

INSPECTION REPORT

HIGH TUNSTALL SCHOOL

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 111748

Headteacher: Mr Peter Cutland

Reporting inspector: Dr Kenneth C Thomas
(OFSTED No: 3390)

Dates of inspection: 9 – 13 October 2000

Inspection number: 223749

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 to 16 Years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Elwick Road
West Park
Hartlepool

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Telephone number: 01429 261446

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mr K Shepherd

Date of previous inspection: 5 February 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Kenneth C Thomas (OFSTED No: 3390)	Registered inspector	Social Science	What sort of school is it?
			What should the school do to improve further?
			How high are standards? a) The school's results and achievements
			How well are pupils taught?
			How well is the school led and managed?
Marvyn Moore (OFSTED No: 11041)	Lay inspector		How high are standards? b) Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
John Morrell (OFSTED No: 23308)	Team inspector	Music	
Janet Flisher (OFSTED No: 19414)	Team inspector	English	
		Drama	
		English as an additional language	
James Berry (OFSTED No: 20729)	Team inspector	Science	
John Brigden (OFSTED No: 8520)	Team inspector	Art	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to students?
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
Derek Cronin (OFSTED No: 11838)	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
Barry Smith (OFSTED No: 11300)	Team inspector	Geography	
Roger Whittaker (OFSTED No: 18755)	Team inspector	Physical education	

Peter Hick (OFSTED No: 10739)	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Michael Morecroft (OFSTED No: 11765)	Team inspector	Religious education	
David Gutmann (OFSTED No: 10060)	Team inspector	Information technology	
		Business Studies	
Bob Thompson (OFSTED No: 10781)	Team inspector	Equal opportunities	
		Special educational needs	
Norman Bertram (OFSTED No: 10316)	Team inspector	History	
Clive Potter (OFSTED No: 4703)	Team inspector	Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

High Tunstall School is a mixed comprehensive school for pupils aged 11-16 in Hartlepool Local Education Authority. The school is oversubscribed and there are 1148 pupils on the school roll. This makes it bigger than similar schools without a sixth form. The percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals is close to the national average. The percentage of pupils with English as an additional language is a bit higher than in most schools. Two of these pupils are at an early stage of language acquisition. The standards of attainment of pupils coming into the school have risen over recent years and, although wide-ranging, are now average, overall. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs, at 21.7 per cent, is in line with the national average, while the proportion of pupils with statements, at one per cent is below the national average. However, a number of pupils with statements of special educational needs who are on the roll of Thornhill Special School, receive most of their education in High Tunstall School.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

High Tunstall is a very effective school, providing a very good quality of education for its pupils. Standards are rising because there is an exceptional commitment to continuous improvement. The headteacher and senior leadership team provide excellent leadership and this is reflected in the high quality of improvement planning and good teaching, which enables pupils to make the most of the good opportunities provided. Resources are very well managed and the school provides very good value for money.

What the school does well

- The school ethos is one in which all staff and pupils work and learn together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.
- Excellent leadership is promoting good teaching, enthusiastic teamwork and good standards in most areas of the work of the school.
- Standards of attainment at the age of 16 are above average and rising at a rate above the national trend.
- Pupils are provided with very good care and support and respond well to the excellent opportunities for personal development. They display very good attitudes to school and behaviour is good.
- Pupils' learning and interest in school are enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities from which many pupils benefit.
- The school has developed excellent strategies for improving attendance. Attendance is good.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with special educational needs and there is an effective inclusion programme to which all staff are committed.
- Very good support from the governing body and excellent financial planning and management are ensuring that the school makes very good use of its resources.

What could be improved

- Standards of attainment in design and technology resistant materials are not as high as they should be.
- The curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for all pupils for the provision of physical education at Key Stage 3 and for information and communications technology at Key Stage 4.
- The school does not comply with the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.
- The accommodation in the mobile classrooms is poor.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in February 1996 and has made very good improvement since that time. National Curriculum tests results, taken at the age of 14, have improved at the same rate as the national average up to 1999 and the school's 2000 test results are above those obtained in 1999. GCSE results improved at a much faster rate than the national average up to 1999 and were better again in 2000. The quality of teaching is much better. The key issues identified for action in the last inspection report have been tackled systematically. The school makes excellent use of information to improve its effectiveness. There is a wider range of teaching and learning strategies and regular use of homework. The accommodation has been improved to provide more pleasant facilities for pupils use during breaks and lunchtimes. School improvement planning is excellent. Morning registration time is now used more productively. Special educational needs provision is very well organised, and is effective. Because of excellent leadership, planning and use of targets the school is well placed to improve further its provision and the standards pupils achieve.

STANDARDS

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

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

Pupils' overall attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science taken at the end of Year 9, was average in comparison with all schools. In comparison with similar schools attainment in English and science in 1999 was average, while attainment in mathematics was above average. Results in the four years from 1996 to 1998 were consistently above the national average and only dipped to average in 1999. The 2000 results are above those achieved in 1999. Standards in geography, information and communications technology, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education are above national expectations by the end of Year 9. Standards in art and history are average. Overall standards in design and technology are broadly average, but below in resistant materials. Pupils' achievement at the end of Year 9, relative to their standards of attainment on entry is Year 7, is good.

Overall attainment in the 1999 GCSE examinations taken at the age of 16 was above average when compared to all schools and well above average when compared to similar schools. The 2000 results are above those obtained in 1999. Results in English, English literature, mathematics, physics, chemistry and biology were all above the national averages in 1999 and higher results were achieved in all subjects, except mathematics, in 2000. The results in mathematics in 2000 were about the same as in 1999. In art, geography, social science, German, music, religious education and business studies results were all above average in 1999 and rose higher in 2000. Results in French were above average in 1999, but dipped to be about the same as the national average in 2000. Results in double award science and history were average in 1999 and similar in 2000. In design and technology, and information and communications technology results are average. However poor results in resistant materials are depressing the overall results in design and technology. Many pupils with special educational needs achieve five or more GCSE grades. Pupils achieve very good standards in extra-curricular activities. Inspection evidence indicates that the improvement shown in 2000 is being sustained and that pupils achieve well in relation to their standards of attainment at the age of 14.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils enjoy coming to school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good in lessons and around the school. Most pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly and there is little unacceptable behaviour.
Personal development and relationships	Excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Consistently above the national average. The school continues to make strenuous efforts to improve attendance.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 11-14 years	aged 14-16 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 quality of teaching is good or better in 72 per cent of the lessons and satisfactory in virtually all of the rest; it is unsatisfactory in only two per cent of the lessons. Teaching is very good or excellent in 30 per cent of lessons. Teaching and learning is very good in English, and good in mathematics, science, art, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. Teaching in the information and communications technology, business studies and social science GCSE courses offered in Years 10 and 11 is good. In religious education, teaching is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Teaching in design and technology and history is satisfactory at both key stages. However, there are weaknesses in teaching in resistant materials. There are examples of excellence in teaching in English, religious education, and in mathematics. Pupils are provided with many successful opportunities to develop their reading, writing, speaking, listening and numeracy skills in most subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The teaching of pupils in the learning support base is very good.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Broad and balanced at both key stages. There are very good opportunities for pupils' personal development. Provision for physical education in Years 7 to 9 and information and communications technology in Years 10 and 11 does not meet statutory requirements. There is a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils are fully included in the school community, are confident and feel secure.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The two pupils who speak English as an additional language and need help are well supported by visiting specialist language teachers and by work in English and other subjects.

Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory provision for pupils' spiritual development and very good provision for pupils' moral, social and cultural development.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good arrangements for monitoring pupils' academic and personal development. Procedures for child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare are very good. Health and safety procedures are good. The school provides a supportive environment in which to learn.

The school has made satisfactory progress in its curricular provision since the previous inspection. Although the weekly teaching time does not meet government recommendations there are plans to make this possible by the end of the school year. There are limited opportunities for the majority of older pupils to use information and communications technology for their GCSE subjects and other courses in Years 10 and 11. Increasing these opportunities is one of several important planned changes to the curriculum. Others include the introduction of drama in Years 8 to 9 and extending the work-related curriculum in Years 10 and 11, together with an increased emphasis on the use of literacy and numeracy. Very good care and support makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress and achievement. Good links with parents provide considerable support to pupils' learning. The school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of worship.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent leadership by headteacher and senior leadership team, and very good leadership by heads of department are having a significant effect on improving standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and fulfil most of their statutory responsibilities. They provide a great deal of expertise to the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Excellent. Exemplary procedures for monitoring and evaluating performance in all areas and information used effectively to guide improvement planning.
The strategic use of resources	The school improvement plan provides an excellent framework for spending priorities. Very good use is made of the school's resources. The school provides very good value for money.

Leadership of the school is highly effective and staff at all levels have a high commitment to the raising of standards. Rigorous monitoring of the school's work has brought about significant improvement since the last inspection. The school is a self-evaluating organisation. It has a good grasp of its strengths and weaknesses and has the capacity to make further improvements. Financial planning is excellent. External grants and other resources are used efficiently. The number of specialist teaching and non-teaching staff is sufficient to meet the needs of all pupils. Although the school works hard to maintain and improve the accommodation, the mobile classrooms are poor.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their best. The progress their children are making. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The information the school provides. The closeness with which the school works with parents.

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school is helping their children become mature and responsible.• The approachability of the school.• The good teaching.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The amount of homework pupils are given.
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Parents are very supportive of the school and inspectors endorse parents' positive views. Some parents have mixed feelings about the closeness with which the school works with parents and the information the school provides. Inspectors found that the school strives hard to involve parents. The quality of information provided is very good. Homework is set regularly in most subjects and homework tasks are generally used to consolidate and extend pupils' learning.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Pupils' overall attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science at the end of Year 9, was average. In comparison with similar schools, overall attainment in English and science was average, while attainment in mathematics was above average. Over the four-year period from 1996 to 1999, there was a rising trend in the school's test results that was similar to the rising trend nationally. During this period girls tended to outperform boys in English while the performance of boys and girls in mathematics and science was broadly similar.
2. Over the three years from 1996 to 1998, overall standards of attainment in English, mathematics and science were consistently above the national average, only dipping to be at the national average in 1999. The results of the National Curriculum tests taken in 2000 show that overall attainment in English, mathematics and science has risen to be above the standards attained in 1999. As in previous years there were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls in mathematics and science, while for the first time the performance of boys and girls in English was broadly similar. Comparisons of standards of attainment on entry to the school with the results obtained at the end of Year 9 show that pupils' levels of achievement are good. This is linked to good teaching and the regular monitoring of pupils' performance as they move through Years 7 to 9. Work in geography, information and communications technology, modern foreign languages, music, physical education and religious education are also strengths, with standards in these subjects that are above average by the end of Year 9. Standards in art and history are broadly consistent with national expectations for 14 year olds. Although overall standards in design and technology are also broadly average, they are below in resistant materials and graphics.
3. In the 1999 GCSE examinations, 53 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* - C grades compared with the national average of 47 per cent and 94 per cent of pupils achieved five or more A* - G grades compared to 91 per cent nationally. The average GCSE points score per pupil was above average in comparison with all schools and well above average in comparison with similar schools. The trend in the average scores over the four years from 1996 to 1999 shows that average points scores have been rising at a rate above that observed nationally. The 2000 results show that this rising trend has been sustained. The average points scores of girls are consistently higher than those of boys.
4. Results in the 2000 GCSE English and English literature examinations are above those obtained in 1999 when the results were above the national average. These high standards were reflected in the work seen during the inspection. The standards reached by pupils in mathematics in the 1999 examination were also above the national average. Although the 2000 results were marginally below those obtained in 1999, inspection evidence indicates that above average standards are being maintained. Taken overall, the 1999 GCSE results in science were similar to the national averages for grades A*-C. However, there is variation in the results obtained from the different science courses. Results in physics, chemistry and biology in 1999 were above the national averages and in 2000 all of the pupils entered in each of the three sciences achieved grades A*-C. Results in the 2000 double award science examination were above those obtained in 1999, when the results were close to the national average. However, results in the single award science examination were well below the national average in 1999 and the 2000 results are similar to those obtained in 1999. Although taken overall, girls achieve higher standards than boys in English, mathematics and science, boys achieve some of the highest standards. For example, all of the six A* grades obtained in mathematics in the 2000 GCSE examinations were gained by boys.
5. Inspection evidence indicates that by the time pupils leave school at the age of 16; standards in most subjects are above average. This is confirmed by the GCSE results, which show that in art

the percentages of pupils gaining A* - C grades have been above average in recent years. This percentage rose substantially in 2000 with just under three-quarters of pupils gaining A* - C grades. Standards in geography are significantly above the national average. In 1999, 81 per cent of pupils achieved A* - C grades and this percentage rose to 88 per cent in 2000. Because pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop their information and communications technology skills in most subjects in Years 10 and 11, overall standards in information and communications technology are below national expectations for pupils at the age of 16. A GCSE option course in the subject has been introduced since the previous inspection and results have been generally similar to national averages. However, whereas girls' results tend to be well above the national average, those of boys tend to be below. This is generally a result of differences in standards between boys and girls in the examination coursework. A GCSE option course in social science has also been introduced since the last inspection and the examination results show a steady improvement in each of the years since the course was introduced. In 1999, 52 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades, compared to 42 per cent nationally, and in 2000 this figure rose to 60 per cent. One boy achieved an A* grade and was the highest scoring candidate of all of the candidates entered for the examination nationally.

6. The attainment of both boys and girls in modern foreign languages are above average. In the 1999 GCSE examinations in French and German, the A*-C grades achieved by both boys and girls were above the national averages. In 2000 there has been a further improvement in German but a decline in French. The decline in French is due to a decline in the performance of boys to a level that is similar to the 1999 national average for boys. Results at highest A*-A grades have improved year on year and in both 1999 and 2000 all pupils entered obtained a grade in the A*-G range. Standards in music are consistently well above average in comparison with national figures. Over three-quarters of the pupils entered for the examination regularly achieve A*-C grades and in all pupils achieve A*-G grades. Overall GCSE results in design and technology in 2000 were slightly below those obtained in 1999 when they were similar to the national average. Analysis of the most recent results shows that the overall results in design and technology are being depressed by below average results in graphic products and poor results in resistant materials. Standards of attainment in religious education have been rising over recent years. All pupils are entered for the GCSE short course examination and in 2000, 42 per cent achieved A*-C grades with 13 per cent achieving the highest A*-A grades. Inspection evidence indicates that this improvement is being sustained and pupils in Years 10 and 11 are achieving standards that are above national expectations.
7. Overall standards of attainment in history at the end of Year 11 are broadly average. The percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in 1999 was slightly below the national average, but rose in 2000 to be well above the 1999 national average. However, inspection evidence indicates that the standards of pupils presently in Years 10 and 11 are generally consistent with, rather than above, national expectations. By the time pupils leave school, their attainment levels in physical education are generally above national expectations. In 1999, 52 per cent of pupils achieved A*-C grades compared with 49 per cent nationally, and in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades rose to 62 per cent. All pupils achieved grades in the A*-G range, which is above the national average.
8. The overall standard of attainment of pupils on entry to the school has risen over recent years to now be broadly average. Comparisons of pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests taken at the age of 11 with the performance of the same pupils at the age of 14 show that levels of achievement as pupils move through Years 7 to 9 are good. Similarly, comparisons of pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests and teacher assessments made at the age of 14 with the performance of the same pupils in the GCSE examination taken at the age of 16 shows that the levels of achievement of pupils as they move through Years 10 and 11 are also good.
9. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs in relation to the targets in pupils' individual educational plans, is good in Years 7 to 9 and very good in Years 10 and 11. Most of these pupils make very good progress both in their lessons and over time. Virtually all pupils on the special educational needs register obtain GCSE grades in the A*-G range with many obtaining five or more A*-G grades and some five or more A*-C grades. This represents good

levels of achievement by these pupils. There are 15 pupils from the adjacent Thornhill special school, who have statements of special educational needs, participating in an inclusive education programme at High Tunstall. This programme is very successful. All staff are aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans: this is an important factor in the good progress that these pupils are making towards their specific targets.

