels than did girls against girls' national levels.
95. The 1999 GCSE results were above the national average for the percentage of pupils getting grades A*-C in English language and in line with the average for English literature. Results in 2000 were significantly lower and reflect the weaker group of pupils that year (as explained in paragraph 8). Levels of attainment are, however, still well above those in mathematics and science and have been consistently so in recent years. The percentage of pupils entered for media studies who obtained GCSE grades A*- C was above the national average in 1999.
96. Standards of work seen during the inspection were close to average by the end of Year 9 but below average by the end of Year 11. Taking into account prior attainment, pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress in Key Stage 4.
97. Although pupils' speech shows a limited range of fluency and expression, all but the lowest attaining Year 9 pupils are generally fluent when reading aloud. Good dramatic reading of Harold Brighouse's 'Hobson's Choice' by higher attaining Year 8 pupils was observed. Effective collaborative talk takes place when pupils work in pairs and small groups. Middle attaining pupils show a good grasp of plot and character when reading complex literature from previous centuries, such as Shakespeare's 'Macbeth', as shown in Year 9 pupils' letters from Macbeth to Lady Macbeth. Pupils with special educational needs are able to tackle a range of writing tasks, sometimes making good use of ICT to present their work, and they achieve some lively personal writing. Higher attaining pupils write imaginative and well-constructed long stories. Too often, though, pupils' spelling, punctuation and grammar are below average.
98. In Key Stage 4, many pupils, especially girls, lack confidence in speaking and are uneasy with more formal talk. Accuracy in writing continues to be variable and written work is not always well structured. Lower attaining pupils do not always finish writing tasks. Pupils have good knowledge of poetic terms and generally respond sensitively when reading poems. Writing about the media is well organised and thoughtful. Lower attaining pupils respond well to complex texts such as Shakespeare's 'Twelfth Night'. By the end of Key Stage 4, the writing of most pupils is more confident and includes work in different genres and essays which discuss general issues. Some of the essays written by higher attaining pupils, for example - when they compare short stories - are impressive.
99. Teaching and learning throughout the department are generally good. In the lessons observed nearly 70 per cent of the teaching was at least good and about 15 per cent was very good. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. The best teaching is of a high quality. Classroom management is very good and lessons move at a brisk pace. Teachers are confident in their subject. Lesson materials are well chosen and include some varied resources for lower and higher attaining pupils. Lessons are very well planned with clear objectives and effective progression through stages of learning. Good use is made of ICT, as when Year 10 pupils were using computer software to extend their knowledge about J B Priestley's 'An Inspector Calls'. Marking is conscientious and detailed. Teachers make clear in their comments how pupils can improve their written work. Where teaching is less good, the lesson plans lack clear objectives: teachers focus too much on the tasks and not enough on the advances in learning which pupils are to make. Not enough attention is paid to the needs of the highest and lowest attaining pupils in a class. Praise is sometimes used indiscriminately when a franker judgement would help to raise standards.

100. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in Years 7 to 9, where they are well supported in class, and satisfactory progress in Years 10 and 11. Teachers make only limited use of individual education plans in lessons.
101. Pupils are usually attentive and well behaved in lessons. They work together well and occasionally higher attaining pupils organise their own ways of learning when working in small groups. Some pupils are reluctant to participate in class discussions and even in Year 11 some pupils lack confidence when talking to adults.
102. A dynamic head of department, who has a clear educational vision and good organisational skills, leads the department. English staff are well qualified and experienced. They have worked hard to overcome recent accommodation difficulties. Schemes of work and policy documents are thorough. Good monitoring of teaching and marking is beginning to improve pupils' learning and there are plans to further share good teaching practice. English has maintained its good position relative to other core subjects since the last inspection. The achievement of boys, which was an issue in the last inspection, has improved; the percentage of boys who gained A*- C grades in GCSE English in 1999 was more than twice that in 1994.

(See also paragraphs 13 and 44 for literacy across the curriculum)

MATHEMATICS

103. Standards achieved in the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds have been consistently below the national average in recent years and below the average for similar schools. Results in 2000 show a small improvement in the percentage of pupils reaching level 5 and above, and continue the upward trend from 1998. In 1999, the test results in mathematics were above those of science but lower than those in English. In 2000, test results were close to those of English. Over several years there have been differences in the attainment of boys and girls, with girls out-performing boys. In 2000, however, this difference was reversed, with boys doing better than girls.
104. Attainment in GCSE examinations in both 1999 and 2000 was well below the national average in the achievement of grades A*- C. The 2000 results, were worse than those in 1999. This is accounted for partially by the lower attainment on entry of the pupils who sat the 2000 examination. GCSE mathematics results are also lower than expected based on what pupils achieved at the end of Key Stage 3. The gap between boys' and girls' results has closed in 2000, but few boys or girls get the highest GCSE grades (A or A*) in mathematics.
105. From the work seen during the inspection, overall standards of attainment are below the nationally expected level by the end of Year 9. Achievement observed in lessons varied according to sets but was rarely above average. Pupils with special educational needs attain appropriately when they are well supported, as seen in a Year 9 lesson on rotational symmetry. They have strong oral skills and are confident in explaining their understanding of their work. They still struggle, nevertheless, with simple numerical tasks such as using the correct notation for money. Some above-average pupils are able to tackle investigative tasks systematically, spot patterns and formulate simple generalisations. They often find it difficult, however, to explain their findings. Pupils' numerical skills are satisfactory and they are competent in identifying types of numbers and approximating results. Pupils in middle groups still lack confidence when using mental and written methods, without calculators, for operations such as multiplication.
106. By the end of Year 11, standards of work seen in mathematics remain below average. In lessons, standards again vary according to the sets in which pupils work. The highest attaining pupils in Year 11 apply themselves well to tasks but lack confidence. They missed opportunities to develop their coursework skills, particularly in explaining their findings by relating them to the practical problem. Other pupils in Year 10, however, are already working successfully on difficult topics, such as rational and irrational numbers. Pupils with special educational needs remain very dependent on calculators for simple numerical tasks such as multiplying and dividing by hundreds and thousands. Some pupils of average and above-average attainment are underachieving. These pupils suffer from poor recall of earlier work in mathematics, such as upper and lower bounds in measurements. The present organisation of groups is unsatisfactory as it prevents pupils in the present Year 11 from taking the highest tier of GCSE mathematics

