

# INSPECTION REPORT

## CHANTRY MIDDLE SCHOOL

Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122314

Headteacher: Mr D. J. Mitchell

Reporting inspector: Mrs. G. Salter-Smith  
8329

Dates of inspection: 16<sup>th</sup> – 18<sup>th</sup> October 2000

Inspection number: 223924

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

© Crown copyright 2000

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Mitford Road  
Morpeth  
Northumberland

Postcode: NE61 1RQ

Telephone number: 01670 512874

Fax number: 01670 513395

Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs K. Gallagher

Date of previous inspection: June 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Gillian Salter-Smith 8329	Registered inspector	Physical education	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Leadership and management
			Key Issues for action
Shirley Elomari 11072	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Harold Davies 13734	Team inspector	Geography	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
Mike Dillon 14837	Team inspector	Art and design	
		Design and technology	
Peggy Hooton 19915	Team inspector	History	
Geoff Hunter 31100	Team inspector	Mathematics	
Jean-Pierre Kirkland 4483	Team inspector	Religious education	
		Provision for pupils with special educational needs	
David Morton 13154	Team inspector	Music	
		Equality of opportunity	
Terence Parish 15465	Team inspector	Science	
		Information technology	
Geoff Price 19214	Team inspector	English	
		Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	
Judith Tolley 17404	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	Teaching and learning

The inspection contractor was:

Power House Inspections

Grasshoppers  
1 Anglesey Close  
Chasetown  
Burntwood  
Staffordshire  
WS7 8XA

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>7</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?</b>	<b>12</b>
The school's results and pupils' achievements	
Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development	
<b>HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS?</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>32</b>

## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Chantry Middle School is a larger than average mixed comprehensive community school for pupils aged 9 to 13. It is a popular school and numbers do not vary from year to year. A good proportion of the pupils come from outside the area immediately served by the school. They come from both urban and rural areas. Most pupils come from relatively advantaged social backgrounds but a diverse range of social circumstances is represented. There are more boys than girls in the school. A very low proportion of pupils are from ethnic minority backgrounds. There is just one pupil for whom English is an additional language. Forty pupils (8.1 per cent) are eligible for free school meals, which is below average for this type of school. There are 57 pupils (11.6 per cent) on the special educational needs register which is well below the national average and the percentage of pupils with a statement of needs (2.2 per cent) is broadly in line with national averages. The attainment of the vast majority of the pupils when they enter the school is above average and there is little variation across the year groups.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

The school provides a good standard of education and is maintaining high standards in most subjects. Pupils behave very well and have very good attitudes to their work. The teaching is good overall and very good in Years 7 and 8. Most pupils are learning well, make good progress and achieve well. Management is good overall and is leading the school in the right direction. The school gives good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils achieve high standards. In most subjects, including the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, standards are above average.
- In the national tests at the end of Year 6, results in the core subjects were well above those achieved in similar schools.
- Teaching is good overall and in Years 7 and 8 it is very good. The teaching of literacy across subjects is especially effective.
- The school expects and achieves very good standards in pupils' behaviour, attitudes and relationships.
- Pupils are very well cared for, and encouraged to learn, work hard and do their best.
- The school works very effectively with its partner schools to share expertise.
- Good whole-school planning of the right targets and activities promotes improvement.

#### **What could be improved**

- Pupils' acquisition of the skills in information and communication technology (ICT) and the use of computers by pupils and teachers across subjects.
- The monitoring of pupils' work and teaching, and the sharing of best practice across subjects.
- The use of assessment information and more closely focused targets to identify and challenge the highest attaining pupils.
- The organisation of the school day and the balance of time for teaching subjects as the range of learning activities is restricted in some areas, for instance in history and geography.

*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 June 1995. The quality of teaching and learning has improved. High standards have been maintained in the core subjects and in most other subjects standards have improved. During the past three years the role of the subject co-ordinators has improved. The work of pupils across all years is better co-ordinated and the

focus is more clearly on improving standards. The school's plans for improvement are now linked to the amounts of money available to spend. The school has increased the number of computers considerably and staff are undergoing training in their use. However, the school has not yet benefited from national funding and there is still a significant shortage of computers. Access to computers across the subjects is limited and consequently pupils have not gained enough skills in the use of ICT. Although some areas of improvement were slow to start owing to staff changes and major capital building improvements, overall improvement since the last inspection is good.

## STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
English	B	B	A	A
Mathematics	B	A	B	A
Science	A	A	A	A

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

Over the last four years results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved in line with those of most schools. In 2000 pupils' results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 were well above the national average in English and science and above average in mathematics. Compared with those of similar schools results were well above average. The school has met the statutory targets set in English and mathematics over the past three and two years respectively. Targets for 2001 are challenging but attainable.

Standards of work seen during the inspection were above average both at the end of Year 6 and by the end of Year 8 in most subjects. Pupils make good progress and achieve well. High standards in literacy help to promote good standards across subjects. The good quality of teaching is a significant contributor to the high standards. A significant number of pupils achieve very high standards in extra-curricular activities in music and physical education. In some subjects highest attaining pupils do not always achieve their very best because they are not set specific targets and activities to challenge them. Results of national tests in Year 6 are generally higher than the standards of work seen because the school prepares pupils for the tests very well and the inspection takes account of a broader range of activities. Pupils with special educational needs are well catered for and make good progress. Pupils achieve well above average standards in English and design and technology by the end of Year 8. Standards are average in French and music at the end of Year 8. In all other subjects except ICT standards are above average. Pupils' skills in ICT are limited.



## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are eager to learn and to be involved in a wide range of school activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The school is a harmonious community. Almost all pupils behave very well.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Relationships between pupils and staff are positive. Very high numbers of pupils take part in activities outside lessons. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to take responsibility and take initiative.
Attendance	Attendance is above average. Unauthorised absence is below average. Pupils are mostly punctual in arriving at school and at lessons.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 9-11 years	aged 11-13 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Very 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.*

Teaching overall is good and has a significant effect on how well pupils learn. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is good and in Years 7 and 8 it is very good. Overall 34 per cent of lessons seen were very good or excellent, 76 per cent good or better and 98 per cent satisfactory or better. More of the highest quality of teaching is found in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. Of the 94 lessons observed just two were judged to be unsatisfactory. The teaching of mathematics is good. The teaching of English and science is very good overall with good teaching in Years 5 and 6 and very good teaching in Years 7 and 8. Examples of excellent teaching are found in science and in design and technology. Teaching is very good overall in religious education, in design and technology in Years 7 and 8 and in music in Years 5 and 6. In all other subjects teaching is good overall. The teaching of literacy skills across the subjects is very good. The teaching of numeracy skills across subjects other than mathematics is satisfactory. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good.

Teachers have good subject knowledge that enables them to teach with confidence and in some lessons inspirationally. Many teachers teach with infectious enthusiasm such that pupils enjoy learning. Teachers have very good relationships with their pupils who consequently are very well behaved and willing to learn. Planning is good especially where teachers share the targets for the lessons with the pupils and review them at the end. A varied range of approaches is used in many subjects to ensure that pupils are involved in a variety of learning activities, such as investigations. The well structured teaching of literacy skills enables pupils to write extensively and for a variety of purposes across subjects. Areas for development in teaching include the more frequent use of computers across subjects; more precise use of targets in order to challenge the highest attaining pupils; and the consistent use of homework across subjects and classes.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory provision overall but breaches of statutory requirements in ICT are a major shortcoming.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils have full access to the curriculum. They learn particularly well when they are in small groups and when support assistants are present in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	Good. Progress has been made in improving provision for pupils' spiritual and multicultural development, and these elements are especially strong in music and religious education.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The school makes very good provision for pupils' welfare, health and safety. The behaviour policy works very well. Pupils receive very good personal support and good academic guidance.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Good. The school has a good relationship with the majority of parents. Pupils' annual reports are of good quality.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. Clear purpose and direction established by the headteacher and deputy. Senior managers, subject co-ordinators and year heads manage their areas of the school effectively.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactorily overall. Many governors are new to the role. Some work very closely with the school. However, statutory requirements in the curriculum for ICT and for a daily collective act of worship are not met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning are in the early stages and are not yet consistently affecting standards across all subjects.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Good staffing. Satisfactory accommodation. Good provision of equipment and books in most subjects but a significant shortage of computers.

## PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Good teaching.</li><li>• That the school expects their child to work hard and do their best.</li><li>• The good progress their children make.</li><li>• The good behaviour of pupils.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The range of extra-curricular activities and pupils' access to them.</li><li>• The amount and quality of homework.</li><li>• The quality of the information they receive about how their pupils are getting on.</li></ul>

Inspectors agree with the positive views. Inspectors consider that a good range of extra-curricular activities is offered. Inspectors have no overall concern about homework but recognise some inconsistencies in its frequency and quality. The annual reports on pupils' progress are good but some of the targets which teachers give to help pupils improve are not precise enough.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and pupils' achievements**

1. In the national tests of the Year 2000 the results of pupils in Year 6 were above average in mathematics and well above average in English and science. Compared with those schools with pupils of a similar background the results in all three core subjects were well above average.

2. Over the last four years results in national tests at the end of Year 6 have improved in line with the national trend and the school has maintained high standards. Up until 1999 pupils by the end of Year 6 have, on average, been more than one and a half terms ahead of other pupils nationally. Science has consistently been the strongest subject and English the relatively weaker subject but pupils are still almost a term and a half ahead in English. The most recent test results in English bring them into line with those in science.

3. The improvement of boys' standards has been a focus for the school, particularly in English, and there is now no significant difference between the results achieved by girls and boys in the most recent national tests in English and mathematics. In the most recent science tests girls achieved better results than the boys after four years of very similar results. There is no marked difference between the standards of the work of girls and boys seen across subjects during the inspection. Results of the most recent national tests in Year 6 are generally higher than the standards of work seen because the school prepares pupils for the tests very well, the inspection takes account of a wider range of activities than is tested and, in science, new topics were being studied.

4. The school has either met or exceeded the statutory targets set in negotiation with the local education authority for English and mathematics over the past three and two years respectively. Targets for 2001 are challenging in that the school is expected to increase the already high proportion of pupils meeting the expected standards by four and three percentage points in English and mathematics respectively. With effective leadership in these core subjects which brings an improved focus on monitoring and supporting the progress of individual pupils these targets should be attainable.

5. Current standards of work are above average both at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8 and most pupils make good progress and achieve well. The good quality of teaching overall is a significant contributor to the high standards. High standards in literacy help to promote good standards across subjects. This weakness was reported at the last inspection.