10. Standards of literacy are good. Pupils have good reading skills. Many read widely for pleasure. They are able to identify different layers of meaning, select key features of a text and analyse the author's intentions. They are given plenty of opportunities to practise their reading skills both in English and in other lessons. Year 7 pupils have an impressive knowledge of language as a result of the National Literacy Strategy and are able to talk about and understand, for instance, connective phrases, similes and metaphors and the difference between emotive and informative language. Standards of writing are generally good, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to communicate ideas and opinions clearly. They use a range of appropriate styles. During their early years in school pupils are confident speakers both in small groups and in class situations. In Years 10 and 11 many girls tend to become less active in discussions and boys are sometimes allowed to dominate classroom discussions. In all talking activities, pupils listen to others' views with attention and respect.
11. There are two pupils in the school at an early stage in acquiring English as an additional language. They are making good progress and are able to access most of the curriculum. They both have adequate day-to-day language skills and vocabulary but find technical language more difficult to remember and understand. Other pupils with English as an additional language are at an advanced stage of language development and able to access the full curriculum.
12. Pupils' standards of numeracy are generally average and the majority of pupils are confident in handling numbers. The mathematics department makes provision for the development of basic numerical skills and there is an emphasis on improving numeracy skills in mathematics lessons in all years. In subjects other than mathematics pupils are able to apply their numeracy skills in a satisfactory way. In geography, science and business studies, for example, pupils are able to use tables and graphs to present and interpret information accurately. In art, pupils are able to make good judgements of the size and proportion of objects. However, there is at present no school numeracy strategy with the consequence that numerical skills are not being developed in a systematic way in all subjects. However, a working group is presently engaged in the formulation of a school policy and it is intended that this will be in place by the start of the next school year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

13. The attitudes of pupils, including those with special educational needs, are very good and this is evident in most lessons, particularly when pupils are engaged in practical activities, for example in art, science, design and technology and physical education. Pupils show that they are keen to learn and make very good efforts to achieve their learning goals. They sustain concentration, respond well to challenges and are prepared to persevere when work is difficult. This high level of perseverance was evident, for example, in a religious education lesson where a Year 11 class of lower attaining pupils sustained concentration for long periods as they discussed issues relating to prejudice and discrimination in a thoughtful and reflective way.
14. Pupils' personal development and the quality of the relationships amongst all groups are excellent and a strength of the school. Pupils work, study and play well together and are prepared to listen to and show respect for the views of others. The mutual respect between teachers and pupils is a significant contributory factor to the good progress that pupils are making. Pupils want to succeed because they want to do well for their teachers. This was particularly evident, for example, in a Year 8 personal and social development lesson where sensitive issues surrounding drugs, alcohol and sex were discussed in a mature and responsible way. The preparedness of pupils to listen to, and show respect for, the viewpoint of others was also very apparent in a Year 9 history lesson on slavery and the meaning of freedom. Pupils listened very carefully to each other's opinions and were able to arrive at moral standpoints through reasoned discussion. This was in contrast to another Year 9 lesson on the same topic, where a small group of boys made deliberate

distracting remarks. However, the developing maturity of the vast majority of pupils was evident in the way in which they remained focused on the lesson despite these distractions. Boys and girls readily collaborate with each other and work well together in, for example, physical education, English, geography and personal and social development lessons. Pupils are very supportive of each other and pupils with special educational needs are well integrated with their peers. Parents attending the pre-inspection meeting commented very favourably on this aspect of school life. Pupils also form very good relationships with adults and the vast majority reciprocate the courtesy and respect they receive. The use of the tutor period has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This time is now used productively to support pupils' personal development.

15. The behaviour of the vast majority of pupils both in lessons and around the school is good. Most pupils are courteous, respectful and friendly and there are few incidents of inappropriate behaviour. This is particularly important in view of the limited amount of playground space available for pupils at break and lunchtimes. Pupils respond well to the school behaviour strategy, which places emphasis on the recognition and reward of good behaviour while making clear the consequences that follow unacceptable behaviour. As a consequence, behaviour and conduct improve as pupils get older and older pupils provide good role models for younger pupils. The school makes strenuous efforts to support and avoid the need to exclude pupils. These efforts include the use of a supervised withdrawal room, which is proving to be an effective means of managing pupils whose classroom behaviour is unacceptable. As a consequence the rate of exclusions has been falling. Nevertheless, the behaviour of a small number of pupils is such that it inevitably leads to exclusion from school. As a result, during the last school year there were 59 fixed-period exclusions. This figure is about the same as the number of exclusions found in secondary schools of similar size. There were no permanent exclusions. The school takes a serious view of bullying and the procedures for dealing with incidents of bullying are included in the staff handbook. Parents, at the pre-inspection meeting, stressed that the school is keen to be alerted at an early stage if any incidents occur and some gave examples of the speed with which the school had dealt with problems. Pupils interviewed during the week of the inspection also reported that occasional incidents of bullying had been dealt with effectively by the school and were confident that any future incidents would also be dealt with equally well.
16. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility for themselves and for others. The school prefect system gives responsibility to older pupils and prefects exercise this responsibility well in the general interests of all. Through the school council, for example, pupils make excellent contributions to the life of the school. The head and deputy head boys and girls attend school management meetings and raise issues arising from the school council. The school council also raises funds and takes the initiative in deciding how these funds should be spent. As a consequence significant improvements have been made to the school environment. These improvements include the building of the Princess Diana memorial garden, which is an attractive small leisure area suitable for quiet reflection, the provision of a secure area for the storage of bicycles, the redecoration of the boys and girls' toilets and the placing of an aquarium in the school entrance. Pupils contribute to the life of the school in a number of other ways. For example, they help in the library, supervise younger pupils, assist with school productions and welcome visitors to the school. Pupils look after school equipment well. Musical instruments, computers and scientific equipment are all handled with care. The corridors remain litter free all day and the pupils make good use of the litter boxes provided out of doors. Pupils organise charity events successfully and are supportive of the local community. For example, Year 8 pupils recently won the Mayor's education award for the greatest voluntary contribution to the community.
17. Attendance is good. It has been above the national average since the last inspection report and exceeds the target agreed with the LEA. Nevertheless, the school makes strenuous efforts to improve attendance. The school analyses group and individuals' attendance patterns and works hard to provide additional support for persistent absentees. Pupils are generally punctual at the start of morning and afternoon sessions and most lessons start on time.

18. The school has sustained the good attitudes and behaviour noted in the previous report; as a result of the many opportunities to show initiative and take responsibility, pupils are making excellent progress in their personal development.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

19. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good at both key stages. This finding endorses the view of almost 90 per cent of the parents who responded to the questionnaire. The quality of teaching is very similar at both key stages with 72 per cent of lessons good or better in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4. Teaching is very good or excellent in 32 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 3 and in 28 per cent of lessons at Key Stage 4. There were four unsatisfactory lessons; two in science, one in physical education and one in design and technology resistant materials. At both key stages, teaching is very good in English, and good in mathematics, art, geography, modern foreign languages, music and physical education. Teaching in the information and communications technology, business studies and social science courses offered in Key Stage 4 is good. In science and religious education, teaching is good at Key Stage 3 and very good at Key Stage 4. Teaching in design and technology and history is satisfactory at both key stages. There are examples of excellence in teaching in English at both key stages and in religious education at Key Stage 3 and in mathematics at Key Stage 4. Teaching of this quality has a significant effect on pupils' progress and achievement.
20. Teachers have good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach and draw on this effectively to plan their lessons, provide clear explanations and give appropriate guidance to pupils. In science, teachers make use of their very good subject knowledge to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding through skilful and challenging questioning. In art, teachers use their subject knowledge skilfully to introduce pupils to the work of artists and to new ideas or themes. The good subject knowledge of geography teachers is used effectively to provide a firm base for pupils' learning. Specialist information and communications technology teachers use their subject knowledge well to give clear explanations and provide good individual support. Very good subject knowledge is a strong feature in modern foreign languages, where all of the teachers are able to offer a second language and provide very good models for pupils. The excellent subject knowledge of music teachers enables them to explain concepts clearly with good illustrations. This helps pupils to build on their previous knowledge.
21. There are good examples of the teaching of basic skills in most subjects. The English department lays a very good foundation for the development of literacy skills and teachers in all subjects have a good awareness of the importance of teaching literacy skills. Most teachers are already using a range of strategies. For example, the spelling strategy of 'Look, Say, Cover, Write and Check' is well embedded in most lessons. There are opportunities for pupils to plan, draft and rewrite their own work in English, information and communications technology, physical education, design and technology and religious education. Support for the development of pupils' writing skills through the use of key words and writing frames is provided in most subjects. Pupils' reading skills are developed and consolidated through opportunities to read both silently and aloud in many lessons. Pupils develop their numerical skills in many subjects. In mathematics teachers regularly include activities to improve recall and pupils' mental agility in their lessons to develop numeracy skills. Numeracy is also developed through measuring and judging proportion in art and design and technology, and in interpreting data in geography and science. The school is in the process of developing a numeracy strategy to support the development of numerical skills in a more systematic way in all subjects.
22. Lesson planning is good. Teachers plan their lessons effectively and in many cases share their objectives with pupils. As a result most pupils are clear about what they are doing and are fully involved in their learning. In English, for example, learning objectives are made clear to pupils at the start of lessons and then revisited at the end to consolidate the learning that has taken place. This review of objectives at the end of lessons to check the level of pupils' understanding is also a feature in science lessons. Good lesson planning in English also ensures that classrooms are

ready when pupils arrive so lessons get off to a brisk start. In art, good demonstrations provide pupils with the steps they need to complete lesson tasks. Lessons are well planned in modern foreign languages to ensure that pupils learn something new in every lesson and have the opportunity to apply this new knowledge in speaking or writing tasks. The close matching of activities to the attainment levels of pupils is very good feature in the planning of lessons in music. Activities are carefully prepared to extend the higher attaining pupils and adjusted so that average and lower attaining pupils are also fully engaged in the lesson. This has a positive effect on pupils' levels of achievement.

23. Teachers have high expectations, which are communicated clearly to pupils. This leads to good progress and above average levels of achievement in most subjects. For example, in an excellent Year 7 English lesson, pupils made rapid progress in response to the teacher's challenging use of technical and difficult vocabulary to emphasise how language is used in argument and persuasion. The high level of challenge was also seen in a Year 11 lesson on the GCSE set text 'Stealing' by Carol Ann Duffy, where pupils were sufficiently confident to offer their own interpretations of the feelings and nature of the boy in the poem. The best teaching in geography is characterised by high expectations and lessons that proceed at a good pace. This, together with the skilful mix of probing questions, discussion and increasingly challenging activities, underpins the standards that are being achieved by these pupils. Teachers in modern foreign languages have high expectations that all pupils will work hard and behave well. In most, but not all, lessons, good use is made of French or German to challenge pupils and raise expectations. In the few lessons where this does not occur, too much use is made of English and insufficient use of the foreign language. In most areas of design and technology pupils respond positively to the demands of teachers and concentrate on their work with the consequence that good progress is made in the development of pupils' planning and practical skills. However, in some resistant materials lessons expectations are low and this leads to work that is not as good as it should be.
24. Teachers use a good range of strategies to enable pupils to learn and develop skills. Paired and small group work is used well in many subjects. In a Year 8 drama lesson, for example, pupils were able to gain an understanding of the effects of different forms of peer pressure through paired and small group role play activities. Small group work followed by presentations to the class was also used effectively in a personal social and health education lesson to draw together the information pupils had obtained at a careers convention. In modern foreign languages pupils benefit from regular opportunities to work with different partners in oral work. Small group work is used effectively in English to discuss and extend pupils' thinking, to undertake investigations in science and to discuss ideas and solve problems in business studies and social science. In religious education, pupils' personal development is enhanced by the discussion of a range of ideas about their own and other people's values and beliefs as in, for example, a Year 9 lesson where pupils considered if religious conviction might make any difference to how people responded to issues of poverty. Group work is also used effectively in physical education to develop pupils' skill levels.
25. Classroom management and organisation are good. Relationships between pupils and their teachers are very good. In most lessons, and particularly in personal and social development lessons, teachers create a very supportive atmosphere where all pupils, including those with special educational needs, feel secure enough to be able to offer suggestions, take risks and not be afraid of making mistakes. In English, very effective classroom management and organisation lead to most lessons being conducted at a good pace with learning tasks well matched to the needs of pupils. In design and technology and physical education, lessons are well organised, with concern for safety, and conducted in a manner which encourages pupils to participate. However, in a few lessons in design and technology resistant materials, weaknesses in planning led to a lack of involvement and unsatisfactory behaviour by a small number of pupils. Weaknesses in class management contributed to inappropriate pupil behaviour in one of the unsatisfactory lessons in science.
26. Teachers make good use of a variety of resources to stimulate pupils' interest and to make explanations clear. For example, teachers use the overhead projector and video clips well when making demonstrations and to illustrate ideas. This underpins the development of new knowledge and skills and encourages progress. In art, effective use is made of examples of artists', pupils'

and teachers' work to illustrate teaching points and stimulate pupils' thinking. Visiting speakers are well used as part of careers education. The careful selection of resources to suit the learning needs of individuals is a feature of geography lessons; this ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully engaged in learning activities for the duration of the lesson. In English and social science, good use is made of information and communications technology for pupils to draft, edit and refine their work. In business studies, pupils successfully use information and communications technology to create spreadsheets to carry out calculations. However, insufficient use is made of information and communications technology as a resource for learning in several subjects in Years 10 and 11, with the consequence that pupils who are not following the GCSE option are not provided with planned opportunities to develop their competence in the subject. In the majority of lessons teachers make good use of time and set deadlines for tasks to be completed. This provides an appropriate challenge to pupils and helps to maintain a good pace in lessons.

27. The marking of pupils' work is well used in several subjects to give pupils clear information on the standard of their work and on what they have to do in order to improve. Pupil self-evaluation and peer assessment are features of teaching in English. Marking in mathematics is regular and provides pupils with clear guidance on what they must do in order to improve. Marking in geography is closely linked to National Curriculum levels and GCSE grades so that pupils know the standards they are achieving. In art teachers use GCSE targets effectively to give pupils specific practical advice and to consolidate and improve the standard of their work. In social science at Key Stage 4, reference is regularly made to GCSE assessment criteria to give pupils clear guidance on how to consolidate and improve the standard of their work. This is having a positive effect of pupils' learning and achievement. Teachers' careful analyses of pupils' performance in physical education lessons help pupils to improve the quality of their performance and provide them with criteria against which they can evaluate their own performance. The marking of pupils' work in modern foreign languages is regular and generally encouraging, but often lacks the constructive comments needed to enable pupils to improve. Although 18 per cent of parents who responded to the pre-inspection questionnaire felt that pupils are given insufficient homework, inspection evidence indicates that homework is well used to consolidate and extend learning in most subjects. In English and modern foreign languages, for example, the high expectations that teachers have of their pupils are also apparent in the nature of the tasks set for homework. Homework is set regularly in information and communications technology, but the nature of the tasks set do not always match the attainment levels of the pupils.
28. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. These pupils are generally taught in mainstream classes. In most of these lessons, teachers are aware of the targets in pupils' individual education plans and take account of these in lesson planning. A feature of the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is the sequencing of small, inter-connected steps, supported by frequent revision, which facilitates learning and promotes good levels of achievement. As a consequence, most pupils with special educational needs are confident and often ask thoughtful questions in lessons. This helps to consolidate their understanding of the work being undertaken. The individual and small group teaching in the learning support base is very good. The specialist teacher and support assistants show a high level of commitment and provide very good support both within the base and in mainstream classes. The quality of provision in the learning support base was recognised in the Lloyds Bank National Teacher Award competition when the special educational needs co-ordinator was a finalist in the North Eastern Region and awarded £500 for the school. In the competition for teaching assistants one of the learning support assistants was declared the winner in the North East Region and awarded £3,500 for the school. This money has been used to provide new reading resources, a computer program and a photocopier for the learning support base.
29. The two pupils at an early stage of acquiring English as an additional language have good support from a language specialist funded by the local education authority for one afternoon each week. The teacher works with the pupils and provides learning programmes which the learning support assistants implement during the week. At other times the pupils follow the same curriculum as all other pupils in Year 10 and the specialist teacher provides practical ideas to help subject

teachers support these pupils' learning. Another bilingual pupil also helps the pupils in some lessons. This level of support is enabling the pupils to learn English at a good rate.

30. The school has made good progress in improving the quality of teaching and learning since the previous inspection report. The quality of teaching was then judged to be sound, with good teaching in almost half of lessons. The strengths identified in the previous report have been sustained, while improvements have been made in the areas of weakness. The overall quality of teaching is now good with much very good and some excellent teaching. The need to develop the range of learning strategies and make more consistent and regular use of homework was identified as a key issue for action in the last report. Good progress has been made in most subjects. A wider range of teaching strategies is now used to cater for pupils' different levels of attainment; homework is set regularly, and in most subjects used to consolidate and extend learning. The school is well placed to continue this improvement.