107. The mathematics department has achieved satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. In spite of the slow rate of progress in raising GCSE results, the department has improved boys' results, and maintained the rise in the proportion of pupils gaining level 5 and above in the National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 9. A thinking skills programme is being effectively implemented in Years 7, 8 and 9 and recent developments through the National Numeracy Strategy are improving these pupils' numerical skills. Teaching has improved significantly and there is a better match of work to pupils' previous learning and attainment in many lessons.
108. Teaching is good and many pupils learn mathematics well in lessons. In the lessons there was a small proportion of very good teaching and only one unsatisfactory lesson was seen during the inspection. This good practice has not yet affected the examination results. In the best lessons, teachers manage pupils very well so that they are confident in their teachers' guidance. The good relationships between teachers and pupils encourage positive attitudes to work in class. Good questioning assists pupils in learning mathematical processes. Pupils benefit from their teachers' thorough planning of lessons, including the enhancement of literacy and numeracy. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is well supported by the close co-ordination between class and support teachers, as happened in a Year 8 lesson on an investigative task. However, in some groups of mixed attainment, lessons did not challenge gifted and talented pupils or meet the needs of those having other special needs. Assessment in lessons has improved but is not yet sufficiently comprehensive and rigorous in focusing on what each pupil actually understands in relation to the planned outcomes. In a few lessons, the pace sometimes slows so that pupils lose concentration. Marking in the department is still inconsistent. The best practice provides helpful comments to assist progress.
109. The present good leadership of the department has improved teamwork and maintained teachers' and pupils' motivation in the face of considerable accommodation difficulties. There has been a significant improvement in the monitoring of teaching. The good analysis of examination and test results is gradually being directed towards underachievement, particularly among average and above-average groups in GCSE mathematics. However, the slow rate of improvement in GCSE results remains to be addressed.

(See also paragraphs 14 and 45 for numeracy across the curriculum)

SCIENCE

110. Standards of attainment in the National Curriculum tests for 14 year olds were well below the national averages in 1999 and 2000 in terms of the proportions of pupils reaching at least level five. The results were also well below those of similar schools. Although the percentage of pupils reaching levels six and above was significantly higher in 2000 than in 1999, it was still below that of similar schools. Standards have fallen at a rate greater than the national trend up to and including 1999. Standards achieved in science are below those achieved in mathematics and English.
111. Attainment in lessons and in work seen during the inspection was similarly well below the average for Key Stage 3. Some pupils, though, achieve standards that are above national expectations. Throughout the key stage pupils' skills in experimental science, such as planning and carrying out experiments, are unsatisfactory. Their knowledge of scientific facts and concepts is often fragmentary. Many pupils have a weak grasp of technical vocabulary and cannot write coherently about their work. For example, pupils in a Year 9 lesson on sight and sound were unable to correctly link pitch and frequency, and pupils in a Year 7 lesson showed a weak grasp of experimental procedures in carrying out an experiment with parachutes. However, some pupils working on food tests in a Year 9 lesson had a confident grasp of some of the important constituents of food such as protein and carbohydrate and could discuss intelligently the requirements for a balanced diet. High attaining pupils in Year 8 can calculate speed and show some understanding of balanced and unbalanced forces.
112. GCSE results in 1999 and 2000 were below the national averages and there has been little improvement since the last inspection. Results in science, particularly for boys, are below the average for the same pupils in other subjects. Standards seen in lessons and in pupils' work

during the inspection showed some signs of improvement. Grades achieved by Year 11 pupils in the newly introduced GCSE module tests are, on average, higher than the grades obtained in the 2000 GCSE examination. Some able pupils in Year 10 had a good understanding of the structure of the heart related to its function. However, others showed a poor awareness of health and safety issues in their handling of apparatus. Too many reach Year 11 with little confidence in using the language of science and have substantial difficulty in writing coherently about their work. Both these factors contribute significantly to poor examination performance.