6. By the time pupils reach the age of 11 most pupils speak well with a good vocabulary. Most are competent and confident readers. Their written work is of a good standard, well presented and accurate. Spelling and punctuation are generally good. Standards in English are very good by the time pupils are age 13. Strengths in their work include their skills in oral expression and their ability to read difficult texts, such as passages from Shakespeare's plays. Their writing is of a high standard, well ordered, well presented and accurate. Lower attaining pupils can construct good pieces of writing of medium length with some help.

7. In mathematics pupils' work is above average by the age of eleven and thirteen. Pupils are confident in their use and understanding of number. By the age of thirteen high attaining pupils have an excellent understanding of geometry. They can use calculators efficiently including the evaluation of powers, roots and index notation. Average attaining pupils have a good grasp of basic geometry, for example the properties of angles around a point but lower attaining pupils have more difficulty with geometric concepts.

8. Standards in science are above average overall. By the age of 13 most pupils can explain their experiments confidently and use scientific terms correctly. Pupils in the middle ability band have a good understanding of chemical processes, but their experimental work sometimes lacks rigour. Pupils at the age of 12 have a better than average understanding of physical processes shown, for example in their work on electricity, and good investigative skills. Pupils at age 11 show an above average knowledge and understanding of vertebrates and invertebrates. The quality of their scientific writing is above average.

9. Pupils achieve very high standards in design and technology by the end of Year 8. Pupils become autonomous and creative problem solvers and this is reflected particularly well in the work they undertake using resistant materials. In out of school activities pupils achieve very high standards in music and sporting activities. Standards are average in French and music at the end of Year 8. In all other subjects except ICT standards of work are above average. It is not possible to judge standards in ICT because the variety and depth of pupils' experiences are not sufficient to substantiate a judgement. In Year 8 the standard of word processing is satisfactory overall and better than average amongst more able pupils.

10. Pupils arrive at the school with above average attainment as judged by nationally recognised reading tests and National Curriculum tests. On the whole most pupils make good progress and achieve well in all years. They maintain high standards and achieve even higher standards in national tests. This is due to the high quality of the teaching, very well motivated pupils and the school's recent emphasis on tracking the progress of individuals carefully and raising standards.

11. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good overall. In mathematics and science, through a mixture of in-class support, work specially set to match pupils' needs and some specialised teaching in smaller groups, pupils acquire basic skills of literacy and numeracy well. There are noticeable improvements in mental agility, handwriting and the quality of extended writing. In English pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall, although lesson planning and the use of individual educational plans could be better organised to identify small steps in learning more clearly and so accelerate progress. In other subjects, progress varies from good to satisfactory. It is better when teachers plan specific work for groups of pupils, using larger print, simpler tasks or less demanding written work. This occurs well in physical education, music, history, geography, religious education, art and design and technology.

12. Some high attaining pupils do not always achieve their very best, particularly in English, science, French, geography and physical education, because these pupils are not clearly identified by the school or set specific targets and activities to challenge them. In music and physical education the provision of a good range of enriching activities beyond the school day helps high attaining pupils in these subjects too achieve their best.

### ***Literacy***

13. Standards of literacy throughout the school are high. Reading for pleasure is well established amongst pupils in all years, and they regularly borrow books from the school library. Reading aloud in Years 5 and 6 is generally of above average standard for any particular attainment group. Literacy is being further supported across the curriculum by a 'Language for Learning' programme under the direction of a recently appointed co-ordinator. Valuable support and interest have been received from the designated member of the school's governing body. In all subject areas reading standards are good. Fluent and expressive reading occurred in geography and pupils have effective skimming and scanning techniques in French and history. In mathematics and French there was confident and accurate reading aloud. Reading standards in history are sufficiently high for pupils to access information on internet web sites, where the language levels are demanding. In music pupils read African words aloud to create rhythmic effects. Written work in all subjects is above average. Standards of accuracy and presentation in mathematics, French and religious studies are high. There was a range of written work, including imaginative work, in history, religious studies, French, music and design technology. In geography and history the writing of lower attaining pupils is well supported by the use of outline structures for writing. In these subjects, too, the writing of higher attaining pupils is notably good. In most subjects key words, often with definitions, are displayed and referred to in lessons.

### ***Numeracy***

14. Pupils' standards in numeracy in their work other than in mathematics throughout the school are satisfactory. The school uses the National Numeracy Strategy in mathematics lessons. Developments in this area are having a positive effect on the pupils' ability to handle numbers. Regular, short, sharp introductory sessions to mathematics lessons in which the pupils are involved with mental arithmetic in various forms are improving their skills levels significantly. These skills are well employed in most areas of the curriculum. In music, for instance, pupils evaluate musical patterns and sequences, recognising music as the organisation of sound in time; in physical education pupils show well-developed spatial awareness when planning complex group sequences in gymnastics; and in history pupils are required to use source materials which include graphs and the interpretation of statistics. There is, however, no policy for the teaching of numeracy skills across all the subjects and lessons other than mathematics are making less contribution to pupils' skills than they could do.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

15. Overall, pupils' attitudes, values, behaviour and personal development are very good and are a major strength of the school. Almost all pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and their learning. Pupils are keen to come to school. They participate with enthusiasm and frequently with enjoyment in lessons and other activities. Large numbers are involved in the good programme of extra-curricular activities, many of which take place at lunchtime so that those pupils who travel by bus may attend. Pupils respond very well to the many opportunities they have to undertake trips and visits. Their enthusiasm makes a significant contribution to their high levels of achievement. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into lessons and take a full and active part. Usually, attitudes to work are good, and support assistants encourage pupils with statements and others to organise themselves appropriately and as a result little time is wasted in settling down to work.

16. Behaviour in the lessons observed during the inspection was never less than satisfactory and in around two thirds of lessons behaviour was very good or exemplary. This is a high proportion. However, in a very few lessons, the behaviour of a small number of Year 8 boys did have a negative effect on the concentration of the class at times. In most cases these pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties recognised as a special educational need.

17. The level of fixed term exclusions was high during the last school year. This was due to a very small number of pupils for whom pupil contracts to manage behaviour turned out to be inappropriate. Since September, the level of exclusions has greatly reduced. Behaviour around the school and at breaks and lunchtimes is very good. Pupils show good awareness of the needs of others as they move around the building, for example by holding doors open and taking extra care on the stairways. They are polite and very willing to help others. Pupils engage confidently in conversation with their peers, teachers and other adults. Conversations with inspectors were respectful and the response to questions was usually thoughtful and mature. Pupils are respectful of property. Bags are safe when left unattended in the cloakrooms. Books and resources are well cared for and there is little litter to be seen around the building. Pupils have open access to many classrooms and respond very well to the levels of trust placed in them.

18. Pupils' relationships with staff are almost always very good, based on high levels of mutual respect. Relationships between pupils are very good and, in particular, pupils in Year 8 are careful to set a good example to younger pupils. Almost all pupils listen very well to their teachers and to their peers. They express their views and opinions confidently when asked to do so, both in the classroom and when talking to inspectors. Aided by the very good teaching of religious education, pupils demonstrate a high level of awareness of the feelings, beliefs and values of others. They are aware of the impact of their actions and words on others and this leads to the low incidence of bullying. Pupils are confident that there is always an adult to turn to in time of need.

19. Almost all pupils are keen and eager to take responsibility. They help to give out and collect books and equipment, tidy classrooms and help their teachers to put work up on display. A Year 5 pupil acted confidently as a librarian, reading the bar codes and stamping the books. In design technology pupils take considerable responsibility: Year 7 pupils took responsibility for anticipating which materials and equipment would be needed and for selecting them from the store during design work on the use of cams. In Year 8 pupils have the opportunity to act as house captains, selecting teams and helping to organise house activities. Year 8 pupils are also involved in the social committee, which helps the head of year to organise the end of term trips. Pupils respond very positively to the many opportunities provided in lessons for group work, discussion and role-play. They work very well together in pairs or small groups and are very supportive of one another. However, opportunities for pupils to work independently and to undertake research-based tasks are not provided consistently across the curriculum. This is due in part to the limited access to ICT such as computers and digital cameras.

20. Attendance is good and is consistently above the national average. Levels of unauthorised absence are consistently below the national average. Almost all pupils arrive in time in the morning but there is some lateness caused by delayed buses. Lessons begin promptly.

## HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

21. The quality of teaching overall is good and has a significant effect on how well pupils learn. In Years 5 and 6 teaching is good and in Years 7 and 8 it is very good. Overall 34 per cent of lessons seen were very good or excellent, 76 per cent good or better and 98 per cent satisfactory or better. Of 94 lessons observed during the inspection only two were judged to be unsatisfactory. In more than sixty per cent of lessons in Years 5 and 6 teaching and learning were good or better and in Years 7 and 8 they were good or better in more than eighty per cent of lessons.

22. Class teachers in Years 5 and 6 know the pupils in their classes very well and have established very good relationships with them. These factors, together with good collaborative planning and the effective implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, ensures that they make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.

23. The teaching of mathematics is good. The teaching of English and science is good in Years 5 and 6 and very good in Years 7 and 8. Examples of excellent teaching are found in science and in design and technology. Teaching is very good throughout the school in religious education, and in design and technology in Years 7 and 8 and in music in Years 5 and 6. In all other subjects the teaching is good except in French in Years 5 and 6, in which it is satisfactory. The teaching of literacy skills across the subjects is very good. The use of literacy skills such as scanning, re-drafting and the use of clear guidance for writing for different purposes help pupils to achieve well in a range of subjects. Although there is no whole school approach to teaching numeracy across subjects, the teaching of these skills in lessons other than mathematics is satisfactory.

24. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good and helps these pupils to make good progress. The quality of the targets and programmes for learning included in the individual education plans is good, and this enables teachers to understand the nature of the needs of the individual, and use suitable strategies to improve learning. In subjects such as religious education and mathematics, where teachers use the information from the individual education plans well, special work is set to challenge pupils effectively. This is not always the case for higher attaining pupils, whose learning is sometimes impeded by a lack of real challenge. In some English lessons individual educational plans are not used effectively enough to track and accelerate the progress of pupils with special educational needs.

25. In most lessons teachers display good subject knowledge which they use well to give clear explanations and engage pupils with their confidence and enthusiasm. Teachers use their specialist knowledge of their subjects very effectively to promote pupils' learning and there is more specialist teaching in Years 7 and 8 than in Years 5 and 6. For example, in a Year 8 English lesson focusing on the poetry of Wilfred Owen, pupils were given clear and detailed background information which helped them to achieve a high level of appreciation and understanding. In physical education pupils develop skills in games because of effective demonstrations and explanations by their teachers and in French teachers use the language extensively in lessons to develop pupils' listening skills and to reinforce previous learning.