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

31. Overall, the school provides a good curriculum. The curriculum is broad and balanced at both key stages and there are very good opportunities for pupils' personal and social development. All National Curriculum subjects are taught with the exception of information and communications technology for all pupils at Key Stage 4. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good.
32. The school has made satisfactory progress in its curricular provision since the previous inspection, Information and communications technology is now taught as a separate subject in Key Stage 3 and there is good planning to ensure that pupils cover all aspects of the subject. Religious education is now given sufficient time to ensure that the Locally Agreed Syllabus is taught in sufficient depth. However, in order to accommodate a second foreign language for some pupils at Key Stage 3, curriculum time is taken from physical education. As a consequence, pupils taking the second language do not receive their full entitlement in physical education. Also, there are limited opportunities for pupils, other than those who are taking the subject as a GCSE option to use information and communications technology Key Stage 4. As a consequence, all pupils do not receive their entitlement in the subject in Years 10 and 11. The school is in the process of reviewing the curriculum to ensure that all pupils receive their full curriculum entitlement. Similarly, although the weekly teaching time is not yet consistent with government recommendations, there are plans to make this possible by the start of the next school year. Other important planned changes include the extension of drama into Year 9 and an increased emphasis on the use of literacy and numeracy in all subjects. Plans also include extending opportunities for pupils to develop their use of thinking skills and to use aspects of the work-related curriculum to give them a wider range of opportunities to achieve.
33. At Key Stage 3, the curriculum is satisfactory and builds on the very good links with the main partner primary schools. The National Curriculum subjects, together with religious education, information and communications technology and personal and social development form the basis of the curriculum at this key stage. The personal and social development programme includes well-structured units on sex education and drug and alcohol misuse. Sex education is carefully planned to take account of the age and maturity of pupils and aspects of the programme are taught in science and child development. About a quarter of pupils in both Year 8 and Year 9 study a second modern foreign language. This is made possible by reducing the amount of time spent in the other foreign language and in physical education. Consequently, these pupils are prevented from being taught the full programme of study in physical education.
34. At Key Stage 4, pupils benefit from a suitable curriculum and follow a broad core of English, mathematics, a double award or three separate science subjects, religious education, a modern foreign language, a design and technology subject, physical education and personal and social development. In Years 9 and 10, sex education is taught effectively as part of the Added Power

and Understanding in Sex Education Project, organised by Tees Valley Health Authority. Pupils also select from a range of options that include GCSE short courses in French and German. Latin is offered as a GCSE subject but pupils taking this as an option complete their studies outside of normal school time. A small number of pupils are disapplied from modern foreign languages to follow a more appropriate vocational curriculum, involving the development of basic skills and preparation for work. Relatively small numbers of pupils in Year 10 and Year 11 follow the ASDAN course or a GNVQ Foundation course in manufacturing. The GNVQ course is taught entirely at the Hartlepool College of Further Education. The vocational provision caters well for the pupils for whom a wider range of academic subjects would be inappropriate.

35. Curriculum planning is good in most subjects and it is very good in English and modern foreign languages. For example, planning in English ensures that all pupils are provided with intellectual challenge and in modern foreign languages, topics are very well sequenced to closely match pupils' learning needs. Good progress has been in the revision of schemes of work to ensure that they conform to very recent changes in the National Curriculum. A high priority is given to pupils' personal and social development to increase both their involvement and interest in school life and to motivate them to achieve high standards. Registration, assemblies and tutor times at both key stages are well planned and organised as part of the school's very good pastoral system. Homework is planned in accordance with the school's recently revised policy and set regularly in most subjects and for all pupils.
36. Careers and work-related education is very good and benefits from the school's well-established links with careers advisers, local colleges, training providers and employers. Year 9 pupils are given good guidance in their option choices and Year 10 and 11 pupils benefit from a taught unit on 'moving on' and from visits to the local sixth forms, the college of further education and other training providers. A very successful careers convention is provided for these older pupils. This provision is very well planned and based on the importance of pupils acquiring the skills to manage their own lifetime learning and career development. A programme of lunchtime talks by visiting outside speakers is well attended by older pupils. Parents are invited to all the important events and play a full part in helping to guide their children's choices. Work experience is well co-ordinated and provided for all pupils in Year 10. The school finds the majority of placements and pupils prepare for this valuable experience through a process of writing an application, including a curriculum vitae, and attending an interview. The work-related curriculum is being extended to meet the needs of all pupils more fully. An increasing number of subjects are contributing to the development of this aspect of the curriculum, including English, science and geography. A thorough audit has been carried out to help plan the ways it can meet the new expectations for work-related education set out by the government in 'Curriculum 2000'. Overall, these aspects of the curriculum help most pupils to form very well considered goals for their future and to cope well with the transition to the next stage of education or employment.
37. There are very good relationships with local schools and colleges and these contribute to the quality of the curriculum and to pupils' learning. A close and constructive working relationship exists with Thornhill Special School and this will aid the smooth transition of some of these pupils to High Tunstall, when Thornhill closes in August. High Tunstall is actively involved in liaison work local schools to ensure that transfer procedures for all pupils into Year 7 are effective. This work not only helps to ensure that the transfer arrangements are smooth, but also that all necessary information is received and that curriculum links between the primary schools and High Tunstall are well supported. Examples of this close co-operation include initiatives led by the English, mathematics, science and music departments. The school has worked with these partner schools to provide literacy summer schools and the Arts for Everyone project which provided many rich opportunities for successful collaborative work with other schools and colleges.
38. The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities in which a large number of pupils participate. This is a strength of the school and recognised as such by parents at the pre-inspection meeting. However, 12 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire disagreed. The range of extra-curricular activities offered by the school, not only considerably enriches the curriculum, but also extends the range of pupils' cultural experiences and opportunities to achieve. Pupils respond well to these opportunities and standards are high. Music

is a particular strength of the school. Musical activities include string and woodwind ensembles, wind band, keyboard club, choir, and junior brass band. There are numerous trips and visits to theatres together with geography and history field trips. There are also visits to Germany and France. The school is keen to give pupils the opportunity to take part in national competitions and competes with some success in such things as the Motorola Youth Parliament, in Crown Court and Magistrates Court Mock Trials, the Kielder Challenge, which involves pupils from both High Tunstall and Thornhill Special School, and the town mathematics challenge. A high proportion of pupils take part in some form of extra-curricular sport. There is a very good range of inter-form competitions and the school fields teams in most areas of competitive sport against other schools and achieves a good level of success. Individual pupils achieve representative honours at district, county and sometimes national level. There are also numerous subject-based clubs that support pupils' learning and personal development.

39. Overall, the school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is very good. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory. The aims of the school embrace high aspirations for the life of individuals and the community. These find clear expression throughout the life and work of the school. The school has a positive ethos, which permeates all lessons and the many other activities.
40. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Because the school does not have an area large enough to accommodate all pupils different year groups attend assemblies on each day of the week while other years remain in their tutor groups. All of the assemblies and tutor groups are conducted in an orderly and thoughtful way and all assemblies have a strong focus on moral and community issues and values. However, it is only in some assemblies that a collective act of worship takes place and as a consequence the school does not meet the statutory requirement in this respect. Nevertheless, the school places a great emphasis on reflection and striving to overcome difficulties. This was seen in a Year 8 assembly, for example, where pupils were enthralled by the linking of the words of a popular song with the performance of athletes in the Sydney Olympics and thought deeply about sacrifices athletes must have made in order to achieve their goals. Again, in an assembly with older pupils, reflections on their own position and that of pupils in Tanzania, to whom the school had sent contributions, were uplifting and thought provoking. Spiritual development is fostered through some lessons and a wide range of activities. For example, in English pupils have the opportunity to reflect on human nature through poetry and novels such as 'Animal Farm'. In geography pupils reflect on the forces of nature in considering the causes and consequences of, for example, earthquakes. In many aspects of music, pupils are led to reflect on the spiritual dimension of life, particularly when considering the different moods that composers are trying to convey through their music. Religious education makes a major contribution to pupils' spiritual development. There are substantial opportunities to consider underlying meaning and significance of, for example, stories from major faiths and how faith impacts on people's actions. Pupils reflect on their own beliefs and how these are formed. There is a clear emphasis in religious education on personal reflection and searching for meaning and the atmosphere is one in which pupils feel at ease when discussing personal and religious issues. However, although there are good examples of pupils' spiritual development being promoted in many subjects, there is a need for a greater awareness of opportunities to explore both religious and non-religious aspects of spirituality, such as human achievement, and the mystery and wonder of the natural world.
41. Provision for moral development is very good. The school actively encourages a sense of right and wrong. Staff and prefects provide good role models. Pupils understand what is expected of them in terms of behaviour and respect and consideration for other people and for their property. Pupils respond well to the school's code of conduct with its clear emphasis on self-discipline and the positive reinforcement of good behaviour. The positive culture of self-discipline and reliability are evident in behaviour in corridors, the dining area, and the school grounds. This is particularly evident when pupils queue in an orderly manner to board the school buses at the end of the school day. The respect with which they treat the school buildings and amenities is particularly evidenced in the way pupils use the Princess Diana memorial garden and the lack of graffiti around the school. The work covered in religious education plays a significant part in pupils'

moral development, providing opportunities for pupils to study the impact of religious ideas on behaviour. Provision for pupils' moral development is very much at the heart of the very good programme of personal and social development. Pupils' moral development is also supported through the study of literature in English and the observance of rules and fair play in physical education. The Young Enterprise initiative also emphasises moral approaches to decision making in business and industry and the citizenship programme includes areas of study such as developing world debt relief.

42. Provision for pupils' social development is very good and a strength of the school. Pupils are provided with many opportunities to develop self-confidence and self-esteem, and to show initiative. These opportunities feature regularly in lessons and include not only such activities as collaborative work in English, drama, music and physical education, but also through service on the school council and participation in the mentoring scheme. Aspects of the personal and social development programme also develop pupils' awareness of social issues such as teenage pregnancy, drug taking and alcoholism. Many other issues of social consequence are covered across the curriculum. For example, the impact of environmental issues on people's lives is tackled in science and social science and the social consequences of decision-making in business and industry are considered in business studies. Pupils are offered numerous opportunities for social development through community work, work placements and the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Pupils are given every opportunity to relate positively to one another and to teachers and visitors to the school. A particularly strong feature of pupils' social development is the consideration that is shown towards pupils with physical disabilities and the good quality of relationships between these pupils and their peers.
43. Provision for pupils' cultural development is very good. The school strives to develop in pupils an appreciation of their own cultural traditions in many subjects of the curriculum and most obviously through English literature, drama, music, art, history and geography, personal and social development, and social science. This work is well supported by educational visits to places of diverse cultural and historical interest. Pupils also learn about some of the diversity and richness of other cultures and this is particularly important in a school where there are very few ethnic minority pupils. For example, the work of authors from different cultural backgrounds is studied in English. In history, pupils gain insights into Islamic civilisation. In design and technology different cultural sources are used for stimulating design work. In art, effective use is made of a wide range of artistic traditions including studies of Indian, Egyptian and early Christian art to stimulate pupils' creative thinking. In religious education both Christian beliefs and tradition and those of other cultures and faiths are explored in a sensitive way. The school's provision for pupils' cultural development is well advanced and makes a significant contribution to the preparation of pupils to live in a diverse society.
44. Overall, provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has continued to improve since the last inspection and makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development. As at the time of the previous report, the school does not meet the requirement to provide a daily act of collective worship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

45. The school takes its responsibilities for child protection and pupils' welfare very seriously and complies with all recommended procedures for child protection. The school provides a supportive environment in which to learn, and responsibilities for child protection are clearly defined. The staff handbook gives detailed information and guidance to staff on the care and protection of pupils, together with the names of designated members of staff and names and addresses of the appropriate authorities. Links with the relevant child protection agencies are very good and there are excellent procedures in place to ensure that all matters relating to the protection and welfare of pupils are dealt with thoroughly. The governing body fulfils its responsibilities for health and

safety. Regular fire drills take place and the inspection of all electrical equipment takes place on a regular basis. The health and safety audit is complete, and a sufficient number of staff hold first aid certificates. Any accidents are properly recorded and the school's policy for medicine administration is well prepared and detailed.

46. Continuity of care is a feature of the school pastoral system, which is built on the role of the form tutors. Pupils are in contact with their form tutors every morning and afternoon for registration and form time and for their weekly personal and social development lessons. This enables tutors to develop a very good knowledge of individual pupils and their particular social and educational needs. This knowledge underpins the school's provision for pupils' personal development, which is a strength of the school. Year team leaders play important roles in ensuring continuity in care and provide good support for form tutors. Form tutors liaise with curriculum team leaders and year team leaders, all of whom meet regularly to discuss and monitor individual pupils' academic and social progress. Year leaders also have regular meetings with the senior leadership team to discuss pupil's progress. As consequence, pupils are provided with very good support as they move through the school. The quality of this provision makes a significant contribution to their progress and achievement. Continuity at the time of transfer from the primary schools is ensured by school's close links with these schools. Both parents and heads of primary schools believe that the transfer arrangements are effective and that the school induction procedures, for both pupils and parents, are very good. The school's good links with post-16 institutions, the careers service and local employers ensure continuity at the time pupils leave school.
47. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. The introduction of the 'remove' system of isolation, where pupils exhibiting unacceptable behaviour are sent for a limited period of time, is helping to reduce the number of fixed-term exclusions. Pupils are encouraged to be self-reliant and to take initiative and responsibility. The effectiveness of this is seen in the newly developed pupil mentor system, in which Year 7 and Year 8 pupils engage in peer group mentoring, which is working well. Pupils gain much from this experience. The school bullying policy clearly states that 'all pupils have the right to attend school and learn in an atmosphere of peace and security' and achieves a good deal of success in achieving this goal. The school makes a commitment to take action when any pupil threatens, intimidates or attacks another pupil verbally or physically. A detailed record of all incidents is kept. Bullying is covered as a topic in the personal and social development programme and the school council has contributed to the school bullying policy.
48. The school places great emphasis on the need for pupils to be in regular attendance and is making strenuous efforts to improve pupils' attendance. The recently appointed home-school liaison assistant, together with year team leaders, closely monitors pupils who have poor attendance records. Parents are contacted immediately a pupil is absent without notification. Parents are also informed about the attendance rate of their children in school reports and in the Record of Achievement. Good attendance is recognised as part of the school system of merit awards. The school has maintained and enhanced the good standards of care provided for pupils noted in the previous inspection report and this is having a positive effect on pupils' learning.
49. Overall, procedures for assessing pupils' progress and attainment are very good. A rigorous system is used to collect a range of assessment information about pupils' attainment on entry to the school including Key Stage 2 National Curriculum test results, NFER test results in English and mathematics, and pupils' reading scores. All of this information is analysed and shared with all subject departments. There are careful procedures for assessing and for monitoring pupils' progress as they proceed from Year 7 to Year 11. In Years 7 to 9, this includes a twice-yearly review with interim reports to track pupils' progress and attainment. There is a very good arrangement of pastoral and subject leaders meetings to consider the outcomes of the reviews and for form tutors to check progress regularly with pupils. The value of this is that pastoral and curriculum teams work very closely together to support pupils' progress. The recently revised school policy provides clear assessment principles, practices and procedures and a supporting framework for all subjects. Subject policies are mostly good or very good. They have been written to provide clear procedures for ongoing assessments. These include end of unit coursework assessments, interim, end of year and end of key stage assessments, together with

arrangements for record keeping, marking and the standardisation of teachers' assessments and reporting. Policies also refer to pupils' self-assessment and how the outcomes of assessment link with the school strategies for monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. Procedures are very good and well used, for example, in English, science, mathematics and modern foreign languages. Marking is effective and in most subjects linked with National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades. The school meets statutory requirements for reporting pupils' assessments at the end of Key Stage 3. Procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs are very good and well documented. Individual records of achievement are comprehensive, covering all National Curriculum subjects.