113. Although learning in lessons is satisfactory, overall, and sometimes good, progress over time is unsatisfactory in both key stages. The lack of progress is most marked in Key Stage 3. For example, many pupils who took the Key Stage 3 test in 1999 did not increase their level beyond that obtained at the end of Year 6 in their primary school. A few achieved lower levels. Many pupils do not retain facts and concepts over time and have little confidence in their own ability. There is not enough emphasis on the teaching of practical skills in Years 7 to 9, and some teaching is too inflexibly linked to a commercially produced scheme of work. This results in some lessons that are inappropriate to the wide range of needs in mixed ability classes. In such lessons the higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged and lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs flounder unless given specific support.
114. Most pupils have a positive attitude to science, particularly in years 7 and 8. Many pupils new to the school say how much they enjoy the different challenge that secondary science brings. They settle down quickly to lessons and there is generally a good working atmosphere in the laboratory. Apart from one instance where poor classroom management led to some poor behaviour, pupils and teachers work together in a good spirit of co-operation and relationships are good.
115. Teaching is satisfactory, overall. During the inspection it was at least satisfactory in 81 per cent of the lessons and good in 25 per cent. Teaching was unsatisfactory or poor in 18 per cent of lessons seen. Overall, teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection, although weaknesses remain, particularly in Key Stage 3. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of their subjects and bring an air of confident authority to the classroom. Planning of individual lessons is generally satisfactory, with some examples of meticulous attention to detail, but lessons in Key Stage 3 are too closely linked to pages in a textbook with very little imaginative input from the teacher. Not enough attention is given to the teaching of experimental skills or to the development of pupils' independent learning skills in Key Stage 3. The management of pupils is almost universally good and in most lessons there is a good relationship between teacher and pupils. Lessons proceed in a calm and purposeful atmosphere. Questions are often used very effectively to assess pupils' prior knowledge or to challenge them to think.
116. The curriculum has improved significantly since the last inspection. The recent move to a modular double science GCSE course has already improved pupils' motivation and early signs from module test results suggest that standards are rising as a result. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 covers National Curriculum requirements but does not provide a range of learning opportunities suitable for all pupils. The commercially produced scheme of work is used inflexibly. Work is not always matched to the wide range of attainment in some classes. Pupils are assessed regularly and good records are kept. Targets are set for pupils at both key stage but the procedure lacks rigour and the targets are not always sufficiently challenging. For example, targets set for some pupils at the end of Year 8 were lower than what they achieved in their primary school. Marking is done conscientiously and there are many examples of detailed comments in pupils' books with advice on how to improve work and with some targets. However, the marking of homework does not generally give pupils information about the standard of their work in relation to national expectations.
117. Management has improved substantially since the last inspection. The head of department is working hard to improve the teaching and learning in the department. Although this has not resulted in higher standards in external tests and examinations, and progress remains unsatisfactory, there have been many improvements, particularly in the face of substantial difficulties following the fire. Teaching has improved. Pupils' motivation is better. Departmental planning is clearly linked to raising standards and there is a good team spirit showing a capacity to improve. A recent move to a modular GCSE course as a result of analysing examination results shows a clear commitment to improvement. The temporary accommodation is well kept

and the available teaching resources are used effectively. There is a shortage of suitable textbooks at Key Stage 4. The science technician works hard and gives effective support to the work of the department.

ART

118. By the end of Key Stage 3 standards in art are high in relation to the national expectation. A significant feature of these standards is that pupils gain good skills, knowledge and understanding in a wide range of media, including drawing and painting, graphics, design, printing, including fabric printing, and ceramics. Photography, including pinhole photography, is available after school.
119. There has been a steady increase in the percentage of pupils gaining grades A*- C in GCSE examinations over the past three years, rising to a little below the national average in 2000. One hundred per cent of the pupils who were entered achieved at least a grade G over the past three years, which is above the national average. Achievement in textiles is good, with five of the seven pupils entered last year gaining A*- C grades, including one A*. Work in the present Years 10 and 11 is of a higher standard, securely at the national average. Pupils working on the themes of "Homage" and "Looking at Life" are aware of the seven points on which their work will be judged in the examination and are able to develop these aspects with confidence. Fabric printing is particularly good and is used by all pupils in Year 11. There is good work in ICT in both key stages, including good use of the digital camera. Pupils begin work in computer generated design in Year 7.
120. Pupils make good progress in both key stages. Pupils' progress is directly related to good teaching. They learn the skills of drawing and painting from Year 7 onwards. The skills of mark making, tone and texture are taught formally and pupils build on these as they progress through school. Landscape perspective is also taught formally and pupils learn some of the standard techniques in the use of line and colour to achieve a good presentation of perspective. The design process is taught formally and this enables pupils to understand how to use their own observations to get new design motifs that are unique and individual. Work is planned so that pupils can improve their skills as they progress through the key stages.
121. Pupils with special educational needs get individual attention, as do all other pupils. They make good progress. A significant number of pupils with special educational needs take art at GCSE level. A GNVQ course has been introduced within the GCSE syllabus and this makes good provision for all pupils.
122. Pupils enjoy art and behave well in all lessons. They can be trusted to get resources and to develop work according to their own interests. The teacher has very good strategies for dealing with inattention and on occasions has to be firm. There is a warm and friendly atmosphere in all lessons; the teacher has a good rapport with all pupils.
123. Teaching was good in all lessons observed. Some aspects of teaching are very good, particularly in design and the use of colour and textiles. The subject is taught by one specialist teacher who is also the head of department. The department is very well organised. Art has a high profile within the school and the extensive displays of work, particularly painting and textiles, greatly enhance the school's environment. Assessment is good in Key Stage 3 and very good in Key Stage 4. Pupils are involved in their own assessments in all years. An excellent assessment booklet has been prepared for GCSE making clear how the seven aspects of each topic will be judged. This helps pupils to focus on aspects such as research and originality. Pupils are given a good awareness of the spiritual and cultural aspects of art, particularly in the art of other cultures. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
124. The teacher maintains very good links with parents, making provision for parents to work alongside pupils and take GCSE art. These adults make a very good contribution to pupils' learning by the standard of their work and the breadth of their experience. They provide pupils with inspiration and support. Another very good contribution is made by a parent who comes in for one day a week to support all aspects of art. The department maintains close links with other schools, including a special school. Pupils from a special school come in to study art for GCSE.

All these pupils were successful in getting a GCSE grade last year.