26. Good control and management of pupils keep pupils on task and create an appropriate atmosphere for learning and as a result pupils make good progress. For example, in a Year 8 science lesson pupils were able to explore and develop their own ideas about energy through a series of experiments and because of the excellent management and high expectations of the teacher all pupils were able to make excellent progress. In many lessons pupils are given the opportunity to work together in small groups and exchange ideas, for example in personal and social education and in history. Pupils practise informally



in pairs or small groups in French. Teachers monitor progress and intervene sensitively and as a result pupils are confident and articulate. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and consequently all pupils in a Year 8 science class were able to describe experiments using correct scientific language.

27. Very good planning with clear learning objectives in many lessons enables pupils to build successfully on previous learning. Lessons are well organised and well structured, pupils know why they are learning and as a result make good progress. Year 5 and 6 class teachers, although not specialists in every subject, work closely with subject co-ordinators and very well as a team to plan effective lessons. In a Year 5 literacy hour tasks were clearly explained to ensure that all pupils were clear about what they had to do and this, together with skilful questioning and guidance, led to pupils having a good understanding of the use of present and past tenses. In a Year 8 French lesson the teacher's skilful use of questioning enabled pupils to identify patterns in the language and apply them themselves to describe events in the past. In a Year 7 art and design lesson, a very good one to one tutorial approach enabled all pupils to make very good progress in developing skills in drawing from observation.

28. Teaching is characterised by very good relationships between teachers and pupils; and teachers make good use of praise and encouragement. Teachers show a real interest in pupils' ideas and their work and as a result pupils are concerned to do well and are well motivated.

29. Pupils make rapid progress when they are given the opportunity to develop investigative skills and work independently of the teacher. For example, in a Year 7 design and technology lesson good use was made of group discussion and decision-making so that pupils could go on to develop their own ideas about how best to use the materials provided for the task. In the majority of lessons teachers monitor progress effectively to determine individual needs and give appropriate support for individuals.

30. The most effective lessons are conducted at a brisk pace maintaining pupils' interest through a variety of well sequenced activities. Teachers make good use of resources, such as the overhead projector and whiteboard, to demonstrate and explain new ideas and to list key words and clarify ideas.

31. In the less effective lessons planning does not always adequately challenge higher attaining pupils. Assessment is not always focused enough to be used effectively and on some occasions there is a lack of imaginative extension work. In some mathematics, French and physical education lessons opportunities to challenge higher attaining pupils are missed. In some less effective lessons in English, science and information technology, steps in learning are sometimes omitted, leaving pupils unclear about how to achieve a task. In several subjects, including science and mathematics, the range of learning opportunities is restricted because of the lack of access to ICT. Although the use of homework is satisfactory overall there are inconsistencies in the quantity set and the challenge that it provides, particularly for higher attaining pupils.

32. Some lack of security in teachers' subject knowledge particularly in Years 5 and 6 in French, geography and science adversely influences achievement. In some lessons in science and French, activities are sometimes dominated by the teacher, decreasing opportunities for pupils to participate and slowing the pace.

33. Good progress has been made in developing teaching strategies since the last report but there is still scope for sharing ideas and spreading good practice both within subject areas and across the curriculum.

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

34. The curriculum is broad at both key stages providing a satisfactory range of learning opportunities except in one important area: the school does not comply with requirements for the teaching of ICT. The length of the taught week meets recommendations for Years 5 and 6 but is still well below the national average in Years 7 and 8 as was the case at the time of the previous inspection. The governors have investigated extending the school day but have not yet found ways of doing so owing to financial impracticalities related to sharing transport with other schools.

35. The low time allocation overall in Years 7 and 8 has a detrimental effect on a number of subjects, particularly in the range of teaching and learning strategies which can be used. This is particularly so in geography and history. Re-organisation of the curriculum is needed, in order to improve the balance of subjects and the curricular experiences available to pupils.

36. The curriculum complies with the National Curriculum and religious education, in accordance with the locally agreed syllabus, except that there is inadequate coverage of ICT, both as a discrete subject and in its use to assist learning across subjects. Despite the school's efforts to provide more computers and teaching time for ICT this remains a weakness that was identified at the last inspection. French is taught in Years 5 and 6 and pupils enjoy learning and develop enthusiasm for the subject. However, opportunities are missed to promote enough listening and speaking activities and as a result pupils' progress is inhibited.

37. Provision for personal, social and health education throughout the school is good and statutory requirements for sex and health education are met. There is an effective governors' policy on sex education. Time is well used to develop pupils' knowledge of a range of topics concerned with understanding themselves, friendship and relationships, rights and responsibilities and wider issues, such as problems associated with the environment.

38. Curriculum planning for progression across the school has improved since the last inspection and has been a focus for the work of the subject co-ordinators. It is satisfactory in most subjects and sometimes good. Year 5 and 6 class teachers plan effectively as a team and build on the schemes of work provided by subject co-ordinators to ensure consistency and continuity in pupils' learning. Weaknesses still exist in incorporating ICT into lesson planning and opportunities to promote spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are also missing from planning for teaching and learning. The National Literacy Strategy was pioneered successfully by Year 5 and 6 teachers over the past three years despite the absence of an English co-ordinator for part of this time. The school's policy on teaching literacy skills across the school arose from this work and has resulted in having a positive impact on the quality of pupils' work across the school. The school's policy on teaching numeracy skills across subjects other than mathematics is satisfactory but is in its early stages of development.

39. Equality of opportunity and access is generally good. Opportunities for pupils to fulfil their potential are provided within the constraints of the timetable by creation of teaching groups (sets) formed according to pupils' levels of attainment. Where there are mixed ability groupings in Years 5 and 6 with no ability groupings within the class, for example in science, teaching fails to challenge all pupils. Gender issues, which were a concern in the last report, have been tackled effectively. Good use of paired work, each pair containing a girl and a boy, in many areas of the school, but particularly in Year 5 and in history and geography lessons, is having a very positive influence on attitudes and achievement.

40. The curriculum provided for pupils with special educational needs is good and meets the requirements of those on the special educational needs register. Teachers are well informed of pupils' needs by detailed and relevant individual education plans. Access to the full curriculum is satisfactory for pupils with special educational needs, and it is good when support assistants are present in lessons. The Code of Practice is fully in place, and some amendments have been made to provide greater access to the curriculum, especially in personal and social education, religious education and mathematics. These pupils are fully included within lessons in many subjects such as drama, music, art and design and technology, and pupils mix well in social groups, and participate fully in role play sessions. Teachers encourage them to participate effectively in oral sessions in literacy, numeracy and other practical work.

41. The provision of extra-curricular activities is good and is a strong feature of the curriculum as was the case at the last inspection. Very high numbers of pupils take part in and benefit from the activities. Musical productions, choirs, including an all boys choir, recorder groups, instrumental ensembles and school orchestra give many pupils the opportunity to perform. A wide range of sporting activities includes inter-school matches and visits from local sports coaches and sports development officers. As a result of these activities a good number of pupils achieve success at county level in cross country running, athletics, football, rugby, cricket and one pupil at national level in badminton.

42. There are satisfactory links with the local community through projects such as 'Papermates' in which pupils work with the elderly in the local area. Environmental projects such as the millennium wood and the environmental garden help pupils to appreciate environmental issues practically. The residential visit to Ford Castle for Year 7 pupils supports pupils learning in history and geography especially. Access to the internet means that pupils now have enriching opportunities to link with the world-wide community. There is very good liaison with the main feeder schools, partner middle schools and the high school. This ensures that sensible progression takes place at times when pupils change schools and that work is organised across all years of compulsory education. Teachers are also able to discuss teaching strategies and share good practice on such issues as assessment.

43. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. The school's aims and code of conduct provide a sound foundation for this aspect of personal development. However, subjects have not been required to specifically identify opportunities to raise pupils' awareness and understanding of these aspects of education.

44. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Religious education makes a valuable contribution by providing opportunities for pupils to examine and acquire insights into beliefs, particularly from the Christian faith but also from the other major world faiths found in this country. There are opportunities for reflection and pupils discuss the nature and existence of God. In English, good opportunities are provided for pupils to study and reflect upon a range of literature and poetry. In music pupils are encouraged and given time to reflect on their own work in addition to a wide range of music. In history, pupils are able to consider and discuss attitudes to death and punishment and contrast religious and spiritual beliefs in

mediaeval times with those of today. School assemblies are held three times per week and house assemblies once per week and these contribute and provide themes for pupils to reflect upon. However, the provision of collective worship does not fully meet statutory requirements. Full assemblies are held on four days of the week and on the remaining day pupils meet in classrooms. However, on these occasions not all classes experience a collective act of worship which is broadly Christian in nature.

45. Provision for pupils' moral development is also good. The school actively promotes a framework of moral values. Teachers by their own example and expectations act as good role models. The school's code of conduct values responsibility, honesty, fairness and tolerance and pupils are clearly made aware of the differences between right and wrong. The programme of personal education and assemblies cover a range of moral issues such as responsibilities, prejudice, the nature and dangers of drug abuse, bullying, violence and issues associated with the environment. Pupils have the opportunity to discuss and reflect on a number of moral concerns in English, geography, history and religious education. Appropriate emphasis is placed on sportsmanship and adherence to rules in physical education. In classrooms pupils benefit from working in an orderly atmosphere with acceptable and predictable responses, rewards and sanctions.

46. Provision for pupils' social development is good. Staff support, encourage and value pupils' achievements. The quality of life and daily activity provides a caring and secure environment in which relationships are based on respect and co-operation. Pupils are given the opportunity to work collaboratively in lessons. Assemblies and the programme of personal education also enable pupils to reflect and consider issues associated with relationships and the family. There is a range of opportunities for pupils to show initiative and accept responsibility, for example the Year 8 pupils' social committee and the school bank run by pupils and overseen by the mathematics department. The good range of extra-curricular activities and visits, in this country and to France, help to cultivate social interaction. A significant amount of charitable fund raising raises awareness of the needs of less fortunate members of society. In many lessons pupils are able to work in pairs and groups to develop their social skills and self-confidence and to appreciate the value of sharing. Provision for raising pupils' social skills and awareness is good.

47. Provision to help pupils to develop an understanding of their own and other cultures is good. There are visits to places of cultural interest and pupils are involved in musical and drama productions. They are given opportunities to consider other cultures through time in history lessons, as well as their local cultural heritage. Art and design and music make strong contributions. Pupils study and reflect upon artistic and musical traditions and styles from around the world and across time. In geography, the study of different countries and the way of life of their peoples also contributes to raising cultural knowledge and awareness. In religious education pupils study the characteristics of different religions of the world and the importance of worship and sacred writings to different faiths. Compared to the time of the last report opportunities for pupils to be aware of and appreciate other cultures has improved considerably and provision is now good. In music, pupils are now given an excellent experience of western and non-western musical styles.

## HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

48. The school makes very good provision to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety. Personal development is very effectively fostered. Procedures for monitoring and promoting pupils' academic achievement have improved since the previous inspection and are now good. Teachers know their pupils very well and use this knowledge sensitively to guide their pastoral care. Form tutors meet regularly with heads of year to share information and there are effective paper systems in operation to monitor behaviour, attendance and punctuality.

49. The school has good systems in place to ensure the health and safety of staff and pupils. All staff are aware of health and safety issues and report any concerns quickly. The school is aware of a number of health and safety issues relating to the building and is taking appropriate action to address them. Money has recently been made available to refurbish the toilets and cloakrooms, for example. In lessons, teachers pay very good attention to safe practice. The arrangements for first aid and medicines in school are very good and well recorded. Appropriate child protection procedures are in place.

50. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are very effective. Staff have high expectations for behaviour and pupils rise to them. Pupils understand the code of conduct and the school rules, which provide a strong framework to support good behaviour. Pupils value the merit system and, in particular, pupils in Year 8 appreciate the bonus scheme. The school has an appropriate programme of personal and social education in place and this incorporates effective work on how to deal with bullying. Pupils understand that incidents of bullying should be reported and they know how to do this. Incidents are dealt with quickly and effectively when they are reported. Pupils feel safe in school.

51. The school has developed good procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and tracking their progress and there is a school assessment policy designed to ensure consistency across the curriculum. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is assessed using data from first schools together with other standard tests and this information is passed on to departments and used in placing pupils in appropriate groups in Year 5. A careful check is kept on their progress and higher and lower attaining pupils are identified so that they can be placed in appropriate teaching groups in Years 7 and 8. Pupils' progress through the levels of attainment for each subject are assessed at the end of Year 8 and this information is passed on to the high school.

52. Several departments have developed sophisticated procedures to track pupils' progress; for example in physical education and art and design pupils' development of particular skills is tracked in detail and targets are set to identify pupils' individual needs and to indicate how they can improve their performance. In literacy, numeracy and geography there are well thought out procedures and appropriate and well planned end-of-unit tasks to determine pupils' progress and address individual needs in lessons. In history tasks are discussed in class and teachers give good guidance to pupils on how to improve their standards. In religious education and science pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own performance and in information technology and music progress is monitored on a regular basis. In French, history, English and mathematics assessments are marked according to National Curriculum levels of attainment, but as yet pupils are not sufficiently involved in this process to be able to track and plan their own progress.

53. In the majority of subjects, although the information gathered is detailed, it is not always used effectively to plan for the progress of groups of differing levels of ability within lessons and some target setting remains too general to be effective in raising standards or planning for progression.

54. The school reports their children's progress to parents in accordance with statutory requirements. The school complies fully with the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. These pupils are well supported by being taught in small groups for literacy and numeracy and are well supported in the classroom. Teachers know their pupils' strengths and weaknesses well and use this knowledge to guide pupils' personal development effectively. The newly appointed special educational needs co-ordinator has begun to build effectively on the good contacts already established with outside agencies, especially the educational psychology service. Statutory assessments meet the requirements of the Code of Practice, and periodic reviews are well documented and set at appropriate intervals.

55. The school has appropriate and effective procedures in place to monitor attendance and punctuality. Any unexplained absences are followed up promptly and efficiently. Almost without exception parents comply with the school's requirements for reporting absence.

#### **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

56. The large majority of parents are supportive of the school as was the case at the last inspection. The views expressed by parents in the questionnaires sent out and at the parents' meeting were predominantly positive. In particular, almost all agreed that their children liked school and were expected to work hard and achieve their best. Standards were high and parents described the teaching in some subjects as inspirational. They stated that the school achieved high standards of good behaviour, although a few parents had concerns about behaviour outside school. This is, however, outside the jurisdiction of the school. Most parents would feel comfortable to approach the school about any matters of concern. Inspection evidence confirms the positive views of the parents.

57. A significant number of parents do not believe that their child receives the right amount of homework; some felt that too much was given while others stated that it was too little, especially in Year 8, to prepare children properly for the demands of the high school. The inspection team found the setting of homework to be satisfactory overall but recognised some inconsistency in the quality and quantity. Some parents did not feel that the school kept them well informed about the progress their children were making but inspection evidence did not back this up. Reports are of good quality and parents are welcome to make an appointment to discuss their children at any reasonable time. There was dissatisfaction among a significant number of parents about the range of extra-curricular activities. The inspection team judged that there is good provision, particularly in music and sport, and that the school tries to ensure that all pupils are involved by putting on many activities during the lunch hour. However some team activities do not cater for every pupil who wants to take part.

58. A wide range of information is provided for parents. The prospectus and annual report of governors to parents contain the full range of required information, clearly presented. The prospectus provides useful information about the curriculum, which is reinforced through the regular newsletters. Parents are appropriately informed about any matters of concern. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved in any statutory assessments taking place and are invited to take part in any reviews as pupils' needs are re-assessed. The good standard of information the school provides for parents has been maintained since the last inspection.

59. The school has developed an effective partnership with the majority of parents. The homework diary is well used, especially in Years 5 and 6, as a channel of communication between parents and teachers. Attendance at parents' consultation evenings is very good. In addition, parents are welcome to discuss their children at any other time. Annual reports are of good quality and provide a clear picture of progress. Although pupils' targets for improvement are given for each subject these are frequently too general to guide future progress effectively. The parent-teacher association organises a wide range of social and fund-raising events to boost school funds considerably each year. For example, the association has funded the leasing of much of the computer stock for the past four years. They have funded homework diaries and bought much of the new stock for the library.

60. The school benefits from parental support in the classroom, particularly in Years 5 and 6 where parents hear pupils read, among other tasks. A parent with ICT skills is very effectively used to support Year 5 computer lessons. The school has made good use of other parental expertise, for example in designing and making the garden areas. A considerable number of parents volunteer to help on trips and visits.

### **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

61. The leadership and management of the school are good overall. The headteacher has established a clear direction for the school to move in, one of maintaining and improving pupils' high standards of attainment, behaviour and positive attitudes. There is a very strong commitment to caring for pupils and responding to their individual needs. The school very clearly aims to provide a breadth of enriching experiences both within and beyond the school day to help pupils to develop into mature, responsible and well rounded young people. The headteacher is well supported by the deputy head, members of the senior management team, the subject co-ordinators and the heads of year in sharing this vision for the school and in implementing the school's plans for improvement. There is a shared commitment to improve and a capacity to succeed. Consequently the school is maintaining high standards of achievement, behaviour and positive attitudes and, after an initial period of relative inertia owing to staff changes and major capital building improvements, has improved in key areas since the last inspection. The outstanding key area not fully addressed since the last inspection is the raising of standards and improvement in the provision of ICT.

62. The school's aims are reflected well in the current emphases in its work. Pupils are valued members of the school community and all, regardless of individual differences, are encouraged to develop academically, personally and socially. The work the school has carried out to ensure that boys do not fall behind the girls in their achievements is an example of the school's commitment to principles of equality of opportunity. There is a strong emphasis on improving pupils' literacy and numeracy skills, which is reflected in the high standards achieved in English and mathematics. The literacy work carried out across the subjects has a particularly strong influence on standards, but the work on developing numeracy across subjects is not yet in place. Teachers work hard to make learning enjoyable for pupils and they are successful in nurturing lively and enquiring minds.

63. The subject co-ordinators and the year heads responsible for the care and welfare of pupils make a strong contribution overall. The heads of year work effectively within their own year teams. Year 5 and 6 co-ordinators have been particularly successful in introducing the National Literacy Strategy over the past three years despite the absence of the English co-ordinator in the early stages. However opportunities to share good practice or plan strategically across the all years in the school, for example in the teaching of personal and social education are limited.

64. The leadership and management of English, design and technology, religious

education and music are very good and they are good in all other subjects. In response to the key issues for action arising from the last inspection subject co-ordinators have broadened their responsibilities considerably. After a slow start following a number of changes in key staff, most co-ordinators now have a clear understanding of their roles as set out in job descriptions. They take more responsibility for improving pupils' learning and for the teaching in their subjects across all years in the school. Some non-teaching time has been made available to co-ordinators to carry out their work, Consequently in most subjects this has resulted in improvements in planning and led to learning that is continuous and progressive across all years. The monitoring of pupils' work and teaching by co-ordinators is not yet in place across all subjects. There is a need for subject co-ordinators to find ways of gaining a fuller view of how well pupils are learning and being taught and to share the best practice.

65. The special educational needs co-ordinator is new in post and to the profession. She has a background of relevant and useful experience. She is beginning to establish herself, and liaise with heads of year about pupils with special educational needs. As yet, she has not set up any formal channels of communication with subject specialists, which is particularly important in Years 7 and 8, since pupils have fewer lessons taught by their class teachers in these years. All teachers, however, have received packs of appropriate information in both key stages to assist with planning to meet the needs of these pupils when planning lessons. The induction activities and support normally provided for newly qualified teachers are appropriate. In this case where the new teacher has significant additional responsibilities extra levels of support have been given in order to ensure that no elements of that teacher's day-to-day responsibilities suffer unduly.

66. The leadership and management of ICT have been fragmented since the previous post-holder was seconded to work with the local education authority. Consequently a number of staff are responsible for various parts of the provision and there are no job descriptions to match their various responsibilities. The overall co-ordination of the subject is at present carried out by the headteacher. Although those with responsibility carry out their tasks well their managerial responsibilities are unclear. The lack of clarity in the management of the subject, in part, contributes to its slow development. The school has improved the number of computers and their use but it is still well behind what is expected both in the number of computers available and in what pupils learn. There is a development plan to increase provision in 2001 linked to the Technology Status bid secured by the high school.

67. Overall the governing body fulfils its responsibilities satisfactorily. A significant number of changes to the governing body took place immediately before the inspection and a new chair of governors was appointed. The governors are very supportive of the school and are informed satisfactorily of its strengths and weaknesses. Some governors make regular visits to the school to talk to staff and observe the work of the school. The governor for special educational needs is fully involved in supporting the school and monitoring the effectiveness of provision. The governing body fulfils most of its statutory duties effectively. However, it does not ensure that the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum for ICT are met or that all pupils take part in a daily act of collective worship.