50. Overall, the use of assessment information to inform teaching and planning is good. Assessment information is carefully analysed and used effectively in English, mathematics, science and modern foreign languages to establish teaching groups. A school approach to target setting at Key Stage 3 is developing well, as National Curriculum attainment levels are available for all foundation as well as the core subjects. Target setting at this key stage is now established and well used in English, mathematics, science, modern foreign languages, history and geography. All subjects set GCSE examination targets for pupils in Key Stage 4. These targets are used effectively to challenge and guide pupils so that they can strive to achieve or exceed them. The school has an effective system for monitoring pupils' progress so that any underachievement is picked up at an early stage. Marking schemes are closely matched to National Curriculum attainment targets and there are firm intentions to use assessment information to review and adjust planning and teaching so that all pupils make at least satisfactory or better progress. In most subjects detailed analyses of coursework assessments, tests and examination results help subject teachers to question the impact and effectiveness of their work. Assessment information and target setting at Key Stages 3 and 4 are used to measure the value that different subjects add to pupils' progress and attainment.
51. The school has systematic procedures for the identification and assessment of pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are carefully prepared and pupils' progress in relation to the targets specified in them is closely monitored. Detailed record of pupils' progress are maintained by the special educational needs co-ordinator and all annual reviews of statements of special educational needs are well documented.
52. Reports to parents are generally good. Where reports are good, teachers' comments provide a precise indication of a pupil's subject strengths and weaknesses, how these relate to National Curriculum levels or GCSE grades and what needs to be done by pupils to improve the standard of their work. However, there is some variation in the usefulness and clarity of information provided in a few subjects. The school is efficient and has very good mechanisms to monitor and support pupils' academic progress. At both key stages, the twice-yearly reviews of pupils' progress enable pastoral and subject teachers to provide additional support and mentoring where this is necessary. Parents are informed about any problems and are encouraged to support their children's learning. Good use is made of support from the school's learning mentor and outside agencies such as staff based at the education development centre, particularly when pupils' progress is affected by marked behavioural or other learning problems.
53. Good progress has been made since the previous inspection to evaluate the use and impact of subject assessment work to ensure that there is effective and consistent practice across the school. Opportunities for pupil self-assessment have been improved but there is still some variation in the quality of reports to parents.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

54. The school has built up a good partnership with parents. They provide good support for pupils' learning. Responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire and comments made at the pre-inspection meeting with parents show that the majority of parents have very positive views of the school. In particular, parents feel that the school expects pupils to work hard and achieve their

best and that this, together with good teaching, is helping their children to make good progress. Parents also feel that the school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.

55. The school has good links with most parents, and tutors know pupils and their families well. This provides a considerable support to pupils' learning. Links with parents of pupils with special educational needs are good. Regular meetings with parents are organised and all are invited to contribute to the setting of targets in the individual education plans of their children.
56. The school is welcoming to parents and, in response to the pre-inspection questionnaire, the majority of parents expressed satisfaction about the approachability of the school and the way in which the school deals with questions or problems, although a few are not always satisfied by the outcomes. A number of parents expressed dissatisfaction with the information the school provides, the amount of homework and how closely the school works with parents. Inspection evidence shows that the school provides good quality information to parents. A very attractive and informative brochure is provided for parents of pupils entering the school in Year 7. Another booklet is provided in Year 9 as parents and pupils consider the option choices to be taken in Years 10 and 11. The information provided in these documents is clear and provides parents and pupils with a sound basis for choice. The governors' annual report to parents is informative and complies with all statutory requirements. Through pupils' homework planners, newsletters, reports and parents' evenings the school attempts to keep parents well informed about school events and their children's progress. Regular newsletters are sent to parents giving much useful information about school events and pupils' achievements, including National Curriculum test and GCSE results. There are regular consultations on pupils' progress at open evenings and parents are contacted at an early stage if their children cause any kind of concern. They are also informed when their children achieve particularly well and parents appreciate this initiative.
57. Parents are actively encouraged to come into school to help and a significant number of parents take advantage of this opportunity to help the school in a variety of ways. For example, parents help with the invigilation of examinations, school drama productions, clerical work and pupils' reading. The Parent School Association and Friends of High Tunstall Music Association raise valuable funds for the school and enable the school to purchase additional resources.
58. The good partnership with parents noted in the previous report is being maintained and the strong links that the school has with parents contribute significantly to the progress that pupils make.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

59. The overall leadership and management of the school are excellent. The leadership skills of the headteacher were recognised when he was a regional finalist in the 1999 Lloyds Bank National Teaching Awards. The head and senior leadership team provide excellent leadership and a clear educational direction for the school. The school has a strong positive ethos and provides a well-ordered learning environment in which there is a strong commitment to continuous improvement and the raising of standards in all areas. Central to the realisation of this commitment are the processes of school improvement planning and self-evaluation, which are exemplary, and having a clear impact on the raising of standards in the school. School improvement planning reflects the school aims and all curriculum and pastoral improvement plans identify relevant priorities and cover both medium and long-term goals. All of the issues identified in this report feature in the school improvement plans. Plans are costed effectively and have clearly defined targets, tasks, success criteria, staff responsibilities and timescales. All school plans serve as working documents and are directly linked to action to improve the quality of education the school provides. The school is very well placed to continue its improvement.
60. The school's commitment to continuous improvement is underpinned by an open-mindedness and willingness to identify, adapt and apply good practice from a range of sources in order to monitor and evaluate its work. A good example of this is the way in which the senior leadership team have evaluated a number of ways of carrying out classroom observations before deciding on the method most appropriate for the needs of the school. All teachers have been trained in carrying out lesson

observations and these now form an integral part of the school's procedures for improving teaching and learning. They are embedded in the school's self-evaluation procedures and carried out by curriculum team leaders, members of the senior leadership team and other teachers. Through these observations the senior leadership team, and others with leadership responsibilities, are very clear about the school's strengths and weaknesses and are having a direct impact on improving the quality of teaching and learning.

61. The deputy head with responsibility for assessment has established a comprehensive assessment database and provides detailed analyses of pupils' performance to curriculum and pastoral team leaders and subject teachers. Procedures for the monitoring and evaluation of examination data are good. The senior leadership team analyse examination results and seek explanations for any discrepancies in performance between subjects and over time, and identify target areas for improvement. Year team leaders closely monitor the use that form tutors make of assessment information to identify any areas of underachievement by individual pupils and set targets for improvement.
62. The overall quality of management provided by subject leaders is very good. The quality of management and leadership in mathematics and music is excellent and having significant effects on standards. Similarly, very good leadership in English, science, geography, modern foreign languages, religious education, business studies and social science is ensuring that there is a constant focus on improving teaching and learning in these subjects. Subject leadership in art, information and communications technology, physical education and design and technology is good. Subject leadership in history, although satisfactory, is presently affected by the absence through illness of the subject leader. The management and co-ordination of special educational needs is good and there is a strong sense of teamwork amongst all concerned with the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The requirements of the Code of Practice are clearly understood and the governing body is kept well informed on all matters relating to special educational needs.
63. The governing body is effective and supportive. With the exceptions of the provision of information and communications technology at Key Stage 4 and the provision of a daily act of collective worship, it meets its statutory responsibilities. Governors take a keen interest in the work of the school and provide the school with a substantial amount of specialist help and advice. Positive relationships exist between the governing body and the senior leadership team. Governors receive regular detailed reports from the head and other senior members of staff, and have a good level of awareness of the school's strengths and weaknesses. The quality of financial management and planning is excellent. Governors are actively involved with the head and the senior leadership team in financial planning and monitoring and are given good support by the school business and operations manager. The school has effective procedures to ensure that the principles of best value for money are applied in the use of its resources and all additional funding received by the school is used for the intended purposes. Action has been taken to attend to the few issues raised in the most recent auditor's report.
64. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are very good. The assistant headteacher with responsibility for staff development has paid close attention to the identification of individual teachers' development needs and ways in which these can be matched to school improvement priorities. Arrangements for the support and professional development of both newly qualified teachers and teachers in training are very good and highly valued by participants, as are the induction arrangements for all new members of staff. Subject teachers are appropriately qualified in their main teaching areas and support staff make effective contributions in lessons. A significant proportion of subject teachers lack the information and communications technology skills necessary to be able to incorporate these skills into their subjects with confidence. This is having an adverse effect on standards. The school is aware of this issue and the development of teachers' information and communications technology skills is included in the school improvement plan. The school has recently strengthened support for information and communications technology with the appointment of a second technician. The number of specialist teaching and non-teaching staff is sufficient to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. The skilled and experienced secretarial and clerical staff provide a welcoming school office and contribute very effectively to the administration and organisation of the school.

65. The accommodation provided in the mobile classrooms, currently used by the humanities subjects, is poor. As rainwater penetrates the roof and walls, the teaching rooms are permanently damp. This causes problems in the conservation of materials and creates unacceptable conditions for teaching and learning. The school intends to remove these classrooms as soon as practical. The school is making very good use of the Youth Centre, which is now the responsibility of the school management. In addition to providing additional teaching space it is also providing much needed social areas for Years 10 and 11 and an early morning breakfast club.
66. Most subject areas benefit from suites of rooms, which are usually large enough for the size of classes, although not in information and communications technology where large groups of pupils have to share computers and there are no spaces for writing. The school has worked hard to update the provision in some areas. For example, £98,000 has been spent in refurbishing two very attractive food technology rooms, and creating a shared information and communications technology resource area for pupil and staff use.
67. The business and operations manager and his team maintain the school premises to a high state of cleanliness and this makes a positive contribution to the ethos of the school. Whilst movement around the school is orderly and well co-ordinated, the narrowness of some corridors, and staircases causes congestion at times of lesson changeover and break times. Overall, the general state of decoration and maintenance is good. In classrooms and open areas there are attractive displays, which celebrate the work of pupils and illustrate the wide range of curricular and extra-curricular activities the school provides.
68. The overall provision of resources to support learning is good and improved since the last inspection. The library is contained in the learning resource centre. It is well used and holds an adequate supply of books and journals. The number of computers available for teaching and learning has improved considerably and these are now networked. As a consequence more use of information and communications technology, is being made, particularly in mathematics and geography. However, there are insufficient computers in music to meet the needs of Curriculum 2000. There is also increased use of the community as a resource for learning and this is particularly seen in business studies, science, geography and social science.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

69. In order to raise standards further and the quality of education provided, the governors, senior leadership team and staff of High Tunstall School, with the help of the local authority should:

- Raise expectations and improve curriculum planning, assessment and teaching in design and technology resistant materials.
(paragraphs:2,6,19,23,25,107-113)
- Ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to information and communications technology at Key Stage 4.
(paragraphs:5,26,31,32,64,94,126,132,135,142,151-152)
- Ensure that there is sufficient time for full coverage of the National Curriculum in physical education for all pupils at Key Stage 3.
(paragraphs: 32,33,160)
- As a matter of urgency, press the case for the replacement of the mobile classrooms.
(paragraph:65,119,128,166)

There are no additional weaknesses.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	194
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	72

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	27	42	26	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11	Sixth form
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1148	
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	163	

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y 11	Sixth form
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	8	
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	220	

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	24

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	32
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	27

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	6.3
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
	2000	118	100	218

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	75 (53)	88 (77)	78 (69)
	Girls	68 (80)	62 (82)	62 (73)
	Total	143 (133)	150 (159)	140 (142)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	64 (57)	67 (68)	63 (61)
	National	(63)	(62)	(55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	29 (23)	47 (38)	30 (18)
	National	(28)	(38)	(23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	68 (76)	90 (75)	68 (75)
	Girls	61 (103)	68 (89)	57 (81)
	Total	129 (179)	158 (164)	125 (156)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	58 (77)	71 (71)	56 (66)
	National	(64)	(64)	(60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	36 (55)	42 (36)	27 (25)
	National	(31)	(37)	(28)

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
	2000	109	116	225

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	51 (49)	193 (103)	106 (109)
	Girls	70 (71)	110 (111)	115 (111)
	Total	121 (120)	212 (214)	221 (220)
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	54 (53)	94 (94)	98 (96)
	National	(47)	(91)	(96)

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

GCSE results	GCSE point score
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Average point score per pupil	School	43 (41)
	National	(38)

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	19
	National	

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	10
Bangladeshi	8
Chinese	5
White	1116
Any other minority ethnic group	5

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	1	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	58	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)	62.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.3

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Education support staff: Y7– Y11

Total number of education support staff	18
Total aggregate hours worked per week	562

Deployment of teachers: Y7– Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	76.6
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Financial information

Financial year	1999 - 2000
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	£
Total income	2,635,266
Total expenditure	2,579,511
Expenditure per pupil	2,225
Balance brought forward from previous year	96,600
Balance carried forward to next year	152,355

Average teaching group size: Y7– Y11

Key Stage 3	26.1
Key Stage 4	23.8

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1148
Number of questionnaires returned	492

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	38	51	7	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	35	54	2	0	9
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	50	6	0	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	26	52	15	2	5
The teaching is good.	30	58	2	0	10
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	32	46	10	3	9
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	47	4	1	4
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	60	37	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	51	11	1	8
The school is well led and managed.	36	50	4	0	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	35	54	4	1	6
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	46	10	3	17

Other issues raised by parents

Written comments were included with 4 per cent of the questionnaires returned. Several of these comments expressed strong support for the school and praised the way in which the school helps pupils to become mature and responsible young people. A small number of parents' comments related to the placement of pupils in teaching groups, the setting of homework and the way individual cases of unacceptable behaviour had not, in their view, been followed up thoroughly enough.

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

ENGLISH

70. Pupils' attainment in English at the ages of 14 and 16 is above average. Fourteen-year-old pupils who took the National Curriculum tests in 1999 entered the school in Year 7 with below average attainment. In the tests they achieved standards that were close to the national average and close to the standards achieved by pupils in similar schools. However, taking the four years from 1996 to 1999 together, the performance of pupils at 14 was above average. In 2000 these standards rose even higher and for the first time boys performed almost as well as girls. Pupils' attainment in the 1999 GCSE examinations was also above the national average with both boys and girls gaining a greater proportion of A* to C grades than pupils in similar schools. It is a real strength of the department's work that they enter almost all the pupils in the year group, including those with special educational needs, for both English and English literature examinations. Given that pupils gain a greater percentage of higher grades and fewer F and G grades in the GCSE examination than is the case nationally, this means that both high attaining and lower attaining pupils are reaching higher standards at High Tunstall School than at many other secondary schools.
71. These high standards were also reflected in the work observed during the inspection in all aspects of English. Pupils have good reading skills because English teachers teach the different forms of reading such as scanning and skimming for information. Emphasis is also placed on teaching pupils how to use the skills of inference and deduction so they are able to identify different layers of meaning, select key features of a text and analyse the author's intentions. This enables pupils in Years 10 and 11 to appreciate and enjoy both pre-twentieth century poems such as *To His Coy Mistress* by John Donne and modern poetry such as *Stealing* by Carol Ann Duffy. They are given plenty of opportunities to practise their reading skills both in English and in other lessons. Year 7 pupils have an impressive knowledge of language as a result of the National Literacy Strategy and are able to talk about and understand, for instance, connective phrases, similes and metaphors and the difference between emotive and informative language.
72. Standards of writing are generally good, and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to communicate ideas and opinions clearly. They use a variety of styles ranging from report writing to some very thoughtful and moving poetry. This is achieved partly through the way that they are taught about the process of writing, studying the language used by other writers to improve their own work. This was illustrated in two Year 7 lessons where pupils analysed the language used in reports and letters of complaint before starting their own writing. At the age of 14, most pupils are writing confidently with good technical accuracy and varied sentence structure. By the age of 16, higher attaining pupils are able to use language very precisely to achieve the desired effect. Narrative writing is well controlled, using suspense, humour and satire. Informative writing is coherent and well structured. Lower attaining pupils can write using imaginative and vivid vocabulary even though some work lacks technical accuracy.
73. During Years 7, 8 and 9 pupils are confident speakers both in small groups and in class situations. They become increasingly able to adapt their talk to the demands of different contexts and respond appropriately to others, questioning and building on others' contributions. In Years 10 and 11, however, many girls tend to become less active in discussions. Not all teachers ensure that girls are encouraged to offer opinions and boys are sometimes allowed to dominate classroom discussion. In all talking activities pupils listen to others' views with attention and respect.
74. Standards of literacy are good and are supported by sound strategies in other subject areas. For instance, in science pupils are encouraged to write their observations in their own words and are given guidance on how to write up experiments. In history, personal and social development, science, geography, design and technology and religious education they are given opportunities

to consolidate their reading skills, sometimes reading for pleasure, at other times for information or research. Almost all subject teachers give pupils opportunities to discuss their work before writing and when marking pupils' work they identify spelling and grammatical errors.

75. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their English lessons. They enjoy the work, are able to concentrate, respond well to challenging tasks, persevering when work is difficult, and work confidently and independently. They behave well, work together sensibly and support one another in their lessons. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect throughout the whole department and this promotes pupils' learning and progress because pupils want to succeed and to please their teachers. It also means that pupils feel sufficiently secure to ask questions when their understanding is incomplete.
76. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Because of this pupils' progress and achievement are very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection and some excellent teaching was seen. There are many strengths in teaching. Objectives for learning are often shared with pupils and revisited at the end of lessons to demonstrate the learning that has taken place. Pupils are told what a teacher will look for in their work so that they know how to gain good marks. Lessons are well planned and classrooms are ready before pupils arrive which leads to brisk openings and no time wasting. Teachers organise lessons so that they are able to provide pupils with individual support as the need arises.
77. Pupils are given many opportunities to plan their own work, to undertake problem-solving activities, to assess their own progress and to read other pupils' work. All these elements lead pupils to become independent learners, involved in and responsible for their own learning. This was well illustrated in a Year 11 lesson when the teacher used drama techniques to allow pupils to explore different interpretations of a poem by Carol Ann Duffy. In a Year 10 lesson comparing the styles of extracts from Bram Stoker's *Dracula* and a short story by H G Wells, the teacher's excellent knowledge of the materials and his pupils ensured that the most effective methods were used to take the class rapidly through new learning. These pupils had recently gained average scores in the end of Year 9 National Curriculum tests. By the end of the lesson pupils had consolidated the reading skills of skimming, scanning and inferring and had practised their note-taking skills. They were able to explore different layers of meaning in the extracts, selecting key features of the language to illustrate their understanding. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and this leads pupils to make very good intellectual effort. In an excellent Year 8 poetry lesson pupils took real delight and pride in discovering the hidden meaning in a very difficult poem. The teacher encouraged pupils to use problem-solving skills, to hypothesise, take risks and extend their vocabulary. The pupils left the room still talking animatedly about the learning they had just experienced.
78. Good improvement has been achieved since the previous inspection. The department has led the school in focusing on spelling in pupils' written work. There have been major improvements in the attainment of low attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to such a point that almost all of them now attain two GCSE grades at the age of 16. Teaching is regularly monitored and has improved. The curriculum is regularly reviewed and the quality of drama has improved. The improving levels of attainment are being promoted by the increasingly sophisticated use of assessment data. This enables the department both to identify and target pupils who are underachieving and to identify areas of the curriculum and aspects of teaching, which need developing. A particular feature of English and drama lessons is the use of self-assessment and peer group assessment where pupils identify the strengths in their work together with aspects that could be improved. They do this with sensitivity and tact.
79. The very good standards of teaching and learning and the developments put into place since the previous inspection, have been promoted through the very good leadership and management of the subject. The team leader heads a team of committed and energetic teachers who work well together in constantly reviewing and improving their practice. The English department is a highly effective department that, through its focus on monitoring and evaluation, is being very successful in improving pupils' attainment and progress.

MATHEMATICS

80. Pupils' overall attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in mathematics taken at the age of 14 was average in comparison with all schools, but above average in comparison with similar schools. The results of the tests taken in 2000 show that pupils' attainment is above the standards attained in 1999, with a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 7. As in previous years there were no significant differences in the performance of boys and girls. Comparison of standards of attainment on entry to the school with the results in the tests taken at the end of Year 9 show that pupils' levels of achievement are good.
81. Inspection evidence indicates that the overall attainment of pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9 is above average. Because most lessons began with brisk mental arithmetic exercises the standards of numeracy are good. Pupils in a lower attaining Year 7 group, for example, could find and explain patterns in a number grid and use terms such as 'product', 'factor', and 'multiple'. They were able to explain their work orally but written answers were less secure. In a Year 8 lesson, lower attaining pupils were able to estimate, measure and draw angles with reasonable accuracy. They understood the terms, 'acute' and 'obtuse'. Higher attaining pupils were able to construct triangles of given size using ruler, protractor and compasses accurately, and use correct mathematical terminology in discussing their work. Another similar group were able to visualise three-dimensional shapes based upon two-dimensional drawings. They responded particularly well to a challenging lesson that proceeded at a good speed. A Year 9 higher attaining group tackled an outdoor measuring exercise enthusiastically and efficiently. They co-operated well in small groups and used measuring wheels and tape measures accurately. They recognised practical difficulties and devised ways of overcoming them, before concluding their work with accurate scale drawings. A middle attaining Year 9 group responded well to a lesson with pace and variety. They were able to recognise different types of angle associated with triangles, quadrilaterals and parallel lines. Pupils respond well to the high standards the department expects in the presentation of coursework.
82. Results in the GCSE examination take at the age of 16 have been consistently above the national average. In 1999, 54 per cent of pupils gained A*-C grades, which was above the national average of 43 per cent. The percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in 2000 was close to the 1999 percentage. Although the overall performance of girls is consistently above that of boys, there are many highly motivated and higher attaining boys in the school. In 2000, for example, all of the six A* GCSE grades were gained by boys. Nevertheless, the department recognises the need to raise the attainment levels of boys and has introduced a number of strategies, such as linking mathematics to sporting activities, to increase interest and motivation.
83. Inspection evidence indicates that the quality of learning of pupils presently in Years 10 and 11 is good and that standards are consistent with those being achieved in external examinations. Lower attaining pupils in a Year 10 lesson were able to recognise numbers up to millions and patterns as they emerged. They were also able perform money calculations and work out profit and loss. Some had difficulty in understanding written questions but were able to complete their work with verbal assistance. Pupils in a higher attaining class maintained a very high level of concentration and could find the n^{th} term for linear and quadratic sequences. Many were very keen to tackle extension work. A similar group used the Internet to work individually, and in pairs, on a GCSE revision exercise. In two Year 11 lessons, lower attaining pupils were able to measure and calculate accurately, using rulers tape measures and then to display the data in tables and graphs, although some pupils did not fully understand the concept of 'scale'. Most middle attaining pupils in Year 11 maintain a very high level of concentration. They are able to calculate simultaneous equations and use correct mathematical terminology to discuss their work. Another group showed that they are able to recognise a quadratic equation, plot quadratic curves with accuracy and establish roots of equations. Higher attaining pupils could understand and apply Pythagoras' Theorem and sine, cosine and tangent when solving problems in two dimensions.
84. Pupils' standards of numeracy are generally in line with expectations and the majority of pupils are confident in handling numbers. The department makes provision for the development of basic

numerical skills and there is an emphasis on improving numeracy skills in lessons in all years. In subjects other than mathematics pupils are able to apply their numeracy skills in a satisfactory way. In geography, science and business studies, for example, pupils are able to use tables and graphs to present and interpret information accurately. In art, pupils are able to make good judgements of the size and proportion of objects. However, there is at present no school numeracy strategy with the consequence that numerical skills are not being developed in a systematic way in all subjects. However, a working group is presently engaged in the formulation of a school policy and it is intended that this will be in place by the start of the next school year.

85. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good with and enhanced by the support of learning assistants. Most pupils with special educational needs make good progress with their learning. These pupils gain confidence with basic mathematics, such as using and applying the four rules of number in the early years. They continue to develop these skills in a variety of situations and most are entered for the GCSE examination. The support that all pupils with special educational needs receive in class, from both teachers and learning assistants, is a significant factor in the standards that they achieve. The mathematically more gifted pupils are encouraged to undertake study beyond the GCSE level and some have worked toward Additional Ordinary level in their own time.
86. The quality of teaching at all levels is consistently good or very good with occasional examples of excellence. Teachers are well qualified, enthusiastic and industrious. One teacher's skills were recognised when she was a regional finalist in the 1999 Lloyds Bank National Teaching Awards. Lessons are well planned. A variety of teaching techniques are employed, including team teaching, practical work, investigations, group work and computer aided lessons in addition to formal class teaching. A structured homework scheme is part of each pupil's programme of work. Many pupils willingly undertake extensive and ambitious projects in their own time. A minority find difficulty in organising their work and staff give freely of their time to assist these pupils. An innovative range of teaching resources has been built up. These resources are used well to stimulate pupils' interest. For example, pupils are supplied with number cards that are used to signal answers in mental arithmetic sessions, avoiding the frustration of putting their hands up and not being asked. The department offers a variety of extra-curricular classes, clubs and competitions, which cater for pupils of all attainment levels, that stimulate enthusiasm and interest in the subject. Teachers' expectations are high. Higher attaining pupils are encouraged to achieve the highest targets, while all pupils are given ample opportunities to achieve realistic goals and enjoy success. In the majority of lessons the attitude and behaviour of the pupils are excellent, a reflection of the department's supportive ethos. There is little or no unacceptable behaviour. Occasional minor transgressions are dealt with firmly by teachers. Work is marked regularly and in a way that informs pupils about their progress and helps them to improve, Regular end of topic assessments are used to build up a profile of each pupil's performance and progress over time.
87. Leadership in the department is excellent and teachers work very much as a team. There is a consistency of approach throughout the department, which is the outcome of effective leadership and good teamwork. Responsibilities are delegated, giving team members the opportunity to develop their own leadership and management skills. Teachers are encouraged to observe each other teach and to share ideas for their mutual benefit. The department aims to promote excellence in the subject and to enable all pupils to achieve their potential through enjoyment of the subject. It goes a long way towards achieving these aims. Teachers constantly monitor the performance of pupils and assess the effectiveness of different teaching strategies. Detailed records are maintained and used well to assist planning. At present there is no whole school numeracy policy. However, the mathematics department is contributing to a working group that has been established with the intention introducing a school numeracy strategy in 2001. The department has good links with the primary schools and post-16 institutions. The department has made good progress since the last inspection and is very well placed to continue to make improvement.

SCIENCE

88. Pupils' overall attainment in the 1999 National Curriculum tests in science taken at the age of 14 was above average. The results of the tests taken in 2000 show that pupils' attainment is above the standards attained in 1999, with a significant increase in the proportion of pupils achieving Level 6. Standards in science are average in comparison with those found in similar schools. The performances of boys and girls are very similar. Pupils' attainment in science is below that found in English and mathematics.
89. The proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the GCSE examination taken at the end of Year 11 is average. However, there is a variation depending upon which science course is being followed. Where the three sciences, biology, chemistry and physics, are studied separately, standards are well above average. In 2000 all pupils in all three sciences achieved grades in the A*-C range. In the double award course the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades is similar to the national average. In 1999, 47 per cent of pupils obtained these grades and in 2000, this figure had risen to 50 per cent. Standards in the single award science course are well below average. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C was in both 1999 and 2000 was around four per cent. Overall, girls are achieving better than boys. Over recent years the results in science have shown a steadily improving trend.
90. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good. Pupils enter the school with broadly average National Curriculum test scores. By the end of the Year 9, the majority are achieving standards that are above the national expectation. Progress is most rapid in experimental science where pupils acquire many useful skills for the planning, carrying out and recording of experiments. Year 7 pupils are taught how to use the microscope to appreciate the structure of plant cells. A Year 8 class successfully boiled red cabbage to make a pH indicator, which they then used, together with commercial indicators, to measure the acidity of liquids. As pupils progress through Years 7 to 9, the quality and quantity of their work increases as topics are covered in more detail. This reflects their increasing skill levels and greater range of knowledge. By Year 9 pupils are able to undertake a series of experiments to investigate the relationships between distance, speed and time. They are able to use the data to draw accurate graphs and to extract information from them.
91. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory overall and good for those engaged in the separate sciences. Inspection evidence suggests a steady expansion of topic breadth, which promotes a deepening of scientific knowledge and understanding, and an improvement in pupils' practical skills. This was well illustrated by Year 10 pupils who showed not only a clear understanding of the link between osmosis and diffusion, but also how osmosis works and why. Another group investigating the differences in the energy content of various fuels demonstrated that they had acquired good levels of precision and safety when using apparatus.
92. Pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory progress because teachers have a good knowledge of pupils' learning needs and adapt their teaching methods accordingly. The grouping of pupils in terms of attainment levels helps teachers to present more challenging work to higher attaining pupils. However, the level of challenge offered to some of the highest attaining pupils in these sets could be higher. Most pupils clearly enjoy and take a pride in their science work, especially the practicals. They generally behave well and work hard. They usually work well in groups with all members keen to contribute to the common aim. Apparatus is handled with care and increasing precision. Pupils are keen to answer questions but few, with notable exceptions in some classes, pose questions of their own.
93. The overall quality of teaching in science is good. Ninety per cent of the lessons observed were satisfactory or better, about half were good and a quarter very good. A very small quantity of unsatisfactory teaching was seen in the Key Stage 3. The most outstanding feature of the teaching is the consistency of planning for the best practice. This says a great deal for the department's arrangements for monitoring and evaluation and the way teachers work together as an effective team. Lessons are well planned and resourced. Teachers use a variety of methods. Lessons commence with a check on what was understood from the previous lesson and pupils become actively involved from the outset. The best teaching features collecting pupils' ideas by skilful questioning, amplifying them and synthesising them into useful extensions of their learning.

This is a feature of many lessons. For example, in one Year 7 lesson pupils discussed in pairs the differences between animal and plant cells and the functions of various parts. Then in a class discussion the teacher drew on the pupils' contributions to build an accurate picture. Objectives are clearly presented to pupils together with the ways in which they can be achieved. Lessons are usually brought together at the end so that the teacher can check that the pupils have really understood what they have been doing. In the few instances where lessons were less successful, there were weaknesses in class management and pupils' understanding of the lesson content was not rigorously checked. Teachers mark pupils' work regularly and comments are designed to help pupils to improve. Homework is usually set and provides a useful extension to pupil learning.

94. Leadership in the subject is very good and characterised by enthusiasm and efficiency. Teaching is regularly monitored and members of the subject team work well together to develop the courses and to raise standards. There are good systems of assessment and these are well used to monitor pupils' progress and achievement and to modify the curriculum. Two competent technicians, who work hard to deploy and to maintain the good resources, support science. The only weak resource area is in information technology, where there is insufficient modern equipment. The school library supplements the resources by offering a good selection of books together with CD-ROMs, videos and Internet access. The laboratories are adequate, although some are rather small to accommodate the size of certain classes and others are in need of refurbishment. The curriculum is enhanced by a programme of visits to such places as the science museums in London and Manchester and to nearby chemical industries, but at present it is not enriched by field courses or fieldwork.
95. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. Standards have risen, teaching has improved, and laboratory and preparation room space has been increased. Assessment and its uses have been usefully developed and are now good. Single science has been reviewed and it is to be discontinued. Much progress has been made in improving information technology skills and use, but more work remains to be done in this area. This is a dynamic, caring and cohesive department that is highly committed to, and well placed to make, further improvement.

ART

96. The standards achieved by 16 year olds at the end of Key Stage 4 are above the national average. Over the last three years the percentages of pupils gaining higher grades have been consistently above national averages. In 1999, just over two thirds of the pupils entered for GCSE art achieved A*-C grades. This was above the national average. A third of these pupils gained A* or A grades which is well above the national average. In 2000, three-quarters of examination candidates achieved higher grades. In both 1999 and 2000, girls out performed boys and gained a greater proportion of higher grades. The department is aware of this and is working on ways of raising boys' attainment in art. Most of the pupils on the special educational needs register who took art gained a high grade. Work seen during the inspection shows that higher attaining pupils produce striking examples of paintings, batiks, ceramics and mixed media sculpture. Pupils make skilful use of two and three-dimensional abstract and figurative work to make highly personal and creative responses to the themes they are set. For example, a Year 11 pupil produced a very good large-scale wire and tissue-paper sculpture of a fish based on an out of school interest. Work such as this shows interesting images combined with the control and expressive use of materials and techniques. A narrow range of visual ideas or a lack of technical skill that restricts the expression of pupils' ideas characterizes work that does not reach this standard.
97. Standards at the end of Year 9 are average. According to teachers' assessments in 1999, the majority of pupils exceed national expectations. Pupils are competent in the recording of visual information and are able to produce designs and develop their artistic ideas. They communicate their expressive ideas through a range of two and three-dimensional materials and techniques such as drawing, painting, collage, ceramics, card and mixed media construction work. By the end of Year 9, the drawing skills of most pupils are well developed and sculpture work is of a high standard. All pupils are developing their ability to express informed opinions about well-known artists' work and they use this work in the development of their own ideas. For example, Year 8

pupils' use Celtic decorative art effectively in the development of intricate designs and symbols about places and people. Pupils also use technical words and phrases accurately to talk about art and design. They are able to evaluate their own and others' artwork and plan ways to improve the techniques and ideas that they are using. Pupils' numeracy skills are used well to draw from observation and to judge the size, proportion and position of objects.