125. The teacher gives generously of her time, running master classes after school on two evenings each week and keeping the art room open most days at lunchtime. In the past three years the subject has suffered from the poor state of the accommodation following the fire. However, the department has recently moved to a new suite of rooms that provide very good accommodation. The rooms are large and attractive with facilities and equipment for all aspects of work including ceramics and photography.
126. All the shortcomings mentioned in the last inspection report have been rectified. Standards have improved in both key stages. There has been an improvement in the attainment of boys. Computer-aided design has been introduced into practical courses in both key stages. Resources showing the work of other artists have improved; they include access to the Internet and CD-ROMs.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

127. The percentage of pupils gaining level five and above in the teachers' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3 improved in 2000 compared with 1999, but was still well below the national average. The performance of boys at this level has improved and there is now little difference between boys' and girls' achievement. The percentage of pupils who gained GCSE grades A*- C in 2000 was below the national average in most DT subjects (that is, in food, textiles, graphic projects and resistant materials). However, the graphic products A*- C results were above the national average and in textiles they matched it. In the GNVQ manufacturing course, 31 per cent of those entered passed with two units.
128. In the work seen during the inspection, standards at the end of Key Stage 3 were below average, but average by the end of Key Stage 4. Pupils' achievement relative to their prior attainment is satisfactory by the end of Key Stage 3 and good by the end of Key Stage 4. Many pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 struggle with the designing and making process and, in particular, the research, specification and evaluation stages. Pupils are better at making than they are at designing. They work safely and correctly when working with materials and their proficiency in manufacturing is often good. Key Stage 4 pupils use ICT to generate working drawings and all pupils will shortly enhance their ICT experiences through using the newly purchased computer-aided design equipment. The graphics and textiles work on display— for instance, camera drawings and textiles work relating to Christmas— confirm some very good standards of work. Pupils are less good at technical graphics. Key Stage 4 pupils demonstrate effective project-management skills, especially in food, textiles and graphics products. Too much colouring-in is evident in some design folios and the number of worksheets and handouts provided is excessive and restricts the development of pupils' designing and writing skills. Pupils' analysis of the way products are designed and their reviews of the work of other designers are unsatisfactory. Higher attaining pupils are not being provided with open-ended projects that would offer a more appropriate level of challenge. There are not enough assignments that use control systems, or pneumatics, or of designs that make use of a range of resistant materials. Year 10 pupils following the GNVQ intermediate engineering course demonstrate good engineering drawing skills.
129. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3 and good overall in Key Stage 4. Pupils' learning is often good in food, graphics, textiles and some resistant materials classes in both key stages. Pupils with special educational needs cope very well with the making aspects of the work. Pupils are prepared to persevere in the organising, planning and making of their products and their productivity is usually good. Very many pupils can select tools and equipment independently. In some classes, pupils' knowledge of materials and tools, evaluation of their own capabilities, and reasoning skills are weak. Teaching in food, textiles and in some resistant materials and graphics classes is often good. In resistant materials it is sometimes unsatisfactory. Teachers are well qualified in the design and technology specialist areas. Practical skills are carefully taught and in some classes, questioning is used well to challenge pupils and to consolidate the learning. The learning support assistant operating in the department is very effective and works very well with both pupils and teachers. Some teachers set effective time targets and conclude lessons effectively with reviews of the learning points. Some teaching is less effective because there is insufficient assessment or regular marking of project assignments and homework, and pupils are

not involved enough in target setting. Teachers' expectations are low in some resistant materials lessons. Teachers in some practical lessons do not intervene effectively to ensure that all pupils are making sufficient progress.

130. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their lessons. They understand the need to operate in a correct and safe manner and demonstrate tenacity when making artefacts. Pupils show respect for their teacher and are ready to help one another. In resistant materials lessons, some pupils' attitudes towards learning and behaviour are unsatisfactory. Too many pupils arrive late for lessons.
131. The subject is planned well, though the time allowed for Key Stage 4 is insufficient. A number of health and safety concerns arose about equipment in the resistant materials area; some of these matters were rectified effectively during the inspection week. There are some problems with the accommodation; for example, there is no separate area for storage and preparation of materials. However, the new graphics and textiles accommodation is excellent. Overall, satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and the department has the capacity to resolve the issues raised and to make further improvements.

GEOGRAPHY

132. Attainment in the 1999 GCSE examination was close to the national average and well above the average of other subjects in the school. In 2000, the percentage of pupils gaining the higher grades, A*- C, was lower, but was still in line with the average of other subjects. Over time there has been an improving trend in the achievement of the higher grades.
133. From the work seen during the inspection, attainment at the end of Years 9 is below average, though pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils' basic geographical skills are weak on entry. Year 7 pupils have a limited knowledge of places and insecure basic map skills. Writing skills are weak. For example only a third of a class of Year 7 pupils were able to communicate in writing their understanding of regional differences between northern and southern England. In a study of the school's stone walls, the great majority of a class of Year 8 pupils displayed satisfactory observational skills by identifying signs of chemical and biological weathering and damage that resembled physical weathering. Able pupils in Year 8 can organise data efficiently and display them through clear and accurate graphs. Year 9 pupils have a sound grasp of differences between richer and poorer countries and able pupils are aware of a good range of indicators by which wealth can be measured.
134. Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 11 is below average, though standards are satisfactory in relation to their prior attainment. As with younger pupils they have weaknesses in basic skills—for example, in identifying and using information from maps effectively. Most pupils have a satisfactory grasp of human and environmental issues studied. This was reflected in a Year 10 study of river flooding, where nearly every pupil made reasoned choices of ways in which further damage might be prevented. All pupils in a Year 11 class recognised the ways that a new out-of-town shopping centre can affect a community and used this information effectively to prepare clear statements either for or against a similar development in their own community. Pupils of average and above-average attainment make effective use of ICT in their individual studies.
135. Teaching is good: it was good in half of lessons observed and satisfactory in all others. Planning is satisfactory and most lessons are well structured. Learning objectives are clearly communicated and pupils are required to give full attention from the outset. There is a good degree of challenge in learning and a fair range of teaching methods is employed. The teaching usually captures and holds the interest of pupils well and secures good progress in their learning. There are well-chosen opportunities for pupils to manage their own learning which the majority use satisfactorily. Group work lacks sparkle, as interactions between pupils are often rather passive. There are a small number of older boys who have an unsatisfactory attitude to lessons and make insufficient effort. Good support is provided for the development of literacy in the majority of lessons; writing frames are used extensively and pupils' knowledge of key word is tested systematically. Less able pupils are very well supported in some lessons and make good progress overall. Some homework tasks are too easy for more able pupils.