68. Procedures for monitoring, supporting and developing teaching are satisfactory. The school's policy of monitoring, evaluation and review is in the early stages of implementation and is not yet consistently affecting standards across all subjects. The headteacher has formally monitored almost all the teaching staff over the past year. Positive effects of some of the school's most recent initiatives, such as the use of strategies to promote boys' learning were recognised by the senior management. The monitoring process used is very general, however, and not yet focused on the school's priorities for development. Although the school's head of English has benefited from gaining a full understanding of the quality of the work of teachers in literacy and English, few other subject co-ordinators have had the opportunity to look more closely at the work of teachers and there are missed opportunities to share the best practice. This needs to be a priority in subjects where non-specialist teaching can benefit from specialist expertise.

69. The school's strategy for the appraisal of teachers is in abeyance whilst the policy for performance management is being developed. The headteacher has clear targets that are reviewed satisfactorily by the governing body annually.

70. The school improvement plan, which is based each year on a review of previous targets, is clear and concise and focuses on the right priorities for development. There is a clear and appropriate focus on maintaining high standards and improving the quality of teaching. The improvement in the provision of ICT and the further development of the role of subject co-ordinators in monitoring and supporting teaching and learning, both areas identified for improvement by the inspection team, are included as major elements in the school's improvement plan. Subject co-ordinators are required to draw up action plans for improvement in their own areas and these are linked appropriately to plans for the whole school. One of the school's priorities has been improving the procedures for and the use of assessment. Much progress has been made but refinements in the use of assessment information are still needed to ensure that highest attaining pupils across all subjects are identified and challenged.

71. Spending on staff development and in-service training rightly arises from priorities identified in the school improvement plan. The in-service training and development of teaching that have taken place as the result of the literacy and numeracy strategies have had a particularly beneficial effect on improving the quality of the teaching. However, not enough use is made of the expertise available among the school's own staff to support and develop teaching across all subjects.

72. The curriculum is managed satisfactorily. The time allocated to teaching has been adjusted to take account of the National Strategies in literacy and numeracy and this has had a positive effect on standards. The major concern in the curriculum is the lack of statutory provision for ICT, which results in pupils' inadequate learning in the subject. The school, although making efforts to improve the overall provision, still does not meet statutory requirements and the expected levels of provision. In Years 7 and 8 the length of the taught week is shorter than in most other schools and some subjects suffer from a lack of time. They are unable to offer the breadth of experiences to adequately challenge pupils of all abilities, in particular the highest attaining pupils.

73. The school manages its budget carefully and links spending to its priorities for development. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Financial control and administration are good. The recommendations of the latest auditors' report have been carried out. The specific grants are spent wisely on provision for pupils with special educational needs, in-service training for teachers and improvements to the building. The headteacher has been very successful in obtaining funds to improve the quality of the accommodation. Teaching rooms, the library and the ICT room have been added since the

last inspection. Further funds have been secured to carry out refurbishment and re-wiring of the building for example in the food technology area, the toilets and cloakrooms. The school follows the principles of best value in its purchases of services and goods.

74. The qualifications, and experience of staff and support staff are well matched to the demands of the curriculum. However, staffing levels are lower than in many schools of this type and the time teachers spend in lessons with pupils is above average. Teachers work very hard, are conscientious and committed to providing good quality experiences for all pupils. There are enough technicians in science, design and technology and ICT and they work effectively to support teaching in these areas. Procedures for the induction of new staff are well established and effective. Performance management is an area the school is developing. Overall the high quality of staff and support staff and their deployment is having a positive impact on pupils' standards of learning.

75. The provision of accommodation is satisfactory overall. The school makes good use of the space available to it by, for example arranging for classes in the same subject to work close together, but there is little spare capacity. The good quality of display in many classrooms and corridors enhances and gives value to the work of pupils. The specialist facilities for physical education are extensive but some areas are in need of refurbishment, namely the hard areas outdoors and in the training shed. The one laboratory is well used but limiting. Some Year 7 and 8 lessons take place outside it and Year 5 and 6 have limited use of it. An additional laboratory would be beneficial and would provide additional space which is needed for using computers. There is insufficient accommodation for ICT. The one room holding the suite of computers is very small for the size of classes that use it. Pupils have to share computers, sometimes one between three, and this has a detrimental effect on the progress they make.

76. The provision and quality of resources vary but are unsatisfactory overall. In music resources are very good and religious education benefits from artefacts recently bought with parental funding. The English department makes good use of the recently created library to encourage reading and research although it does not serve as a resource for the whole school. Resources are unsatisfactory in geography in which current texts are inadequate, and in design and technology where control technology and computer aided design and manufacturing are not possible. Most significantly the provision of computers, peripheral equipment and software is poor, and is a weakness which pervades the whole curriculum.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to improve the standards achieved and the quality of education provided the headteacher, staff and governors should take the following measures.

- (1) Ensure that all pupils receive their full entitlement to ICT in all subjects by:
  - unifying the co-ordination of ICT within the school and supporting it through a clear, agreed job description;
  - providing more computers, peripherals and software and enhancing networks;
  - improving teachers' knowledge of ICT through enhanced in-service training;
  - securing accommodation of sufficient size to house effectively a full class of pupils using computers;
  - monitoring and evaluating the integration of ICT into all subjects;(Paragraphs: 5, 9, 31, 34, 36, 38, 39, 61, 66, 72, 75, 76, 85, 91, 93, 94, 104, 114, 125, 131, 135, 140-149, 156, 177)
  
- (2) Improve the monitoring of pupils' work and the teaching and the sharing of best practice across all subjects by:
  - ensuring that all subject co-ordinators have specific job descriptions that outline clearly their responsibilities for monitoring standards and teaching;
  - training the subject co-ordinators in how best to carry out their monitoring and supporting role both of pupils' work and of the teaching;
  - making the best use of teaching and subject expertise among staff to ensure that best practice is shared;
  - allocating to each subject co-ordinator sufficient time in which to carry out monitoring and support work.(Paragraphs: 64, 68, 71, 93, 102, 126, 131, 157, 172)
  
- (3) Make better use of assessment information and more closely focused targets to identify, track and challenge the highest attaining pupils by:
  - using assessment information to identify and track high attaining, and gifted and talented pupils from the time they enter the school;
  - giving a teacher overall responsibility for co-ordinating the provision for such pupils;
  - providing individual educational plans for the highest attaining pupils;
  - ensuring that targets for learning take account of the highest attaining pupils and that sufficiently challenging tasks are set both in class and for homework.(Paragraphs: 12, 24, 31, 53, 70, 79, 85, 101, 129, 136, 156, 157, 169, 171)
  
- (4) Organise better the school day and the balance of time for teaching subjects to widen the range of learning activities in some subjects, for example in history and geography by:
  - lengthening the taught time each day to bring it closer to that recommended by the Department for Education and Employment and to that found in most schools across the country.
  - allocating a more even spread of time across non-core subjects especially in Years 7 and 8.(Paragraphs: 34, 35, 72, 131, 134)

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	94
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	44

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
3	31	42	22	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	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	491
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	40

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	11
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	57

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	15
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	18

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	6.0

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.14
National comparative data	0.4

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

### Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	49	60	109

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	42	41	43
	Girls	54	51	59
	Total	96	92	102
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	88 (80)	84 (86)	94 (92)
	National	75 (70)	72 (69)	85 (78)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	40	43	46
	Girls	54	52	58
	Total	94	95	104
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (84)	87 (87)	95 (92)
	National	70 (70)	72 (69)	79 (78)

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

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	1
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	463
Any other minority ethnic group	27

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	27	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	22.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21.6

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

#### **Education support staff: Y5 – Y8**

Total number of education support staff	14.0
Total aggregate hours worked per week	179

#### **Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8**

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	83.9
---	------

#### **Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8**

Key Stage 2	26.0
Key Stage 3	25.1

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	906 580
Total expenditure	911 126
Expenditure per pupil	1 856
Balance brought forward from previous year	20 113
Balance carried forward to next year	15 567

## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	489
Number of questionnaires returned	284

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	48	45	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	37	50	2	2	5
Behaviour in the school is good.	29	57	3	1	7
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	57	14	3	4
The teaching is good.	30	59	2	0	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	24	50	11	5	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	44	44	5	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	49	44	1	1	2
The school works closely with parents.	24	48	12	2	10
The school is well led and managed.	35	48	5	1	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	33	52	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	44	12	6	11

*Percentages do not total 100 as not all parents answered every question. Many parents were new to the school and felt they could not answer some of the questions.*

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

### **ENGLISH**

78. Standards in English are above national levels. Pupils' results in national tests at the age of eleven for the year 2000 are well above national averages and well above the levels achieved by pupils at schools with similar backgrounds. Results for 2000 show a significant improvement on those of the previous year and they bring English standards into line with those achieved in mathematics and science, after two years when results in English were significantly lower. Over a four year period standards have risen in line with the national trend. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests boys performed less well than did girls but not by as great a margin as was the case nationally.

79. When account is taken of pupils' progress from an above average starting point the achievement of pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 is satisfactory and in Year 7 and Year 8 their achievement is good. Standards of work seen during the inspection are above average for pupils at the age of eleven and well above average for those at the age of thirteen. Pupils' results in national tests at the age of eleven are slightly higher than the standards in the work seen because the school is particularly skilled in preparing pupils for the tests and the inspection takes account of a broader range of activities. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. However, lesson planning, the use of individual education plans and assessment information could be better organised and used to accelerate the progress of the highest and lowest attaining pupils.

80. There are notable strengths in the work of pupils at the age of eleven. These include good use of talk to exchange ideas, express opinions and correct spellings when pupils support one another in informal group work. Pupils have a good range of speaking vocabulary which helps them to become confident communicators. They are often able to talk to adults in a relaxed and mature way. Pupils enjoy reading books, which they regularly borrow from the school library, and they are usually confident readers. Writing is very well presented and standards of accuracy in spelling and punctuation are generally high.

81. Strengths in the work of pupils at the age of thirteen include their helpful and detailed evaluative oral comments about each other's work. Pupils deliver clear and confident talks about chosen authors, making effective use of visual aids. Pupils are able to read and understand complex literary texts, such as passages from Shakespeare's plays. They annotate them to indicate differences from modern English in words, sentences and aspects of the whole passage. Pupils write well-presented and organised stories with effective use of paragraphing and high levels of accuracy. They produce good written responses to poetry, such as the impressive work on first world war poets including the very good discursive essays on the challenging theme 'How have people's experiences of war changed since 1914?' Lower attaining pupils are able to construct good medium-length pieces of writing with the aid of supporting structures and outlines provided by the teacher. Much enthusiasm and enjoyment are evident in pupils' written work, which is often enlivened by the use of colour, illustrations and explanatory diagrams or tables, all of which demonstrate a general pride in presentation.