98. Pupils' achievement in art at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory. Pupils acquire, develop and consolidate their skills because they know the steps needed to prepare and produce a successful piece of art and design work. Pupils' learning is also enhanced by the study of artists and examples of art from different times and places. They become increasingly able to judge whether practical work has been successful, although they have limited understanding of the standards they are expected to achieve in art. Achievement at Key Stage 4 is good. Higher attaining pupils acquire the study skills necessary for planning, organising and improving the standard of their work. Most pupils make rapid progress because they are clear about GCSE standards in art and how to meet or exceed the targets set for them. As provision for pupils with special educational needs is good the progress and achievement of the majority are good and for some, very good.
99. Pupils' attitudes to learning and behaviour in art are good. Pupils are interested in the subject and are enthusiastic to develop their art, craft and design skills. They are keen to succeed. They listen carefully to teachers and use the advice they are given to improve the standard of their work. Middle and higher attaining pupils work diligently and lower attaining boys in Year 10 respond well to the very close guidance they are given and the opportunity to express ideas about their own identity and interests. Most pupils are conscientious, helpful and courteous.
100. Teaching is satisfactory at Key Stage 3 and good at Key Stage 4. Teachers make good use of their subject knowledge to introduce pupils to the work of artists and to new ideas or themes. Lesson planning and preparation are good and specific learning objectives are set and shared with pupils. Pupils are motivated by teachers' skilful use of practical demonstrations to show drawing, ceramic and sculpture techniques and processes. Teachers' use of questioning is good and this helps pupils to understand the purpose of their work. Praise is used carefully to help sustain pupils' momentum and interest during art lessons. Practical advice is used effectively to help pupils to review, adapt or refine their artwork. Teachers are aware of the abilities of younger pupils but do not cater fully for the needs of pupils of different attainment levels in all lessons. In Years 8 and 9, limited reference is made to National Curriculum standards to help pupils know the level of work expected of them. In Key Stage 4, teachers plan to meet the needs of most pupils, including those on the special educational needs register. Attention is given to structuring and adapting tasks to support lower attaining pupils, or those that lack confidence, particularly boys, and to extend and advance the progress of average and higher attaining pupils. Teachers use GCSE targets to give pupils specific practical advice and to consolidate or improve the standard of their work. In both key stages, homework is set and marked regularly to support and extend class work.
101. Art teachers are very committed to promoting the subject and to raising standards. The analysis of pupils' performance to inform teaching and planning is developing well at Key Stage 4 but is at an early stage in Key Stage 3. Work on using the new National Curriculum levels for art is in hand and there are firm plans to improve the consistency of teachers' assessment at Key Stage 3 and to enhance the reliability of end of key stage assessments. At Key Stage 4, a careful process of monitoring is used to provide support for pupils who might not otherwise reach the standards expected of them. The department has made very good use of the cross-curricular arts work within the school and the community to enrich pupils' learning in art. Arts initiatives in the school make an important contribution to the social and cultural development of pupils and to the life in the school.
102. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. Standards at Key Stage 3 have been maintained and at Key Stage 4, there had been a significant improvement in standards since the last inspection. In recent years, standards have continued to be above the national averages. Sufficient challenge is now given in art to pupils and they show independence in their own artwork. Pupils now have a sound knowledge of the work of the established artists that they study. Time

for the subject has been improved and information and communications technology is planned as a part of the art curriculum at Key Stages 3 and Key Stage 4.

BUSINESS STUDIES

103. The GCSE examination results in business studies in 2000 were significantly better than the 1999 results when they were below the national average. Standards have continued to rise since the last inspection and inspection evidence indicates that the standards of pupils presently in Year 11 are above average. In Year 10, pupils are able to explain supply and demand and opportunity cost, and to produce well-presented notes and graphs. Year 11 pupils' GCSE coursework projects show well-designed research into local businesses. Well-structured questionnaires are used to gather data and information and communications technology is used effectively to produce wordprocessed reports with graphs and charts to present information. No evidence was seen of the use of spreadsheets for financial planning. Pupils' coursework folders are well presented, and the higher attaining pupils produce in-depth evaluations that show a clear understanding of business concepts together with an ability to apply them in a variety of practical business situations.
104. Teaching is good in Year 10 and very good in Year 11. Very good use was made of structured questionnaires by pupils in Year 11 to obtain information from the personnel department of a multinational oilrig company. The questionnaires enabled pupils to gather information in a systematic way and then to combine their information with that gathered by other pupils. The teacher's very good subject knowledge is reflected in well-structured lessons that make good use of topical case studies and relevant material from newspapers and local organisations. Tasks are well matched to the attainment levels of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Homework is regularly set and marked, and higher attaining pupils are given extension tasks. Written feedback to pupils is prompt and very constructive, based on regular targets and the frequent use of pupil checklists to reinforce learning. This ensures that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are fully aware of both the GCSE grade level they are working at and how to improve. The teacher ensures that pupils' competence in the use of information and communications technology is supported and improved through regular use in lessons. The teacher also gives pupils of all attainment levels individual support as required, including lunchtime sessions for lower attainers and well-planned revision sessions after school for all.
105. Pupils enjoy their lessons and their progress and achievement is good. Theoretical knowledge is consolidated through practical activities, collaborative working and problem solving. Pupils cooperate well with each other and their teacher, and are able to work independently. The majority of pupils use their initiative well, and make good use of independent research in local organisations.
106. The business studies department is very ably managed and is well focused on continuous improvement, in line with the school's aims. Textbooks and materials from industry and the media are up-to-date. The teacher researches the Internet effectively for financial and marketing data. Links with industry are good, and the school runs a successful Young Enterprise club with the help of local business people. Improvement since the last inspection has been good overall, particularly the quality of pupils' coursework and use of technology. The department has a good capacity to make further improvements.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

107. Teacher assessments show that in 2000 the percentage of pupils achieving the expected Level 5 and above in design and technology rose above the 1999 percentage and was above the 1999 national average. The overall percentage of pupils gaining A*-C grades in the 1999 GCSE examination was average. The percentage gaining A*-C grades in 2000 was similar to the 1999 percentage. However, the results in systems and control in 2000 were well above average, with 82

per cent of pupils achieving A*-C grades. In food, the 2000 results rose above those obtained in 1999, to a level above the 1999 national average. Results in 2000 in child development, textiles, graphic products and the GNVQ in manufacturing are around the 1999 national average. However, GCSE results in resistant materials over the last two years have been poor with only 23 per cent of the pupils entered for the examination in 2000 achieving A*-C grades.

108. Overall attainment, at the end of both key stages, is average. It is sometimes above in food and textiles, and below in resistant materials and some graphics products classes. The best work is seen in food, textiles and some graphic products portfolios where pupils often demonstrate effective project management. Whilst many pupils' understanding of the design process is good, pupils' evaluations are not always sufficiently related to the design specification and some pupils, in both key stages, are unable to explain what is meant by the specification stage. Some pupils' graphical skills are well above national expectations in Years 7 to 9. However, overall the pupils' making skills are stronger than their designing skills. Information and communications technology is well used to support pupils' learning and this is reflected in portfolios of work. However, opportunities for pupils to gain computer aided design and computer aided manufacturing experiences are restricted because of a lack of resources. Pupils' presentation of work in both key stages is good. Good use is made of product design analysis, for example in food and textiles, which allows pupils to review the work of other designers. However, this aspect of the subject is a weakness in resistant materials as is the level of challenge being presented to higher attaining pupils in Year 9. Pupils' opportunities to experience control systems at Key Stage 4 and pneumatics at both key stages are also weaknesses in resistant materials.
109. Pupils' progress and achievement in food and textiles is at least satisfactory and often good at both key stages. They acquire skills, knowledge and understanding and demonstrate that they are competent on the use of tools and equipment. However, the levels of productivity and pace of working in resistant materials are often too low and this is having an adverse effect on the pupils' progress and achievement. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language cope well with the making aspects of design and technology and make satisfactory progress. However, they do not always have a clear understanding of their learning targets in resistant materials and this slows their progress.
110. Overall, pupils' attitudes towards design and technology are good. Pupils enjoy the subject, persevere and take much pride in their work. The working atmosphere is often good with a buzz as pupils work individually and in small groups, particularly in food and textiles. They work with a clear sense of commitment. Pupils have a good understanding of the need to behave correctly and to handle tools with care. However, the attitudes and behaviour of some pupils in resistant materials lessons are unsatisfactory and this is often associated with lesson activities that do not match the needs of pupils.
111. The overall quality of teaching in design and technology is satisfactory. In food and textiles it is good. Teachers are well qualified in the design and technology material areas. Effective use is made of resources and stimulus materials. Planning is generally good in food and textiles. Teachers take sensible account of hygiene and health and safety matters and instil in pupils the need to work safely at all times. Some teachers set time targets and effectively conclude lessons with a review of the learning points. The learning support assistants and technicians and in particular the food technician, operating in the department are very effective and a credit to the department. Teaching in resistant materials has several shortcomings. There are weaknesses in class management and a lack of challenge in lesson activities. Expectations are too low and work is not marked regularly by all teachers.
112. The subject leader sets a good example and, in food and textiles, clearly demonstrates how pupils' learning and achievement can be improved. Subject documentation is very good and well organised as are the resources that have been prepared to support pupils' learning, for example a dictionary of technological terms. Through well established monitoring and evaluation procedures both the subject leader and the senior leadership team are aware of the weaknesses in resistant materials and have implemented a number of strategies to improve teaching and learning in the area. This features as a continuing issue in the school and subject improvement plans. The

teacher in charge of resistant materials supervises the GNVQ pupils who attend the further education college on two half-days a week. This arrangement is unsatisfactory as it restricts his opportunity to contribute to improving teaching and learning in the area. Assessment has been well used to revise Key Stage 3 schemes of work and overall planning in food and textiles is good. However, the decision has been taken to drop the GCSE systems and control course this year even though pupils achieved very good results. There is some very good practice in the marking of pupils' work. Marking of this sort is regular and pupils are given good information on what they must do in order to improve. However, there is inconsistency in the marking of class work and homework. The learning environment in several teaching rooms is enlivened by good displays of pupils' work, including some very good two-dimensional work. The refurbished food rooms are excellent and improvements have been made in food and resistant materials by the provision of information and communications technology areas.

113. There has been some progress in relation to food technology and systems and control GCSE results since the previous inspection and most of the strengths identified during the last inspection have been maintained. However, there has been an overall downward trend in design and technology and this is largely because of weaknesses in teaching and planning in resistant materials.

GEOGRAPHY

114. Teachers' assessments at the end of Year 9 show that standards of attainment over the past three years have been just above the national average. Inspection evidence indicates that these assessments are accurate. While overall attainment across Years 7 to 9 is generally consistent with national expectations by the age of 14, it is above average. There are good examples of extended and imaginative writing, including National Curriculum Level 7 work on Mount St. Helens in Year 9 and very good project work on migration in Year 8. The quality of the work is much enhanced by the very good use of information and communications technology in all years. This was seen to good advantage in a Year 9 lesson in which pupils used information and communications technology skills to create a tourist guide to the local coast. Numerical work is satisfactory in Year 7 and steadily improves as pupils move through Years 7 to 9. Basic mapping skills are established in Year 7 and pupils can use co-ordinates, recognise symbols and measure line and angle. In a Year 8 lesson, pupils interpreted graphs to make statistical comparisons of national development. Mapping exercises, using the classroom, home, the school environment and the world map provide pupils with good spatial awareness and knowledge of places. By age 14 the majority of pupils have a good knowledge of physical processes such as coastal erosion and are well prepared to begin the GCSE course.
115. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving GCSE A*-C grades was well above the national average. Girls did particularly well and although boys' grades were below those of girls, they too were well above the national average for boys. The proportion of pupils gaining A* grades was twice the national average. The 2000 results show continued improvement, with girls maintaining the very high standards of 1999 and boys improving significantly with 87 per cent achieving A*-C grades. In 2000 girls achieved less well at the highest grades than in 1999, but the percentage of boys achieving A* grades was well above the 1999 national average. This is because of the effort the department puts into coursework. In 1999 all pupils were gaining slightly better grades in geography than in other subjects they took. Results over the past four years show that the department has made continued and very good improvement since 1997.
116. Inspection evidence indicates that attainment at the age of 16 is above average. Written work improves steadily and there are many examples of well-structured enquiry and coursework. This is a particular strength of the department. Work on inner-city change in Hartlepool and the location of residential homes for the elderly shows that pupils are able to build on the basic skills established in earlier years. They are able to hypothesise, gather data, analyse and arrive at accurate conclusions. In the process they make effective use of information and communications technology for word processing, spreadsheets and databases. Lower attaining pupils and those

on the special educational needs register achieve standards that are good in relation to the targets in their individual education plans and their previous levels of attainment

117. Teaching is good or very good. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. Teachers' knowledge and long experience are well used to give pupils confidence in what they are doing. Lessons are characterised by careful planning, clear lesson objectives and humour. At the same time there is a firmness of purpose that helps to maintain high levels of concentration and interest. The teaching is of high quality and the subject is brought alive through incisive questioning which helps pupils to concentrate on the lesson tasks and consolidate their learning. The department is educating pupils whose knowledge and understanding extends over a wide area in a structured way. Particularly important here are the good links that are made with other subjects and the fieldwork undertaken both in the local area and in other countries. Pupils' geographical understanding is deepened through the use of information and communications technology for independent learning. Good use is made of materials that are adapted to suit the needs of pupils of different attainment levels. For example, the use of adapted materials, together with effective support from a learning assistant, made a significant contribution to the learning of lower attaining pupils in a Year 7 lesson on map reading. Assessment is closely linked to National Curriculum programmes of study and GCSE grades, and this provides pupils with a good understanding of the levels they are achieving. Parents support the teachers and play an important part in encouraging homework, which is regularly set and marked. Pupils know what they can do and what they must do in order to improve.
118. By the ages of 14 and 16 most pupils have made good progress and achieve well. This is related to good teaching and class management, which produces good behaviour. The majority of pupils enjoy the subject and their enthusiasm matches that of teachers. Pupils are well motivated and persevere in their work. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are very good and pupils trust the judgements of their teachers. The above average GCSE results reflect the effort that pupils put into their work and the way that all pupils are encouraged and supported within the department.
119. The department has recently moved, on rotation between departments, into the mobile classrooms. The accommodation these rooms offer is poor. As rainwater penetrates the walls and ceilings the rooms are permanently damp. This creates an unsatisfactory environment for learning and one in which it is difficult to store and maintain resources.
120. This is a successful department. It is well led and all teachers form a strong and cohesive team. Since the last inspection, all of the positive features noted in the report have been maintained and GCSE results have significantly improved. The quality of teaching has improved, as has the use of assessment. The department is well placed to continue its improvement.

HISTORY

121. In 1999, according to teacher assessments made at the end of Year 9, most pupils are achieving standards that are average for pupils aged 14. The trend over recent years has been the same as the national trend and rose again in 2000 to be above the levels of previous years. More pupils achieved the expected Level 5 and above, but fewer pupils achieved the higher Level 7 than in previous years. Inspection evidence is consistent with teacher assessments. By the end of Year 9, standards are consistent with those expected of pupils of this age. By the age of 14, pupils have covered many aspects of English history, including the life and times of Henry VIII, and most understand the importance of the changes that took place in our society at that time. They know and are able to explain the difference between primary and secondary sources of evidence of how people lived in the past. Higher attaining pupils are able to draw inferences from evidence and understand the importance of the work of archaeologists in providing historical evidence. They are able to consider whether there is bias in the evidence and how valid it is as a source for interpreting history. This was seen, for example, when papers written at the time of the slave trade between Africa, the West Indies and England, were being examined in a Year 9 lesson. Most pupils, including those with special educational needs, are able to use original sources to describe the conditions both of the journey to the New World and the life of slaves on plantations. Through extended pieces of written work pupils show that they are able to put themselves in the place of the people living at different times in the past and write about life from their perspective.
122. In the 1999 GCSE examination, taken at the age of 16, the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades was about the same as the national average. This percentage rose in 2000 to be above the 1999 average. However, it is too soon to determine if this is an upward trend. On the whole girls do better in the GCSE examination than boys. Inspection evidence shows that by the end of Year 11, standards are about the same as those expected nationally for 16 year olds. By this time pupils have acquired a deep understanding of the ways in which evidence is used, how it can be evaluated, and how, by drawing on their knowledge of other sources, they can extend it. The best of the GCSE coursework shows that both pupils' research and literary skills are good. Most pupils have a good command of historical skills and a wide knowledge and understanding of, for example, the significance of the voyages of Captain James Cook, his command of navigation and map making, and his contribution in extending the knowledge of the existence of many lands previously unknown to Europeans.
123. Pupils' overall progress and achievement in Years 7 to 9 are satisfactory. They gain a broad and balance knowledge and understanding of the National Curriculum course in history. The work that they do is firmly based on historical skills, which are embedded in the first three years in the school. In Year 7 they know that a passage of writing by Julius Caesar, recounting his direct experience, is likely to be more accurate than a similar account written later by Tacitus. Most pupils are able to use photographs of the remains of buildings and artefacts to describe the kind of houses lived in by Romans in Britain. Higher attaining pupils are able to draw inferences about the materials used and the different construction skills needed to construct the dwellings. In a Year 8 class, pupils knew the many and complex facts that account for the marriages of Henry VIII. By using reports sent to Thomas Cromwell most understood why some of them were written to please and some were more factual. In this way pupils increased their understanding of the ways in which there can be bias in primary evidence. At the end of the Year 9, the vast majority can describe and give sensible accounts of life in the times in which written evidence was committed to paper. Higher attaining pupils use their own experience to draw valid conclusions.
124. Pupils' progress and achievement continue to be satisfactory as they move through Years 10 and 11. By the end of Year 11 pupils are able to make valid judgements about the different kinds of medicinal practices used from the time of the Egyptians to the present day. They understand that the past is sometimes the key to the present and that the use of evidence, as a basis for making judgements, is not just confined to history. The vast majority of pupils develop a wide historical vocabulary that includes the names and events that shaped the growth of the USA as well as the major figures in the development of medicinal practices up to the present day.