136. The curriculum is supported by a good range of extra-curricular activities and fieldwork. Teachers assess pupils systematically and have a clear picture of the progress they make over time. The target grades for GCSE pupils are a little unrealistic, and the arrangements for pupils to identify their weaknesses and set personal targets are not yet fully effective. Some pupils do not have a secure understanding of how well they are doing. The department is well managed and development planning is very effective, with good progress being made towards all targets.
137. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Attainment in GCSE examinations has improved and fewer pupils are underachieving in lessons. The overall standard of teaching is significantly higher and a wider range of teaching and learning styles is employed, including opportunities for pupils to work independently. Very good progress has been made with the development of ICT and fieldwork is more varied and effective.

HISTORY

138. Results in the 1999 GCSE examination were well below the national average but close to the average of other subjects in the school. In 2000, the percentage of pupils who gained the higher grades, A*- C, was significantly better and well above the average of other subjects in the school. There has been a marked improvement in performance over the last three years.
139. Attainment at the end of Year 9 is below average, though pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils display low levels of literacy and these affect the standards of written work in all years. In Year 7, only a third of pupils used clear, properly structured sentences to describe Roman weapons and armour, though most described, sketched and labelled pieces satisfactorily. Younger pupils display a sound grasp of chronology. More able pupils use a good range of writing styles in Years 8 and 9, though only the most able produce fluent, extended pieces of written work. The majority of pupils can communicate empathy for the topics they write about. All Year 9 pupils have a good understanding of the horrific conditions of soldiers involved in the World War 1 trench warfare and most grasp which types of weapons were effective or ineffective and why.
140. Attainment at the end of Year 11 is below average, though pupils achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the historical events studied. They are less skilled in identifying factors that contribute to change. For example, only one of five groups was successful in selecting and linking the best illustrations with appropriate headlines to communicate aspects of World War 1 military strategy. Year 10 pupils often fail to pick up important clues in the study of photographic records. Able Year 11 pupils have a good grasp of cause and effect.
141. Teaching is good. It was good or very good in three-quarters of lessons observed and in these lessons the pace of learning was good. In all other lessons observed both teaching and learning were satisfactory. Teachers have a good command of their subject, plan carefully and employ a good range of mostly well-chosen teaching methods. The pupils' attention is claimed effectively at the start of lessons and questioning is often used skilfully to test pupils' recall of earlier learning. In all lessons learning objectives are explicit and pupils are helped effectively to build up their use and understanding of historical language, through reference to the display of key words and the use of flash cards. Writing frames, sometimes with lists of key words, are being used extensively to aid learning and help less able pupils to make satisfactory progress. Tasks are mostly well matched to the abilities of pupils and often quite challenging. The great majority of pupils display positive attitudes to learning and sustain good concentration. Among a small number of pupils in all years, mostly boys, attitudes to learning are unsatisfactory. Pupils collaborate satisfactorily in small groups, but lack the skills to work independently.
142. The curriculum is enhanced by good extra-curricular activities in all years. Good support is provided for the development of literacy but there is insufficient use of ICT. Pupils' learning is enhanced by attractive and informative wall displays. Assessment is well structured and teachers build up a very detailed profile of the performance of pupils over time. Many pupils do not have a clear understanding of the significance of the levels at which they are working and there are inconsistencies in the results of pupils' self-assessment. Currently, teachers' judgements on the levels that pupils are attaining are a little harsh. The department is managed effectively, monitoring is systematic and nearly all the issues identified within the development plan are being

rigorously addressed.

143. Overall, good progress has been made since the last inspection. The standard of teaching has improved and a more diversified range of teaching and learning styles is being employed. Satisfactory progress has been made in matching tasks and resources to meet the needs of the most and least able pupils. There has been a great improvement in assessment practices, particularly in Years 10 and 11.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

144. The school's efforts to provide an effective ICT curriculum have been seriously hampered by the loss of equipment in the fire and the prolonged absence of the ICT co-ordinator. This has limited the opportunities for pupils to use computers and adversely affected standards of attainment. The situation is now improving, but, as the school's development plan recognises, a number of significant issues are still to be addressed.
145. Pupils come into the school with standards below the national average and because they do not have enough access to computers in the following years, most are well below average by the end of Year 9. Pupils in Year 7 need considerable help to make progress, though they are able to combine text and graphics effectively, including the use of digital photography. At the end of Year 9, the occasional use of ICT in other subjects and at home results in some improvement in word processing skills and applications that involve collecting, combining and presenting information. The current Year 9 pupils experienced their first taught ICT lessons this year. In those lessons most pupils showed below-average skills and needed considerable support to search the Internet and retrieve information for their promotional poster task. Furthermore, their skills in handling data, using spreadsheets and databases are even more limited. There is no evidence of pupils using computers for measurement, modelling and control.
146. Pupils start Key Stage 4 with limited skills but are now beginning to make some progress through the taught lesson in Year 10. All will be entered for the key skills qualification in ICT. However, most Year 11 pupils have not greatly improved their ICT capability and standards remain well below average. A few pupils demonstrate stronger knowledge and skills in courses that provide more structured and regular opportunities to use ICT. These include business studies, media studies and other GCSE courses that involve project work in which pupils can use word processing, desktop publishing and spreadsheets to present their work. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs often make relatively better gains in their ICT skills, such as in the ASDAN course and GNVQ foundation level in leisure and tourism. In a Year 10 leisure and tourism lesson, pupils used ICT well to collate and present their research into the local tourist industry.
147. Pupils enjoy the opportunities to use ICT and make full use of the lunchtime computer clubs. In lessons, they are particularly engaged by those activities that involve gaining access to data from the Internet. Although some pupils lack urgency in completing their tasks, they nonetheless respond well to effective teaching and behave well.
148. Teaching in the taught programme is never less than satisfactory. In a third of lessons observed it was good. The main strength of the teaching is the firm, positive class management, which ensures that pupils concentrate on their work and make progress in the lesson. Given the limited skills of many of the pupils, the teaching shows flexibility in adapting planned lessons so that pupils can cope with what are often new applications. Given the previous lack of resources, there has been considerable effort to plan the provision and produce materials that help pupils retrieve lost ground. However, those learning and assessment materials are not sufficiently varied to meet the different needs of pupils, nor do they provide effective means of monitoring and assessing pupils' progress. As a result pupils' previous experiences with ICT are not fully taken into account, and pupils have a limited understanding of their standard and progress.
149. The school does not cover the National Curriculum programme of study in Key Stage 3, for several reasons. Until most recently it provided a single taught lesson in Year 9 and only patchy teaching of ICT through other subjects in Years 7 and 8. The stronger practice is currently in English and geography, where ICT is used for research and presentation, and in art, which