82. Teaching and learning in English are very good. In almost three-quarters of the lessons observed teaching and learning were at least good and in half they were very good. Although there is very good teaching across the whole school, teaching is generally better in Years 7 and 8. In the best lessons teachers are able to transfer their enthusiasm for English to pupils and this is reflected in pupils' learning. This was particularly evident in much of the work on poetry. Because teachers are confident in their subject they allow pupils to



participate fully in lessons, such as those which explore aspects of language. They encourage pupils to make suggestions and to try out their own ideas and theories. Classroom management, based on careful planning, is always very good and teachers successfully convey the message that work in English is important. The teaching is generally brisk and business-like and lessons move along at a good pace. There is a good balance of activities between speaking and listening, reading and writing. Marking is conscientious and teachers usually make clear in their comments how pupils can improve their written work.

83. On occasions pupils find themselves completing tasks without being quite clear what advances in learning they are expected to make. Sometimes teachers' lesson plans take insufficient account of the need for progression in lessons to ensure that pupils build upon previous knowledge, skills and understanding in an ordered way. In general not enough use is made of additional or alternative lesson materials and strategies to meet the needs of the highest and lowest attaining pupils in a class. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress but teachers make little use of individual education plans in lessons to track and accelerate their learning.

84. Pupils are invariably very well behaved and almost always totally involved in lesson activities. They support one another very well when listening to each other reading aloud or when collaborating in small groups. All pupils, including those with lower levels of attainment, are very positive about their work in English. They are not afraid to contribute to class discussion. Homework is for the most part conscientiously completed and well presented. When opportunities arise to show initiative, for example in personal research of a lesson topic, pupils respond well and show that they are happy to accept responsibility for aspects of their learning.

85. The subject co-ordinator, who has been in post for just a year, shows good leadership and management. He has devised new schemes of work, embracing the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy, and strengthened procedures for monitoring pupils' progress. Steps are being taken to strengthen the links between English work in Years 5 and 6 and that in Years 7 and 8, through closer monitoring and better integrated planning. The use of ICT across the subject is limited but recognised by the school as an area for improvement. Good use is made of the library to encourage pupils to read. Pupils' progress is well monitored through half-termly assessment tasks and regular testing of reading and spelling. Data on each pupil is carefully collated and stored. In all years pupils who have difficulty with basic literacy skills are identified and given additional support. There has been significant improvement in the development and planning of English across the school since the last inspection. Lower attaining pupils are now better challenged and procedures for monitoring English teaching have improved. Planning for meeting the needs of the highest and lowest attaining pupils in a class is progressing but remains an important area for further development.

## **MATHEMATICS**

86. Pupils' results in the national tests, taken at the end of Year 6, were above the national average in 2000. When compared with the results obtained by pupils from similar schools standards were well above average. Over the past four years pupils' results have been above the national average and improving broadly in line with the national trend. There is no marked difference in the achievement of girls and boys.

87. The standards of the pupils' work seen during the inspection were above average. By the age of eleven higher attaining pupils are confident in their use and understanding of number. Almost all know their multiplication tables thoroughly up to the 12 times table and can add and subtract numbers to two decimal places in columns. Average and lower attaining pupils are also very competent at number work. All pupils showed that they could construct a tally chart from a set of given data, although some of the lower attaining pupils were not secure in recognising 4444 as five. Pupils with special educational needs attain good standards in relation to their varying abilities.

88. By the age of thirteen high attaining pupils have an excellent understanding of bearings and their use. They can use calculators efficiently including the evaluation of powers, roots and index notation. Average attaining pupils have a good grasp of the properties of angles. Lower attaining pupils have more difficulty with such concepts. They can draw angles to an accuracy of one degree and recognise vertically opposite and corresponding angles as equal but do not readily use the correct terminology or identify which angle corresponds to another.

89. All pupils achieve well in relation to an above average starting point. They maintain above average standards in their work in all years. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and they benefit in particular from effective support from both learning support assistants and teachers.

90. The quality of teaching is good overall and has a positive effect on pupils' learning across the school. In 14 out of the 17 lessons seen teaching was either good or very good; in two lessons it was satisfactory. The one unsatisfactory lesson was due to inexperienced teaching that lacked pace and challenge. Teachers generally use effective teaching methods with a variety of activities built into well-planned lessons. Pupils are well managed and time is used well. The impact of the National Numeracy Strategy is clearly reflected in lessons. Specialist knowledge leads to teaching that is marginally better in Years 7 and 8, but the class teachers in Years 5 and 6 make a good and very valuable contribution to the children's learning. Pupils' work is almost always marked, and some good practice exists within the school in this respect. Teachers use a range of rewards for good work. This includes the use of rubber stamps and stars in books and the award of certificates. This is a substantial motivator for pupils. Almost all of the marking is thorough and has helpful and constructive comments.

91. The teaching of skills in numeracy is good and is improving as the teachers employ lessons learned from the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy. But there is, as yet, no whole-school policy for the teaching of numeracy skills in subjects other than mathematics. Individual examples of good and very good teaching of numerical skills are found in other subjects in the school, but these are not co-ordinated and are therefore less effective than they should be. With regard to literacy, pupils are encouraged to use language carefully when speaking to the class or answering questions, and teachers take care to insist on rigorous use of vocabulary in both written and oral work. Classrooms have lists of key mathematical vocabulary posted on the wall or whiteboard. Overall the teaching of the basic skills related to numeracy and literacy is good. ICT used as a tool for learning is, on the other hand, unsatisfactory. The departmental work programmes contain references to its use but it is not taught often enough because of lack of access to the machines. This is a breach of the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum.

92. The pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive. In all except one lesson attitudes and relationships were good or very good. In almost all lessons pupils concentrated hard while listening and their behaviour was very good. Relationships in the classroom both between the teachers and the pupils and amongst the pupils themselves are very good. The quality of relationships does much to contribute to pupils' progress.

93. Overall, the work in mathematics is well co-ordinated and well led. The mathematics co-ordinator enjoys the confidence of all who work with her. She has a very clear vision of how teaching and learning of the subject can be improved and what needs to be done to ensure that they are. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 referred to above testifies to the effectiveness of the in-service training the co-ordinator has led. Although departmental planning is thoughtful and thorough it needs to be more sharply focussed to incorporate clearer ways to measure success. The mathematics curriculum is broad and balanced and complies with the requirements of National Curriculum except for the lack of a satisfactory ICT element. Regular testing procedures are in place to keep a check on how pupils are progressing. Classroom observation of teaching is a good feature of the organisation of the subject and promises to become more effective now that the mathematics co-ordinator has been given more time to use for observation and support.

94. Since the last inspection improvement has been satisfactory overall. Standards remain high. The curriculum has been reorganised to take account of the National Numeracy Strategy and to prepare pupils well for their next school. However, the provision and use of computers for pupils to use as an aid to learning are still unsatisfactory.

## **SCIENCE**

95. Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2000 were well above the national average and well above average in relation to similar schools. The trend of improvement, over four years, is broadly in line with the national trend. There is no significant difference in standards between boys and girls. Pupils achieve well at both key stages and pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

96. Standards in science are above average both at the age of eleven and at the age of thirteen. Older pupils in both the lower and upper sets can explain their experiments and use scientific words such as potential, kinetic and solar more clearly than many. Lower attaining pupils are forthcoming in discussing their own understanding and knowledge of energy from observation, for example of the wind turbines at Staithes. Year 8 pupils in the middle ability band completing work on chemical reactions have a good understanding of oxidation, but their experimental work on combustion lacks appropriate rigour and their results are likely to support incorrect ideas, leading to probable confusion.

97. Year 6 work about vertebrates and invertebrates is above average and includes some work using information and pictures gleaned from electronic sources. Year 6 pupils' skills in scientific enquiry and their knowledge and understanding of materials and their properties are at an average standard as seen in their work on the permeability of soils. However, their understanding of the term 'permeability' and the quality of their scientific writing is above average.

98. The fact that standards of the current Year 6 are not as high as those achieved in recent national tests is due to the limited nature of work available at this time of the year. In Years 7 and 8 new topics of work are studied and the standards in these typically build over time. Pupils' work in Years 7 and 8 contribute substantially to the well above average test results at the end of Year 9 taken in schools to which these pupils transfer.

99. Teaching and learning in science are good in Years 5 and 6 and very good in Years 7 and 8, with a range from satisfactory to excellent. Overall, teaching and learning are very good. Weaknesses in the teaching include slow pace, with too much cautious preparation before pupils engage in experiments. All pupils show patience, but more able ones are held back. Another weakness is insufficient planning of experiments, leading to some conflict over pupils' conclusions that are not always picked up. Strengths within all teaching include the general management of pupils, though this can sometimes be overdone with pupils who are very well behaved and want to learn. Assessment of pupils as they work in class is also good and leads both to consolidation of knowledge and better progress by pupils. Health and safety are correctly stressed at all times, to the extent that pupils were able to advise the inspector when observing burning magnesium.

100. The best lessons show very good planning that sometimes include the organisation of a large circus of experiments, creating excitement and fun as well as very effective learning and very good progress. Teachers also set very high expectations for pupils deemed to be of lower ability, so that they rise to the challenge and explain their work well. Pupils have opportunities to relate their experiment and results to their peers. An excellent lesson in Year 6 on the permeability of soils was outstanding in many respects. A large class of 32 pupils were successfully engaged in an experiment involving water, mud and gravel. They could explain exactly what they were doing, and the significance of their measurements. The teachers' management and pace were so effective that all was cleared away, results compared, ideas explored and the whole thing written up within the lesson. A very good lesson in Year 6 used excellent question and answer techniques to reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding of seaweeds and grasses on dunes. Pupils showed an above average understanding of erosion and stability. It also showed the excellent contribution visits to off-school sites make. Pupils still remembered the event with considerable enthusiasm.

101. Overall the leadership and management of science are good. In the short time the co-ordinator has been in post much has been achieved. Planning across the years has improved and there is good liaison with the high school which helps to ensure that pupils have continuity in their work. The testing before topics, to determine what pupils know, helps to shape how topics are taught and the testing afterwards establishes how successful they have been, as well as giving an indicator of pupils' attainment. Such assessment leads to good targets for pupils and is a strength of the department. Different work for more able pupils does not always follow this analysis. Pupils' learning of literacy is well supported through key words, the science dictionary and opportunities for pupils to present their work orally. Pupils' learning of the skills of numeracy is supported through graph work. A new national resource, produced by the Association of Science Education, is about to be utilised in co-operation with the mathematics department. Strong links are also being forged with design and technology and the high quality of science teaching from a non-specialist within technology reflects this.