125. Pupils' attitudes to the study of history are very good. The vast majority enjoy the activity of studying history and need little urging to complete tasks. They listen with rapt concentration to the teacher and to their classmates when they are making replies. In the course of these discussions they make good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. Everyone is given the chance to express his or her views without fear of disrespect being shown. The work of most pupils shows that care has been taken to present it well. Most pupils strive to achieve high marks and school commendations.
126. Teaching is never less than satisfactory in both key stages and in some lessons in Key Stage 3 it is good or very good. One of the strengths in teaching is good lesson planning. This ensures that the lesson's learning objectives are covered in a way that enables the majority of pupils to make at least satisfactory progress. Teachers always return to the lesson objectives at the end of lessons to consolidate the learning that has taken place. Most lessons also ensure that investigative skills are well used and, in the best lessons, supported by the effective use of resources. For example, in a Year 7 lesson on the Romans, good use was made of photographs and artefacts to stimulate and motivate pupils. Similarly, in a Year 9 lesson an interesting story was used to introduce a discussion on attitudes towards slaves, which involved all pupils, and led to high levels of thinking about the issue. Although teachers make use of video recordings, such as those from 'Roots', insufficient use is made of the research material available on CD-ROMs to extend the range of research and to add variety to more routine teaching.
127. The leadership in the subject has been affected by the absence through illness of the team leader. Satisfactory records of pupils' assessments in end of topic tests are maintained but insufficient use is being made of these records, and information and communications technology, to monitor pupils' progress through the courses of study. The lack of monitoring makes planning less precise and makes it difficult to give pupils constructive advice on how to improve their work. This weakness has been recognised both within the department and the school and features in the subject improvement plan.
128. Accommodation in mobile classrooms is poor and the relative remoteness of the classrooms from the main school makes it difficult to access the computers in the resource centre. Although the supply of textbooks is generally adequate there is a shortage of good historical artefacts and insufficient use is made of information and communications technology as a research tool. There is a lack of computer software for history and a lack of teaching expertise in the use of information and communications technology both as a resource for teaching and departmental administration.
129. Overall, the department has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection, even though the amount of progress has been affected by the absence of the subject leader. Teachers have both the capacity for and are committed to further improvement and the subject leader is due to return to school at the start of the next term. Given this, the department is in a sound position to make further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY

130. Teacher assessments show that by the end of Year 9, pupils' standards of attainment in information and communications technology are above average. According to these assessments nearly three-quarters of both boys and girls are at or above the expected Level 5. Since the previous inspection the accuracy of teacher assessments has improved considerably. Evidence of work seen during the inspection is consistent with teachers' assessments. Pupils are achieving above expectations in control technology, modelling mathematical problems, communicating and handling information, including research on Internet, and the applications and effects of information and communications technology in society. Pupils make good progress and achievement through Years 7 to 9. In timetabled information and communications technology lessons pupils in Years 8 and 9 show skills in the design of web pages, use of text, clip art, digital photographs and sounds that are above average for their age.

131. A GCSE option in information and communications technology has been introduced since the last inspection. In 1999, the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C was below the national average. This percentage rose in 2000, with over half of all pupils entered achieving A*-C grades. In both 1999 and 2000 girls' results were well above the national averages, while boys' results were significantly below. This is mainly due to the examination coursework demand that many boys find difficult to meet. In 2000, virtually all boys and girls entered gained grades A*-G, which was above the 1999 national average. When pupils' standard of attainment on entry to the course are taken into account, these results represent satisfactory levels of achievement for boys and good levels of achievement for girls.
132. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in Years 10 and 11 are improving. The standards of pupils in the current Year 11 GCSE information and communications technology option are consistent with national expectations. Pupils use spreadsheets effectively for modelling solutions to mathematical problems. They produce well-constructed questionnaires to research menu ideas for restaurants and are able to design databases for estate agents. Boys generally find more difficulty in writing in-depth reports than girls and this affects the standard of their GCSE coursework. In subjects other than information and communications technology and business studies, taken in Years 10 and 11, pupils' attainment in information and communications technology is below national expectations. This is because pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop their information and communications technology competence in most subjects. Because of increased access to computers and teachers' skills in information and communications technology, pupils' competence in handling data, measurement and control and modelling, using spreadsheets, are beginning to improve. For example, in a Year 10 careers lesson that followed a careers convention, pupils were able to combine text and graphics to create job descriptions in preparation for work experience placements. Access to computers restricts pupils' progress in lessons. In all years computers have to be shared and there is a heavy reliance on the use of home computers for word processing and in some cases researching the Internet. Although only occasional use is made of computers in many subjects, in some, such as mathematics and geography, good use is made of information and communications technology to support pupils' learning. In mathematics, for example, Year 8 pupils use logo commands to draw polygons and circles and develop basic programming skills. In geography, pupils in Year 9 use computers effectively to scan digital photographs taken on a recent field trip and produce attractive visitors' guides, combining both text and graphics. Use is made of the Internet in geography, science, art, design and technology and religious education for pupils' project work. Most pupils use word processing for essays and reports on their home computers.
133. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good in Years 7, 8 and 9, and good in Years 10 and 11. The majority of pupils concentrate well when they work alone or have to share computers. They enjoy lessons, stick to their tasks, co-operate very well with each other and their teachers, and show a mature attitude to their work. Higher attaining pupils often try out more advanced work independently while waiting for other pupils to complete lesson tasks. Overall, the positive attitudes of pupils contribute significantly to the knowledge, skills and fluency in a variety of computer applications they are acquiring in the timetabled information and communications technology lessons.
134. Overall, the specialist teaching observed in all years is good. It is very good in a third of lessons in Years 7 to 9. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils, manage them well, and encourage positive attitudes to learning through their own enthusiasm. They plan lessons well, set clear objectives, and continually review and reinforce previous work. Their good subject knowledge enables them to explain topics clearly and support individual pupils well. This allows teachers to make good provision for pupils with special educational needs who make good progress as a consequence. Good templates are provided for business letters in GCSE information studies and in all lessons, writing frames are used effectively to improve pupils' literacy skills. Teachers encourage paired and group working to develop collaborative skills, and question pupils skilfully to check understanding of software packages. Pupils are encouraged to be creative through exploring challenging computer programs and expectations of standards of work and behaviour are high. Lessons generally proceed at a good pace but the pace of lessons is adversely affected when pupils have to share computers in large classes. Homework is usually

set when required to allow research, design and theory work, although the level of task is not always matched to the pupils' level of attainment. Teachers and technicians supervise a popular computer club at lunchtimes and after school.

135. An experienced specialist teacher provides good subject leadership. Good use is made of assessment to monitor pupils' progress in Years 7 to 9 and in GCSE classes. Schemes of work in Years 7 to 9 are well planned to meet National Curriculum programmes of study and GCSE course requirements in Years 10 and 11. However, in Years 10 and 11 the provision of information and communications technology for pupils who are not taking the GCSE option does not meet statutory requirements. Although in some subjects, such as mathematics and geography, the use of information and communications technology is developing well, the curriculum does not allow pupils to develop their competence in all subjects and this affects overall standards in Key Stage 4. The accommodation is good overall and well maintained. However, some rooms are too cramped for larger classes and there is no room for writing.
136. Overall improvement since the last inspection is good. This is due to the appointment of new specialist teachers and technician support and increased networked computer provision. Standards of pupils on entry to the course have also been raised because of the increased time for information and communications technology in Key Stage 3. Attention is being paid to the performance of boys and teachers are breaking the coursework assignments into smaller tasks and working hard to improve pupils' writing and evaluation skills. The department is well placed to make further improvement.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

137. The attainment of pupils at the age of 14, as shown by teacher assessments, was above average in 1999, for both boys and girls. Girls did better than boys. In 2000 there was further improvement, with boys improving to match the performance of girls. Performance is equally good across the range of skills. This is confirmed by inspection evidence. Pupils learn how to use tenses and give opinions in Year 8, so that they achieve good standards by the end of Year 9. Pupils in top sets write at length on a good range of topics, such as food and drink, and recent holidays. Pupils in lower sets, including those with special educational needs, attempt similar tasks although with less accuracy. This affects communication. Pupils seek and give information in oral tasks, and are capable of five or six exchanges. Content is usually good but weak pronunciation impedes communication, at all levels of attainment, especially where speech is based on written prompts. Pupils' recall of vocabulary is good. All pupils understand key details in short extracts in the foreign language, whilst pupils in top sets already understand the substance of what they hear and read in extended passages.
138. Both boys and girls GCSE results in 1999 were above average. The proportions of both boys and girls achieving the higher A*-C grades in French were well above average and in German they were above average. In 2000, there was a further improvement in German but a fall in French, due to a decline in the performance of boys to about the same level as the 1999 national average for boys. Results in the highest A*-A range have improved year on year. In both 1999 and 2000, all pupils entered for the examination obtained a grade in the A*-G range. This indicates at least satisfactory progress and achievement by pupils with special educational needs. There are no significant differences in attainment in the different skills. Comparison of results at ages 14 and 16 for pupils taking the GCSE examination in 2000 shows that pupils made good progress in modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
139. Inspection evidence shows that pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from a focus on how language works, which underpins their progress in all skills. Many pupils make very good progress in writing. Standards among pupils in top sets in end of key stage examinations and written coursework are very high, both in content and accuracy. This is seen in challenging topics such as writing accounts of work experience and keeping fit. In lower sets there is less accuracy, but all pupils are aware of what they must do in order to raise the standard of their work. In German, pupils in all sets find it difficult to come to terms with unusual rules, such as word order and

capital letters for nouns. There is little original spoken work in many lessons, but when pupils engage in role play exercises, persistent problems with pronunciation and intonation are apparent. In these situations some of the higher attaining pupils, especially girls, are reticent. In Years 10 and 11, new topics, plus the extension of topics covered earlier, are used well to extend knowledge of vocabulary and structures so that good progress is made in listening and reading comprehension skills. Pupils in lower sets, including some with special educational needs, make good progress, in some cases towards modified goals such as a certificate of achievement.

140. Attitudes to learning foreign languages are generally positive. A few pupils in middle and lower attaining sets find the routine of lessons less stimulating, especially in Years 10 and 11, but there is a lot of enjoyment of the intellectual challenge provided in many lessons. Pupils sustain concentration well and are attentive. They collaborate well and behaviour is nearly always good, so that imaginative oral tasks can take place. Pupils work in pairs, not only to engage in role play, but also to exchange ideas and review each other's writing. This helps to ensure that they think carefully about their work. In open-ended tasks, notably in much of the written coursework used in Years 8 to 11, many pupils show an ability to go beyond the minimum requirements and produce good independent work.
141. Teaching is effective in ensuring that pupils progress through National Curriculum levels to achieve the best GCSE grades of which they are capable. It is good in two thirds of lessons. There is no unsatisfactory teaching. This has a positive impact on the quality of learning, which is also good. All teachers have good knowledge of their main language and six teachers offer a second language. In most lessons teachers make good use of the foreign language to provide an appropriate model and raise expectations. Teachers have a very good knowledge of National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria, which they share effectively with pupils to ensure a thoughtful and productive approach to all aspects of language learning. Planning for individual lessons is very good, so that pupils learn something new in every lesson and nearly always have opportunities to apply this, in speaking or writing, as well as showing understanding in reading or listening tasks. A good example of this was seen in a Year 8 German lesson on making travel arrangements, where pupils incorporated the use of prepositions taking the dative case into their role plays. Expectations, of behaviour and through the challenge in tasks, are always high, though in some lessons too much use is made of English. Where this is used to ensure understanding of tasks or to explain a grammatical point, it is acceptable, but in lessons dominated by grammatical work pupils hear little French or German, and do not use the foreign language themselves.
142. Teaching methods are effective in raising standards. Teachers vary the organisation of lessons well, to include variety in paired work and whole class activities such as surveys. This was, for example, well demonstrated in a Year 11 German lesson on holidays. This variation ensures pupils' enjoyment of activities, which in turn enhances learning. The consistently good management of pupils is also a key factor in supporting pupils' learning. Relationships are good and learning takes place in an atmosphere of mutual respect. In only one lesson was unsatisfactory behaviour observed, which slowed progress in the lesson. Time is used well and most lessons are conducted with pace which helps to keep pupils focused on lesson tasks. When the pace of lessons slows this is often where the focus on a grammatical point consumes too much time. Resources are well used, but a lack of reading materials and computers means that pupils' learning experiences are not as wide as they could be. Teachers ensure, by comments in class and by marks awarded, that pupils have a firm grasp on how well they are doing. The marking of written work is up to date but brief, so that pupils do not benefit from helpful comments to which they can refer. However, the main weaknesses in pupils' written work are usually discussed with the teacher in following lessons. Homework is set according to the department policy and complements and consolidates work covered in lessons.
143. The work of the department benefits from very good leadership. Schemes of work and planning documents are very good. The regular monitoring of teaching and learning, careful analyses of results, and the effective use of assessment information collated all ensure that the work of this enthusiastic team of teachers has a positive impact in improving standards. Curricular provision is satisfactory. Pupils take either French or German in Year 7. About 60 pupils in top sets take both

languages in Years 8 and 9 and can take both in Years 10 and 11 if they choose, though very few do. Although new resources are being acquired in the learning resource centre, there is a shortage of good reading materials, including a shortage of textbooks, which means that pupils often share and cannot take books home. There are no computers in the department. These issues feature in the improvement plan for the subject. Good use is made of display in classrooms. Key words and phrases are displayed and used in lessons, and pupils' work is celebrated.

144. There has been good improvement in modern foreign languages since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have improved year on year and there is more good teaching. Procedures for assessing pupils' work and monitoring teaching have improved considerably. Both the analyses and use of assessment information are excellent. Effective use is made of this information to set targets and improve teaching and learning. Other positive features identified in the last inspection report remain strong, notably subject leadership and the quality of departmental documentation.