provides opportunities for computer graphics. There is also some use of computer-aided learning in the core subjects. The introduction of a further taught lesson in Year 7 is an improvement, but there are substantial areas of the National Curriculum programme of study for Key Stage 3 that remain uncovered. The school meets the National Curriculum requirement in Key Stage 4 because of the Year 10 taught programme, which leads to the national key skills qualification, and the greater opportunities for pupils to use ICT in their GCSE and vocational courses. However, the school has currently few means of recording pupils' experiences across the curriculum to ensure that they are receiving a worthwhile entitlement and making progress.

150. The senior management team has made considerable efforts to deal with problems of equipment and staffing, and the acting co-ordinator, has coped well with establishing the new network as well as developing and teaching the ICT programme alongside his other duties. Training has been provided for staff, and the school now has a modern computer network that with careful planning should meet the future needs of the school. However, the school does not have any specialist technical support to ensure the reliability of the network. Furthermore, the school has yet to establish a clear strategy for developing and monitoring the ICT curriculum across the school. In summary, the standards and provision of ICT have declined since the last inspection, though there are clear indications that the school is in the process of retrieving the situation.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

151. Standards achieved by the end of Key Stage 4 in German are below national averages and in French they are well below. Pupils' positive attitudes and the quality of teaching in Key Stage 3 enable pupils to achieve satisfactory standards in relation to their prior attainment. However, progress is too slow, so that by the time they leave the school pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory. In 1999 the percentage of candidates achieving grades A*-C in GCSE French was well below the national averages, whilst in German it was below average. The percentage of candidates achieving A*-G grades in both languages was just below the national average. According to the teachers' assessments, pupils achieved just below national expectations by the end of Year 9.
152. Pupils' listening skills are well developed throughout both key stages; they respond appropriately to instructions in the languages and identify the main points from short extracts of speech. However their responses are usually brief, often restricted to single words or short phrases, and the majority lack confidence in using the languages without guidance from the teacher or reference to written notes. Pupils recognise the main points from short texts and writing is generally accurate. They describe events in detail in the present tense and express simple opinions by the end of Key Stage 3. By the end of Key Stage 4, pupils can use the present, future and past tenses. Although many pupils have a good understanding of the way the languages work by the end of Year 9, they lack independence in using them for themselves either in writing or in speech. They take part in short, prepared dialogues but few are able to use the languages spontaneously.
153. Teaching is satisfactory in Key Stage 3; all lessons observed were satisfactory or better. The teaching seen in Key Stage 4 was at least satisfactory in four out of five lessons. Overall, however, the teaching in Key Stage 4 is unsatisfactory because it fails to help pupils to build effectively on previous learning or to develop skills confidently over time. Teachers have a very good command of the languages they teach. In the vast majority of lessons they use the language effectively and extensively, which helps pupils to develop their listening skills and reinforces what they have already learned. In a small number of lessons, however, teachers supply translations too readily, eliminating pupils' need to listen to the language and missing the opportunity to challenge higher attainers by asking them to interpret for others. Good use is made of the overhead projector and flashcards to focus attention, clarify meaning and encourage pupils to contribute to oral work. Teachers' clear presentations and skilful questioning enable pupils to identify and apply patterns in the languages. In the majority of lessons activities are appropriate and well sequenced, enabling pupils to build on what has gone before, but in a small number of lessons steps in learning are missing, leaving pupils uncertain about how to complete tasks. Pupils make good progress when they are given the opportunity to practise informally in pairs and small groups, but there is too little opportunity for pupils to try out the language they have learned in real situations to gather or give information. Teachers' control and management of pupils are

very good and create a calm and supportive atmosphere in which pupils can learn. In their eagerness for pupils to succeed, teachers sometimes give them too few opportunities to solve problems for themselves, which results in their remaining over-dependent upon the teacher.

154. Pupils have positive attitudes towards their learning; they listen attentively and behaviour is very good. Pupils in Key Stage 3 are keen to participate in oral work and enjoy working in pairs and taking part in games and songs. They lose concentration and interest when the teacher spends too much time talking and they are not required to participate. Older pupils are more reluctant to volunteer to speak in front of the class, but when asked to work in pairs and small groups they work well, concentrate, and are concerned to do well.
155. The department has made satisfactory progress since the last report; examination results appear to have declined, but the department now enters pupils from a far wider ability range than before. Assessment procedures are good and systems to monitor pupils' progress are being developed, although not enough use is made of this to set challenging work for high attaining pupils. More appropriate course materials have been introduced and schemes of work are constantly reviewed. Appropriate systems are in place to monitor and evaluate the work of the department. The display in the department is of a very high quality, celebrating pupils' achievement and reinforcing the languages being taught. There are too few textbooks and not enough use is made of ICT, which restricts the learning opportunities for pupils.