102. The teaching of science is not routinely monitored and neither are pupils' books checked for content, style and marking. Some Year 5 and 6 work is poorly marked and contains comments intended to be helpful that are scientifically incorrect. Monitoring is needed to pick these issues up. The co-ordinator of science does not provide formal in-service training for other teachers, including non-specialists. Such work is needed to raise the scientific standards of some teachers.

103. The scientific curriculum is generally satisfactory, but there is a very significant weakness in the use of ICT. There are minor uses of ICT for presentation, accessing CD-ROM's, and occasional use of the internet. However there are serious omissions in the fields of data capture, spreadsheets and graphical presentations. The school falls well short of meeting the ICT requirements for science. Resources for ICT are poor and this limits the opportunities for its use across the subject. The co-ordinator is aware of the shortcomings in ICT and the insufficient monitoring and development of the teaching and these are identified clearly as areas for improvement in the subject development plan.

104. Resources for experiments are good and well organised. The laboratory accommodation is good, but limited. It is fully utilised. Some Year 7 and Year 8 work takes place outside it. Year 5 and 6 pupils can only get into it for one topic. An additional laboratory would be beneficial and provide space for necessary computers to be fully utilised.

## **ART AND DESIGN**

105. Standards in art and design are above average throughout the school. This results from teaching of good quality in all years, enabling pupils progressively to acquire skills and to apply these effectively in their work. The success this brings to pupils feeds into their enthusiasm for the subject and contributes to the very positive attitudes they exhibit. Pupils from across the ability range benefit from this, achieve well and make good progress. Boys and girls do equally well. Pupils with special educational needs learn and progress very well in art and design.

106. Art and design is very well organised in the school, and this contributes significantly to its effectiveness. The subject co-ordinator has a clear view of the direction in which the subject should progress and is effective in leading it there. The teaching programme from Year 5 through to Year 8 builds up pupils' experiences across the range of media, and in all the lessons seen opportunities were taken to link the work in hand to the work of notable artists. For example, in a project with Year 7 that focused on still life pastel drawing of fruit, pupils discussed the work of Cezanne and his use of colour. Pupils subsequently applied what they had learned in their own work to good effect. In a Year 5 class, pupils' understanding of portrait drawing was enhanced through the enthusiasm with which the teacher introduced them to the portrait sketches of Leonardo da Vinci. This enabled them to understand more about the proportions of the face and about shading, helping them to be more successful when making their own drawings.

107. By the time pupils reach Year 8, their knowledge of artists is good, contributing valuably to their own artistic and cultural development. Furthermore, through occasions such as assemblies, the art and design department 'raises the spirit' of the school when slides of great art are shown, and an insight is given to their possible meaning. This contributes to the spiritual development of all pupils in the school.

108. There are many good features in the quality of the teaching of art and design throughout the school. All teachers set very high expectations of pupils, both in terms of work and behaviour. The very good behaviour of pupils and the interest with which they apply themselves frequently mean these expectations are expressed implicitly rather than explicitly, emerging more from the pupils' own response to the well-organised lessons than from demands for attention or greater effort. Teachers work very effectively with individual pupils, generally after an initial whole class introduction. This approach is very effective in ensuring that all pupils, and especially those with special educational needs, make good progress. Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the subject are also good, and pupils in Year 7 and 8 benefit particularly from this.

109. Pupils use sketchbooks satisfactorily, mainly for homework tasks, but also as a research notebook, to record observations and experiment with ideas. Homework is set frequently, but not regularly. This is a policy decision, not lax implementation, based on the premise that only meaningful tasks will add to pupils' learning and interest in the subject. More frequent relevant homework tasks are needed to help pupils, particularly the more able, to benefit from more open-ended opportunities and to extend and develop their ideas.

110. Pupils listen to each other and to their teachers very well, and speculate and offer suggestions during these discussions. Teachers use question and answer techniques very well to encourage these opportunities. As a consequence, pupils in all year groups talk very coherently and confidently about their work and their intentions. They also show a great deal of interest during discussions of the work of notable artists. For example, when looking at the work of Modigliani during a Year 8 lesson, pupils were able to discuss how the artist had emphasised the proportions of the body to create dramatic effect, and were able to describe convincingly their personal response to this. In addition to developing pupils' oral skills, the department also makes a focused contribution to pupils' broader skills of literacy, for example through carefully displaying art and design vocabulary, including definitions, within classrooms.

111. The curriculum for art and design provides a good balance between two-dimensional and three-dimensional studies, although there are currently few opportunities for pupils to model using plastic media, such as clay. Construction techniques in three dimensions, for example using card, are used effectively in mask-making and other applications. Extra-curricular provision for art and design is good and well-attended clubs operate twice a week.

112. The department has chosen to offer an art and design curriculum that carefully develops pupils' practical skills within projects that are closely-defined by the teacher. A consequence of this is that correspondingly few opportunities are available for pupils to engage in work with open-ended outcomes. Building in such opportunities in ways that do not distract from the good work already achieved is needed to further enhance the work of the department.

113. Pupils' work is carefully assessed by teachers, and this helps them to plan for pupils' progression. The subject co-ordinator works effectively with colleagues in Years 5 and 6 in order to ensure consistency of assessments and to encourage progression from Years 5 and 6 to Years 7 and 8.

114. Standards, teaching and learning have all improved since the previous inspection, but there are currently too few opportunities for pupils to use ICT as a tool in their work in art and design, and this is the principal area in which the department now needs to develop.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

115. Standards in design and technology are above average throughout the school. By the end of Year 6, as a result of good quality of teaching most pupils can design and make to a good standard. By Year 8, very good teaching, helps to accelerate pupils' progress further, and many are working a year ahead of their expected level and achieving well above average standards. Pupils respond very well to the interesting and carefully presented lessons and this adds to the progress they make as they move through the school. Pupils from across the ability range achieve well in relation to their starting point in design and technology. Boys and girls do equally well in all aspects of the subject. Pupils with special educational needs learn and progress particularly well.

116. Pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6 and they benefit from teachers' clear understanding of the subject. For example, in a Year 6 class, pupils designed and made models that contained moving parts using simple pneumatics. Pupils were able to solve their own problems and make rapid progress. because the teacher was very effective in providing just the right amount of input to individuals

117. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 build on the solid foundation of earlier work very effectively and their work is well above average. For example pupils in Year 8 are autonomous and creative problem-solvers in their work using resistant materials. Pupils develop their practical skills very well in other areas of the design and technology curriculum where there is greater emphasis on the formal development of skills. However, in these areas pupils have fewer opportunities to engage in open-ended designing and making. The high quality of pupils' work in these other areas reflects teachers' expertise and enthusiasm for their individual areas.

118. Year 7 and 8 pupils are skilled in individual design and planning. They explore ideas, take the initiative and anticipate what materials will be needed. For example, in a Year 7 lesson where pupils explore, through individual experimental designs, the use of cams, a group of pupils had responsibility for anticipating the materials that were likely to be needed and to get these out from the store. Each lesson a group of pupils have responsibility for 'looking ahead' in this way, as others have for tidying away tools and equipment. Not only does this develop important skills in the individual, but it also adds to the pace of learning for the group. The high quality of the teaching was most effective in enabling these pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility, both for themselves and for the group

119. In all branches of the subject, teachers are skilled in supporting individual pupils through one-to-one teaching during practical work. It is the strength of this work that helps all pupils, especially those with special educational needs, to make good progress. Teaching approaches are adapted to meet individual pupils' needs rather than the tasks.

120. Excellent relationships between teachers and pupils throughout the department underpin the success. Teachers have high expectations of their pupils, and the pupils, in turn, respond very well to their lessons. Teachers in Year 7 and 8 have particularly high expectations, setting an excellent example through their own planning and presentation of activities. They manage pupils very well, using teaching methods which engage pupils' interest, thereby minimising time wasted controlling behaviour.

121. Homework is used well in Years 7 and 8 in ways which extend pupils' learning. A very good example of this was seen in a Year 8 food technology lesson, in which pupils had completed assignments of very high quality, some of them word processed, on the topic of tomatoes. This extended their classroom learning considerably, and pupils from across the ability range showed great pride in their projects and achieved considerable success. Opening out pupils' learning like this is an effective way of balancing the strong emphasis placed on formal development of skills in this area of technology.

122. Teachers make a positive contribution through design and technology to pupils' development in literacy. For example, in a Year 5 class that was undertaking an evaluation exercise of their textiles work, the teacher was very effective in developing pupils' understanding of the technical vocabulary that was to be used in assessing the work. In food technology, considerable care is taken to ensure that pupils know and understand the terms that are being used, including their spelling. Pupils are also given many opportunities to discuss their own and others' work. They listen to each other and to their teachers well. Very effective questioning by teachers makes a positive contribution to pupils' skills of speaking.

123. Pupils' skills in numeracy are also developed effectively through design and technology. In all aspects of the subject pupils are taught to measure, weigh, estimate and calculate accurately, and to work to increasingly fine tolerances.

124. Careful attention is paid to the health and safety of pupils in all areas of the subject. Attention to hygiene and to the safe use of tools is emphasised very effectively in food technology. Pupils demonstrated in the resistant materials area of the subject that safe practices are routinely adopted in the classroom and workshop, for example in the way drills and other machinery are used.

125. Very good subject leadership makes an important contribution to the quality of pupils' learning across all aspects of design and technology, although there is still a need to ensure greater consistency across "making areas" in the way activities target all the elements of the programme of study in Years 7 and 8. The curriculum is well balanced in Years 5 and 6, but contains too few opportunities in Years 7 and 8 for pupils to use ICT in their work. In particular, the area of computer-aided design and manufacture is under-developed.

126. The department is not yet bringing together effectively the different elements of technology to make enough contribution to the development of pupils' capability in design and technology. This was a weakness identified during the previous inspection which remains unresolved. At present, very high quality teaching of individual teachers ensures that pupils learn well in all the "making areas", but the focus of this teaching does not always accurately reflect the specific focus of National Curriculum design and technology.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

127. Pupils enter the school with average levels of geographical knowledge and by Year 6 they achieve standards that are above average. As was the situation at the time of the last report pupils are gaining secure knowledge of the geography of the local area. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of the water cycle, and mapping and diagrammatic skills improve across the two years. In the current Year 6 pupils are beginning to understand the relationships between physical and human geography. There is evidence in both years that pupils can carry out field study tasks appropriate for their age, for example work in Morpeth and on the River Wansbeck. Pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress in line with their targets.