MUSIC

145. The 1999 teacher assessments show pupils' standards of attainment in music at the end of Year 9 were above the national average for 14 year olds. The 2000 assessments show an improvement on those of the previous year. Inspection evidence is consistent with teacher assessments. Pupils in Year 7 start their musical education at the school by singing rounds or partner songs and discussing the elements of music, particularly rhythm. Pupils in Year 8 explore the blues by listening to blues music and researching its history. They also explore the structure of chords. Pupils in Year 9 use musical vocabulary confidently, discuss the elements of music found in a piece of music played on a CD and listen to pieces in theme and variation form.
146. The 1999 GCSE results were above the national average and show a continuation of the above average standard of results achieved since the previous inspection. This trend continued in 2000 with 82 per cent of candidates achieving A* - C grades. Inspection evidence confirms standards in Year 11 to be above expectations. Pupils in Year 10 improvise well and make good use of pentatonic scales and the notes from the Dorian mode, and record them for future reference. Similarly, pupils in Year 11 show good musical skills in composing an original theme, or choosing a well-known theme, harmonising it and writing a variation on the theme.
147. Pupils' progress and learning in Years 7 to 9 are good. Pupils in Year 7 learn rhythmic notation and demonstrate their knowledge by clapping rhythmic patterns written on the board and by using them in class rhythmic ensembles. Pupils in Year 8 learn a twelve bar blues chord pattern and are able to play it on a keyboard or percussion instrument, whilst a partner improvises using the notes from a blues scale. Pupils in Year 9 listen to different arrangements of well-known songs, identify the differences between the arrangements and use their observations to improve their own compositions. Learning in Years 10 and 11 is good. Pupils in Year 10 carry out research into music in the Renaissance era and use their improvisation experiences to compose simple eight bar melodies. Pupils in Year 11 listen to more pieces in variation form and pay particular attention to the different ways in which the composer has varied his original melody. They then use the results of their observations effectively in their own variations.
148. Careful attention is paid to the needs of pupils of different levels in the planning of all lessons. Activities are prepared for extending the higher attaining pupils and suitably adjusted resources and demands are arranged for lower attainers. This ensures that the achievement and progress of pupils at both key stages, including those with special educational needs, is at least satisfactory and often good. This is particularly so when learning assistants support pupils with special educational needs. When this occurs, music teachers and the special educational needs co-ordinator work together to ensure that the learning assistants are familiar with the contents of the particular lessons in order to ensure that support is most effective.

149. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in music are good and sometimes very good. Pupils are polite to the staff and enthusiastic to start the lesson. They take clear enjoyment in the practical sections of lessons. During questioning they raise their hands to answer questions and make positive contributions to discussion. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher, extracts of recorded music, and particularly to performances given by other pupils. Good relationships exist between pupils and between pupils and teachers. Pupils work well together to produce short compositions and often without direct supervision by the teacher. This capacity to work independently becomes more apparent in Years 10 and 11. Pupils feel able to ask questions when they do not understand a new aspect and persevere well when faced with challenging tasks.
150. Overall teaching is very good at both key stages. Teachers have an excellent knowledge and understanding of their subject. This enables them to explain new concepts clearly and provide good illustrations. Lessons are very well planned with an interesting variety of activities that engage and hold the attention of all pupils. Higher attaining pupils are offered opportunities to improvise or to explain aspects that are unclear to the remainder of the class. In keeping with the department's aims, music lessons are enjoyable, but nevertheless demanding. Expectations are high and contributions that do not reach the expected standard are repeated after a clear explanation of the ways in which the contribution can be improved. Questioning is used effectively and the correct use of musical vocabulary and technical terms is encouraged. Class management is characterised by a firm but informal manner, which produces positive response from pupils. Good use is made of time and resources in lessons, particularly in practical sessions, where the setting of time limits helps pupils focus on the set task. Homework is set regularly, and relates to work started in the lesson.
151. The curriculum offers pupils a wide range of worthwhile musical experiences, with ample opportunities for developing literacy and numeracy skills. However, the Key Stage 3 curriculum requires more specific reference to the regular use of information and communications technology as an integral part of lessons. Assessment is well used to monitor pupils' learning in both key stages and to set targets in Key Stage 4. Curriculum links are being established with the primary schools through joint participation in workshops, but more formal links are necessary to enable attainment at the end of Year 6 to properly influence curriculum planning in Year 7. Pupils make good use of the access they are given to the department during break, lunchtime and after school for further musical activities.
152. Subject leadership is excellent. The department benefits from the subject leader's connection with University of Durham as an associate tutor for the initial teacher-training course. The students who are placed in the school receive very good support and help to enrich pupils' musical experiences. The work of department also benefits from the contribution made by a fully qualified part-time teacher, who has been working with the head of department for the last year. Instrumental teaching is undertaken by six visiting teachers from the Tees Valley Music Service who teach a variety of instruments to approximately 100 pupils. This work is well co-ordinated and tuition is of very good standard. The department offers a wide range of extra-curricular activities that have gained the school a reputation for music making of a high standard. The department also promotes visits by professional musicians. Accommodation for music is just satisfactory. Storage units lack proper shelving and there is no ventilation in the practice rooms. The lack of computers means that resources are insufficient to meet the needs of Curriculum 2000. Very good contributions are made to the work of the department by the Friends of High Tunstall Music Association, which is a dedicated group of parents who raise funds for the departments, organise transport to collect pupils after rehearsals, provide extra supervisors on visits and contribute to administration of musical events.
153. Since the previous inspection the department has tackled the issues raised as far as financial constraints allow. The learning and appraising activities at Key Stage 4 have been improved and are now more relevant to the pupils' needs. The department documentation is exemplary. However the provision for information and communications technology is still inadequate.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

154. Pupils' attainment in physical education by the end of Year 9 is above national expectations. This is due to consistently good teaching and because pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning. By the end of Year 9, pupils are able to pass and catch in rugby and perform basic balance and flight in gymnastics. Many pupils have developed these techniques so that they are performing at an above average level. Pupils develop an understanding of techniques and are able to talk to each other about their work and suggest improvements. They know that it is important to prepare for strenuous physical activity and confidently suggest and lead appropriate warm-up activities. They have a good understanding of the effects of exercise on the body.
155. By the time that they leave school, pupils' overall attainment is above national expectations. The percentage of pupils following the GCSE course achieving A*-C grades in the 1999 was above the national average. This percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades in the 2000 was above the 1999 percentage. Inspection evidence indicates that the overall attainment of pupils currently in Year 11 is above expectations for their age. Where pupils have substantial previous experience, for example in football, they achieve above average standards. A significant number of pupils achieve good standards in extra-curricular activities at local, county and regional levels and this makes a good contribution to the overall standards in physical education throughout the school.
156. Pupils make good progress and achievement up to the end of Year 9. Good teaching ensures that basic skills are quickly acquired and that pupils learn to work productively with one other. Good progress is made in learning a basic gymnastic vocabulary of movement in which quality of performance is emphasised. Good progress is also made in the development of skills in rugby football. Awareness of space and position in relation to the ball carrier improves as pupils move through Key Stage 3. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers know them well and make good use of their individual education plans. Pupils following the GCSE course are also making good progress as a consequence of demanding and challenging skills practices.
157. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. Participation rates are high and standards of kit are good. Pupils work well together in pairs and groups and show good levels of concentration, even when not directly supervised by the teacher. Behaviour is good. Levels of sporting behaviour are high and good play is appreciated and applauded. Pupils respond well to the opportunities provided to exercise responsibility. These occur within lessons and in extra-curricular activities. A high proportion of pupils choose to take part in the very good programme of extra-curricular activities.
158. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and use this to plan lessons with good pace and challenge. Participation levels are generally high. However, in the one unsatisfactory lesson observed, a large number of non-participants in a swimming lesson were largely unoccupied for the duration of the lesson. Teachers relate well with pupils and this gives them confidence to respond to questioning and to perform in front of other pupils. Clear explanations and demonstrations ensure that pupils have a sound understanding of lesson tasks. Teachers offer clear guidance as necessary in order to assess and encourage progress as in striking the ball in hockey and to improve the flow and tension in gymnastics. Good management of the teaching space and resources means that pupils can quickly settle into their work with the minimum of interference from other performers. Positive relationships are based on mutual respect and the use of praise for both effort and achievement.
159. Subject leadership and management are good. The subject leader has a clear vision for the development of the department. Teachers carefully assess and monitor the progress of pupils and use the outcome of these assessments to plan strategies for improvement. However, the amount of teaching time for about a quarter of pupils in Years 8 and 9 is reduced in order for them to study a second modern foreign language. Consequently, these pupils are not taught the full programme of study in physical education. Good teamwork is a feature of the department. This leads to a consistency of expectations in terms of dress, participation and behaviour. The subject improvement plan is very good and directly linked to teaching and learning outcomes.

160. Good progress has been made since the last inspection. All of the strengths identified in the previous inspection report have been sustained and there is now greater variety in teaching and learning methods. Pupils also have greater opportunity to work independently. However, no progress has been made with regard to the curriculum in Key Stage 3 where some pupils are unable to complete the full programme of study.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

161. Teacher assessments show standards of attainment at the end of Year 9 are good in terms of the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Standards at the end of Year 11, when all pupils take GCSE religious education short course examination are above average. Over the past three years there has been a significant rising trend in terms of the percentage of A*-C grades and A*-G grades awarded. In 2000, the percentage of pupils achieving A*-C grades was above the 1999 average. The attainment of boys and girls is similar. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and show a good grasp of the topics studied.
162. Pupils at both key stages make good progress and achieve well in relation to their previous levels of attainment. They show good knowledge of distinctive features of major religions, and especially of the Christian faith. During Years 7 to 9 pupils' work shows a good understanding of the nature and purpose of sacred buildings, of major festivals and of an extensive range of celebrations to mark rites of passage. They explore concepts of right and wrong, and areas such as responsibility for the world we live in. By the end of Year 9 they have studied sensitive and tragic issues such as the holocaust and have explored some of the ways in which people of faith have expressed that faith in action. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 deepen this appreciation and understanding. Through Christian and other major religious traditions, pupils examine belief in relation to such issues as the problem of suffering and evil. Aspects of work relating to making moral decisions and relationships are vigorously debated and the perspectives gained expand their own horizons and sharpen their perceptions and reflections. In each year group there are many good and very good examples of stimulating discussion.
163. In learning about religious symbolism, pupils are encouraged to probe the underlying meaning and significance of the externals of religion and to explore deeper questions of significance and meaning. They use stories and events effectively, going beyond the narrative, to consider some of the reasons underlying events and their significance for today. Discussions are often lively and robust, well focused and balanced. Pupils' writing, often of a good standard, shows care and pride in presentation and content. In Year 9, extended studies are characterised by careful research and sifting of important issues. Many pupils use word processing skills effectively. Pupils write in a range of styles for particular purposes such as straightforward responses to questions or using a newspaper style to report an event. They make thoughtful attempts to explore the ways in which faith has had a profound impact on peoples lives and their service to others. A distinctive feature of work at all levels is the emphasis on personal exploration of the Christian and other faiths in terms of how these can affect our thinking and beliefs. Religious education makes a very important contribution to the provision for pupils' spiritual development throughout the school.
164. Pupils listen well to their teachers and to each other. They usually behave well in class, and many older pupils show a notable level of maturity and sensitivity. Many pupils are able to sustain periods of listening, concentration and reflection. They are receptive to others' opinions, beliefs and values. Most pupils respond well to difficult challenges such as thinking through issues relating to discrimination. Some work is characterised by the extra effort pupils are willing to put in. This was evident, for example, in the production of a high quality guide around a mosque.
165. The quality of teaching at both key stages is always at least good and frequently very good. It is underpinned by teachers' good knowledge and understanding, which encompasses religious, historic and contemporary appreciation of issues. Preparation and planning are very good, with carefully chosen materials and methods being developed to match the needs of the pupils being taught. Teaching is enthusiastic and pace and challenge are sustained in lessons. Clear exposition is well linked to skilled question and answer sessions. These aspects, coupled with a

range of activities in each lesson, generate interest and ensure pupil involvement. For example, in a Year 11 lesson on issues of prejudice and discrimination, there was vociferous debate about how women have been regarded in the home, workplace, and in the church. Lessons build on pupils' knowledge and experience, and their own interests and perspectives are valued and respected. Literacy skills are continually reinforced and extended both orally and in writing. There is increasing use of information and communications technology. Pupils are kept firmly on task and the excellent quality of personal relationships means that they usually enjoy working hard. Such relationships also ensure that difficult and contentious moral and social issues can be sensitively and effectively dealt with. Teachers continually assess pupils' progress during lessons to provide effective individual support as necessary.

166. The leadership of the subject is very good. The school complies with statutory requirements for religious education. The arrangements in Years 10 and 11, where religious education is focused by the requirements of the GCSE short course, are good. For many pupils, this raises the profile and impact of religious education. Most give considerable and serious efforts, and their standard of work is evidence of this. Good progress has been made in the provision of religious education and standards are rising. This is due to well-embedded processes of monitoring, evaluation and improvement planning. For example, schemes of work have been revised, assessments refined, targets set, and teaching strategies re-appraised. New materials and approaches continue to be developed. Progress has been made in marking, assessment against criteria and in validating standards, providing critically supportive comments and targets. Staff are increasingly aware of the benefits of observing teaching, and this facility is being extended. There is a continuing cycle of review and evaluation, which links standards with teaching methods, materials used, modes of assessment. The accommodation in the mobile classrooms is poor and poses significant difficulties and constraints, teachers have made very good efforts to make it into as stimulating a working environment as possible.

SOCIAL SCIENCE

167. Social science was introduced as a GCSE option in 1994 with the first candidates taking the GCSE examination in 1996. Since that time, results in the examination have seen a year on year improvement. In 1999, 52 per cent of pupils entered for the examination achieved A*-C grades compared with the national average of 42 per cent. All pupils achieved A*-G grades. In 2000 the proportion of pupils achieving A*-C grades rose to 60 per cent, with 98 per cent of pupils achieving grades in the A*-G range. A feature of the 2000 results was the outstanding performance of a boy who was identified as the top candidate of the 27,742 entries in the social sciences group of GCSE subjects taken through the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance. This achievement was recognised by the award of a solid silver medal to the pupil and a specially prepared diploma for the school at a presentation ceremony in London.
168. The progress and achievement of pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good. Inspection evidence indicates that pupils currently in Years 10 and 11 are achieving standards that, although distributed across the A*-G range, are above average, overall. Pupils in Year 10 who are just beginning the two-year course are already showing a good understanding of family and community issues. They are able to identify different types of family structure, such as nuclear, extended, single parent and reconstituted and discuss the difference in a mature and objective way. In a Year 11 lesson on citizenship, pupils were able to explain why the rule of law is essential to a healthy democracy and show a good understanding of the differences between European, common, case and statute law. GCSE coursework shows that by the end of Year 11 pupils have a good grasp of research design. They are able to construct questionnaires and interview schedules to gather data in a systematic way and use information and communications technology to analyse the data. In doing this appropriate use is made statistics and charts and graphs to present the findings.
169. Pupils display very positive attitudes towards their social science lessons. They concentrate, respond well to challenging tasks and persevere when work is difficult. Pupils demonstrate their ability to work independently when engaged in coursework and the majority take great care in the

presentation of their work. The overall quality of coursework is above average and one piece of coursework in the 2000 examination was awarded full marks. However, the coursework of some lower attaining pupils shows a lack of application and willingness to submit work that lacks depth and is untidy in presentation. Pupils behave well, work together sensibly and support one another in their lessons. This is apparent in the way that pupils listen to each other's contributions in class discussions. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect and this promotes pupils' learning and progress because pupils feel sufficiently confident to ask questions when their understanding is incomplete.

170. The quality of teaching is very good and having a significant impact on pupils' progress and achievement. The teacher is enthusiastic and has very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This enables the teacher to explain new concepts clearly and provide good illustrations from both historical and recent events. Lessons are very well planned with an interesting variety of activities that engage and hold the attention of all pupils. Expectations are high and these are clearly communicated to pupils in a way that encourages them to achieve higher standards. Questioning is used effectively and the correct use of the vocabulary and technical terms associated with social science is systematically developed. There is a continuous emphasis on developing in pupils the ability to look at society and social issues through the perspective of the sociologist. Class management very good and characterised by a firm but friendly manner, which produces a positive response from pupils. One of the most significant factors underpinning pupils' progress and achievement is the effective use of ongoing assessment. In lessons this is seen in the linking of concepts to examination marks so that pupils understand what constitutes a precise and accurate answer. In coursework it is seen in the marking, which gives pupils clear guidance on the standards they are achieving and what they must do to improve.
171. Leadership in the subject is very good. The teacher responsible, although part-time, has a high level of commitment to the pupils, the subject and the school. This is demonstrated in extra-curricular activities such as the Motorola Youth Parliament and Mock Magistrates Court and Crown Court Trials in which a large number of pupils of all ages participate and achieve very good standards. Activities such as these contribute significantly to not only pupils' academic progress and learning but also to their social development. The subject documentation is exemplary. Detailed assessment records are maintained and pupils' progress is carefully monitored towards individual targets. Examination results are carefully analysed and teaching and learning strategies are modified in the light of the information obtained. The GCSE targets agreed for the subject are usually exceeded.
172. There has been a pattern of continued improvement in all areas in the subject since it was introduced in 1994 and the subject is well placed to continue to make improvement in the future.