MUSIC

156. Standards in music by the end of Key Stage 3 were in line with national expectations in 1999, according to teachers' assessments. Results for 2000 show a slight improvement on those of the previous year. The GCSE results for music in 1999 were above the national and school averages, though the number entered was small. The 2000 results show a drop in the percentage gaining A*- C grades.
157. In work observed during the inspection, however, standards attained by the end of Key Stage 3 were below national expectations. Since the last inspection there has been a succession of music teachers and the lack of continuity has affected standards. Pupils in Year 7 start their musical education at the school by singing and writing music for graphic scores and storyboards. Pupils in Year 8 and Year 9 have also studied these aspects in an attempt to build the foundations omitted in the previous years, although this is only a temporary measure for this academic year.
158. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are also below national expectations. Pupils in Year 10 have started to develop their ensemble skills, revise rhythmic and staff notation, and have learned to improvise. Pupils in Year 11 have work in varying stages of completion from the year 1999 to 2000.
159. Teaching in both key stages is satisfactory in the majority of lessons and pupils are making satisfactory progress. In some lessons the teaching is good. The teachers subject knowledge and understanding are good and this enables him to teach new concepts well. This is often achieved by letting the pupils discover the learning from the music and through guided discussion, rather than by detailed explanations. Lessons are well planned and move at a good pace. The teachers expectations are high and both teacher and pupils make appropriate use of musical terminology. New musical words are attached to the classroom wall and referred to frequently in an attempt to broaden the pupils' musical vocabulary. The teacher has a firm but friendly manner with the pupils, and relationships are generally good; expectations of behaviour are well established. Good use is made of time and resources in lessons, with the setting of time limits helping pupils to complete tasks. Homework was not set throughout the inspection; resulting in lost opportunities for reinforcing material learnt in the lesson.
160. Music is taught to mixed ability classes in Key Stage 3, and tasks are devised to enable all pupils to gain worthwhile musical experiences. Pupils with special educational needs work alongside their peers and with their assistance achieve good results. In lessons where support is provided, the support teacher is well prepared in advance and is consequently able to make a

valuable contribution to the pupils' learning. However, too few demands are being made of pupils who have a talent for music.

161. The new curriculum is broad and varied, but the progression from one topic to the next is not always clear, and very little use is made of ICT, especially in Years 7 and 8. Instrumental lessons given by visiting teachers from the Durham Music Service are of a high standard, but few pupils are able to benefit from this valuable opportunity. The department is decorated well with displays of curricular relevance, posters of historical periods and concerts, and pupils' work, but the accommodation itself is unsatisfactory. The teaching area is inadequately ventilated, as none of the windows open, and there is not enough space for the number of computers and keyboards required. There is a lack of rehearsal space and too few quality pitched and non-pitched percussion instruments. While there are enough keyboards for one between two pupils, there are too few headphones to make class practical work feasible. The computers that are available do not meet the needs of Curriculum 2000. Since the last inspection the high turnover of permanent teaching staff has prevented some of the issues raised from being addressed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

162. In the most recent GCSE examination, 100 per cent of pupils gained grades A*- G, which is line with the national average. The percentage of pupils gaining A*- C grades was, though, well below average. The number of pupils currently following the GCSE course is impressive.
163. The attainment of pupils is in line with national expectations by the end of Year 9, with a significant minority achieving even higher standards. Pupils perform well in a wide range of physical activities. They have a good understanding of the necessity of warm-up exercises and apply this knowledge at the beginning of each lesson. Pupils are developing their skills and understanding in a variety of practical contexts and groupings and are developing the skills to compete successfully.
164. The overall attainment at the end of Year 11 is also in line with national expectations, with some pupils, particularly those in the examination groups, achieving even higher standards. In health related fitness lessons pupils gain an understanding of fitness issues and practices and by the time they reach the end of Year 11 many are able to devise their own fitness programmes. Pupils in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. Pupils mostly have a good depth of knowledge but are generally not confident in their use of technical language. Higher attaining pupils present written work that is well structured with careful analysis, but a minority of pupils have limited subject knowledge and their notes are sometimes incomplete. Their practical work is satisfactory but they find it difficult to achieve success in the theoretical aspects of the course.
165. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated, are given much support and encouragement both by teachers and fellow pupils, and reach a satisfactory level of performance. Teaching is sensitive and there is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum.
166. Many school teams take part in a large number of inter-school competitions and sporting events, and gain much success. Many pupils have represented Derwentside and some have gone on to gain county honours.
167. The school has maintained the overall good quality of teaching noted in the last inspection. It has continued to be always at least satisfactory, with most lessons observed being good or very good, and a minority excellent. All lessons begin and end in an orderly manner and objectives are clearly stated and understood by the pupils. Lessons are well organised and are conducted at a brisk, demanding pace, achieving an appropriate balance of activities and offering the pupils a range of appropriate challenges. The subject planning is well structured, with a choice of tasks that promotes a high level of interest and effort. There is an expectation that pupils will work hard and behave well and generally that is met. Following comments in the last report, teachers are now encouraging their pupils to be more involved with the planning and evaluation of their work. Teachers show a care and concern for the pupils while encouraging the best in fair play, co-operation and competitive experiences. Pupils respond very positively to this good quality

teaching. They are enthusiastic, behave very well and most are prepared to work very hard. The enjoyment of their work is very evident. The curriculum, which has been revised since the last inspection, meets the demands of the National Curriculum and allows pupils to take part in a wide variety of activities. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 have the opportunity to use the excellent facilities of the nearby leisure centre, where they take part in squash, badminton and fitness training, in addition to the activities on offer at the school. The procedures for assessing and recording pupils' attainment have been revised and are now very comprehensive and include a good pupil self-assessment component. Pupils are clear about their standard of attainment and what they need to do to improve. Many staff give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of lunchtime and after-school extra-curricular activities, which are very well supported by the pupils. Pupils have the opportunity to go skiing in Italy, to visit the Howtown Outdoor Pursuits Centre and to take part in walking expeditions organised by the Tanfield Exploration Society.

168. Strong leadership and a positive ethos characterise the management of the subject. The department's development plan identifies a range of appropriate priorities. The high quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work, and helps the teaching of the subject. The staff who teach physical education work well together, support each other, and show a very strong commitment to the pupils. The accommodation for the subject is good and the on-site facilities are well supplemented by the accommodation at the leisure centre.
169. Since the last inspection the department has continued to provide its pupils with good quality physical education. The system for the assessment, recording and reporting of pupils' work has been reviewed, and is now more effective. The curriculum has been revised: although it now offers a more balanced range of activities, it is still biased towards games.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

170. Overall, standards in religious education are in line with the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus by the end of both key stages. However, pupils' standards in speaking and understanding are much higher than in their written answers. Thinking skills are well promoted in all lessons; this is a very significant aspect of religious education in both key stages. The subject is taught from the perspective of philosophy and the great universal questions are presented to pupils. These provide challenge for all pupils and particularly for the high attaining pupils. Pupils in Year 7 are helped to evaluate the positions taken by the theist, the atheist and the agnostic. They learn from practical experiences that one's viewpoint is coloured by one's experiences. In Year 8, pupils begin the study of Advent from the viewpoint of the Christian mystery and learn about the worldwide impact of the Incarnation as presented through art and music. Year 9 pupils consider the definition of sin and as they look at the topic of crime and punishment they examine the different responses to punishment - for example, retribution, reparation and reform.
171. GCSE was offered as an optional subject in the past and results were well below average. However, since the appointment of a new head of department two years ago the school has decided to offer the short course GCSE to all pupils. There is also provision for a local education authority certificate that, for some pupils, might be more valued than a low grade GCSE. Standards in the present Years 10 and 11 are at least average. Twelve pupils in Year 10 are taking the GCSE examination at the end of this year, in half the recommended time. They are all expected to get the top A* - C grades. This represents good provision for these gifted pupils.
172. In Years 10 and 11, pupils consider in depth topics such as marriage, from a Christian viewpoint and also from the viewpoints of other world faiths. Some pupils in Year 10 are making arrangements to interview a Hindu woman on the subject of arranged marriages. Pupils in Year 11 are learning about miracles in relation to the Exodus. They gain an understanding of the viewpoints of the Egyptians, the Jews, the laws of nature and the sceptic. They are encouraged to be analytical and to argue their points with logic.
173. All pupils, including those on the SEN register make very good progress. Care is taken to ensure that all pupils understand the concepts. This progress is directly related to very good teaching.
174. Teaching is very good and sometimes is excellent. All but six lessons are taught by the head of department, who uses inspiring methods, including practical exercises and visual aids, to capture

pupils' attention and interest. Pupils are engaged in the lessons, express opinions and think for themselves. They are helped to analyse their opinions and those of others. The subject is made relevant to life today and pupils are engaged with the big moral, social and philosophical questions such as justice, faith, love, care, trust and why we are here. The head of department is energetic and has made links with a wide range of people from the faith communities, including Christians, Jews, Muslims and Hindus, to give a broad perspective on faith. People from these groups come into school to add to the teachers' input in lessons. Particularly impressive was the contribution of a young Christian convert with a troubled past who helped pupils to understand the simple yet profound truth that one cannot give love until one has received it. Other inspiring contributions were made by a mime and dance artist and a faith group who used sign language and music to exemplify the 'head, heart and hand' approach to active learning. Other visitors who come to speak to pupils include a Buddhist monk, a Muslim and a survivor of the Holocaust. A mature teacher gives of his time voluntarily to help specific groups of pupils identified by the teacher. Video and music are used to good effect to deepen pupils' knowledge and to help them to think and reflect. Visits are arranged to Christian churches, Jewish synagogues and museum exhibitions such as the Anne Frank exhibition.

175. The subject has improved significantly since the last inspection. There is no underachievement in Key Stage 4. Pupils have a satisfactory awareness of the religious diversity within their own region. Pupils' skills in reasoning and enquiry are now well developed. There is no non-specialist teaching. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. A quality of excellence pervades all areas of this department.

BUSINESS STUDIES

176. Standards of attainment in GCSE business studies have improved and in the year 2000 all pupils who were entered gained graded results and just over 40 per cent succeeded in getting grades A*-C. This is below the national average, but pupils did at least as well as in their other GCSE subjects.
177. In the work seen, standards were a little below average. Most pupils have a sound knowledge of business organisations and demonstrate their understanding in specific case studies. In a Year 11 lesson, most pupils could show how changes in economic policy affected consumer demand, though higher level explanations were less evident. In the GNVQ foundation level course in business, standards are low and in a Year 11 lesson, pupils' limited ICT skills slowed their progress in completing a unit on business communication.
178. Pupils in the GCSE course are usually interested and involved in the work, particularly the higher attaining girls, who contribute well to lessons. Behaviour is good, though a significant number of pupils lack confidence when participating in presentations and discussion.
179. Teaching in business studies is mostly good and never less than satisfactory. Lessons are well planned with clear objectives for learning. The teacher's lucid explanation of business concepts and good use of questions enable most pupils to build on their knowledge of the subject. Sometimes, the teacher does not involve the less confident pupils enough in class discussions, so their oral skills are less developed. The best practice was most evident in a lesson on the product life cycle, in which the teacher used the pupils' own experience well to develop their understanding of marketing. Learning materials are well produced, though more challenging resources for the higher attaining pupils are less evident. Assessment is most rigorous in the marking of project work; the teacher uses the assessment criteria well, which enables pupils to identify areas for improvement.
180. The subject is effectively organised and makes use of outside commercial links, including the local football club. The main accommodation is good and is enhanced by attractive displays of project work. Access to a computer suite helps to ensure that ICT is well used.