128. In Year 8 even at this early stage in the academic year, there is evidence in books and in lessons that attainment is above average. Pupils display good overall knowledge and understanding of the causes and consequences to people of earthquakes and other hazards; the make-up of the European Union; and the physical and human geography of Spain. Higher attaining pupils, in particular, speak clearly and are able to answer geographical questions well. As in Years 5 and 6, pupils on the special educational needs register make good progress, supported by class teachers and learning support assistants. Most pupils can write accurately and opportunities for the development of extended writing are provided but still need to be widened. While many pupils have good mapping skills a significant number find using map references very difficult. There is no evidence in any year of significant differences in achievement between girls and boys. Overall pupils make good progress in all years and they achieve well in relation to an average starting point.

129. The teaching is good overall and consequently pupils learn at a good rate and make progress in all years. Teaching is always at least satisfactory with some good and a small percentage of very good lessons. Teachers prepare lessons carefully, ensuring that subject matter meets the needs of most pupils. Limited attention is given, however, to the needs of the highest attaining pupils. This issue was raised in the last report and needs attention. Different approaches rather than just extension work are required for these pupils, if they are to reach their potential. In the good lessons in particular learning is assisted by the use of an effective range of learning strategies and by careful explanations of geographical processes. This, combined with a very positive attitude and the good behaviour by pupils, results in good progress being made. Appropriate emphasis is placed on the development of practical and investigative work. Pupils are expected to work in groups and pairs to discuss their ideas and share research information. Teachers' knowledge is generally good, although some insecurity was observed in Years 5 and 6.

130. A suitable range of resources and up-to-date information are used in lessons to interest and motivate pupils and enhance their learning. The aims of lessons are shared effectively with pupils so that they are all clear about the tasks set for them. Classroom management is friendly yet firm and lessons proceed at an appropriate pace. Marking is carried out carefully and pupils are generally made aware of what they need to do to improve their work.

131. The department is well led and managed. Subject policies and procedures are fully documented in a practical and useful subject handbook. The scheme of work meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and assessment procedures are good. Compared to the situation at the time of the last report targets for learning cover what is required and are very clear. Monitoring of teaching and learning is just beginning but does not yet help to identify the specific needs of non-specialist teachers and to share good practice. Not enough attention is given to developing pupils' ICT skills, an important aid to learning geography and also a requirement of the National Curriculum. This is mainly the result of inadequate computer resources and the need for staff training in the use of computers to teach geography. There is a good range of field study opportunities which enables pupils to develop practical skills and to see the relationships between theory and the real world in their own locality. The residential week at Ford Castle for Year 7 pupils makes a particularly good contribution to their learning. Currently the supply of text books is inadequate. The low time allocation given to the subject at both key stages limits the range of teaching and learning opportunities possible in the time. It also means that some topics have to be covered quickly and without the usual depth.

## **HISTORY**

132. Pupils show great commitment to history and appreciate how the past and the

present touch their lives. Standards in history at the end of Year 6 are above average. Pupils make good progress and they achieve well in relation to an average starting point. Pupils can place events in time and make comparisons across time. Early in the course they develop the historian's approach of comparing differing sources of information, generating their own questions and demonstrating in a variety of ways what they know. From their studies of Ancient Egypt and life in Victorian England they can show how technology and social status shaped the way people lived, how societies were organised and why prosperity and poverty can exist side by side. Visits, including the ones to Cragside, the Tyne Bridges and Quayside are a strong feature demanding a multi-skilled approach from pupils and bringing history alive by setting learning in a local context. Good in-class support keeps pupils with special educational needs fully involved.

133. Pupils maintain above average standards at the end of Year 8 and continue to make good progress and achieve well. This reflects the impact of separate history teaching and the high profile given to literacy skills. Most pupils are aware of their developing skills and knowledge and use their teachers' marking comments to know what to do to improve. Strategies are also in place to maintain good levels of achievement among boys. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are very confident in their use of historical terminology and dates. They express judgements about the consequences of events by reflecting on attitudes and motives, using evidence to weigh the merits of different views and explanations. In their studies of the change in the balance of power between political, economic and religious forces from Norman times to the days of the British Empire and the slave trade, pupils illustrate how democracy and human rights evolved. Extended writing is impressive at this stage, in which most pupils exceed expectations, especially when they use computers and homework time to do extra research.

134. At both key stages, spiritual and moral aspects and the multicultural dimension are underdeveloped because of the low allocation of time to history. The spontaneous empathy derived from drama, literature and role play, and the thoughtful probing and re-assessing of evidence through extended discussion or group problem-solving, are curtailed by the need to consolidate skills and cover the syllabus in the relatively low time given to teach the subject compared to many other schools.

135. Although many pupils use computers for investigative work and the one networked personal computer in the classroom is used, lack of regular, built-in access to ICT is a serious limitation. Pupils are missing opportunities to manipulate data, to access Websites and discriminate between appropriate and irrelevant information, and to search globally for original material.

136. Day to day assessment of pupils' work to National Curriculum levels is good and helps pupils to improve. Guidance for assessed work includes criteria on "How to get the best possible mark". However there is no overall monitoring of standards year on year or analysis of trends in order to make predictions and set targets.

137. Teaching and consequently pupils' learning are good across the school because lessons have a clear structure which builds up learning in a variety of ways. Pupils use historical vocabulary with ease and are articulate in sharing their findings with the rest of the class because teachers are conscious of giving all pupils a chance and allowing them time to formulate a reasoned explanation. History comes alive because teachers consistently encourage pupils to make comparisons or put themselves in the shoes of others. For example, Year 6 pupils compare life in the Luxor of Ancient Egypt with life in twentieth century Morpeth and comment on sensitive issues surrounding the unwrapping of mummies. Since the previous report, teachers have built up a repertoire of effective strategies, including date searches, story outlines and progressively detailed timelines to boost pupils' confidence with

chronology and accuracy in sequencing events.

138. Pupils show enthusiasm and historical focus when they re-draft information into other forms or do a long investigation, because teachers prepare them well. For example, Year 7 pupils studying the murder of Thomas Becket were free to concentrate their imagination on how to convey the shocking significance of it all to readers of the "Canterbury Chronicle". They had become familiar with relevant material, having scanned three contemporary accounts, discussed their findings as a class and made notes in a prepared outline for writing. Pupils with special educational needs take charge of their work with this kind of support and make good progress. The investigative writing of some pupils shows outstanding skill in interweaving information, interpretation and conflicting views. This kind of challenge is not as evident in lessons as it could be and needs to be planned more frequently and specifically in order to challenge higher attaining pupils.

139. Leadership of the department is good and promises to be very good. Effective collaboration with regard to schemes of work with other schools in the local network of schools known as the pyramid maintains coherence and continuity of learning. Sharing good practice and discussing pupils' work with history teachers within the pyramid of local schools assures standards and dynamic professional dialogue. Monitoring lessons and sampling pupils' work supports colleagues and guarantees consistency across the department.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

140. Within the National Curriculum pupils have to both acquire a range of skills associated with computers and use computers appropriately to support their learning in all subjects. It is also expected that teachers will utilise ICT to support their teaching. The use of computers in this school does not meet statutory requirements. This is a significant weakness that has existed at least since the time of the last inspection despite the school's substantial efforts to improve the number of computers and the skills of the teachers.

141. It is not possible to judge standards in ICT at either Year 6 or by the time the pupils leave the school in Year 8. This is because the variety and depth of experiences pupils have are not sufficient to substantiate a judgement. Some elements of 'exchanging and sharing information' were seen during the inspection, significantly word-processing. In Year 8 the standard of this aspect is satisfactory overall and better than average amongst more able pupils. There is a very small amount of spreadsheet work and some paint images. Neither is very significant, though Year 6 are moving in the right direction with some graphing and CD-ROM research. Pupils in Years 6 and 7 are acquiring similar skills to pupils in Year 8 and, the planned programme of work is intended to raise standards in both years. If full attention is paid to spreadsheets, databases, publishing and communications software a significant part of the core of ICT skills will be covered. Data capture, control, designing and making will still be untouched, however.

142. Some pupils, often those who have computers at home, have good keyboard skills. They are also more aware of what can be done, for example importing pictures into text, using clipart and pictures. This advantage is not built on within the school partly owing to inadequate resources. For example, an exercise in Year 6 producing a newspaper page about Macbeth was basic font-style work and this did not stretch pupils more able in ICT. The English was of a high standard. Large classes of 32 pupils have to be split in order to use the computer room and this means gaps of maybe two or three weeks between lessons. This lack of continuity leads to unsatisfactory progress over time. Pupils' achievement within the lessons is good. Those pupils with special educational needs make good progress because schemes of work are well structured.

143. Pupils do use the computers at lunchtime, but only about 12 at a time can do so as there are few machines. They complete word processed work, use CD-ROM based encyclopaedias to find out things and explore the internet. They find out significant facts, for example about Wilfred Owen. Their attitudes and behaviour, as in lessons, are excellent.

144. Only limited opportunities existed to observe teachers using computers with pupils. These were all in the computer lessons, in which pupils are essentially following a planned programme of work on the screen or are engaged in limited word-processing tasks. The management of these lessons is competent and the help given by teachers to support, challenge and introduce pupils to new skills, such as spell checking is good. Teaching in these lessons is good overall.

145. The leadership and management of ICT have been fragmented since the co-ordinator left to take up a seconded post with the local education authority and subsequently moved on. The headteacher now takes overall responsibility. One teacher looks after lessons and curriculum work in Years 7 and 8 and another looks after the technical aspects of the network. Recently, extra technician time has been made possible through the Technology College bid. This should reduce the duties of the teacher providing technical support and make management more efficient. Currently the managerial responsibilities of the two teachers are unclear though they perform appropriate tasks well. There are no job descriptions to match the responsibilities of the holders of the posts. ICT within subjects in Years 5 and 6 is looked after by two other teachers. They are making some inroads within the limitations of hardware, software and available time.

146. At the time of the last report, the use of computers in the school was described as 'barely satisfactory'. Since then, significant investment has been made and resources improved and there is more use of computers but because the world has "moved on", the provision for ICT is now poor.

147. The school maintains that mismatches between what is needed and the money available from the National Grid for Learning money, controlled by the local education authority, have contributed to this position. Delays in the allocation of funds for equipment and training have exacerbated the situation. The number of computers within the school is well below average for the number of pupils on roll and purchases in the pipeline will still leave it so. Pupils in computer lessons currently occupy most of the school's computers. Thus teachers or pupils cannot use them to support other work. Even in computer lessons, pupils most often have to share. This reduces the progress that pupils might make. Because the machines lack functioning headphones the use of sound distracts other pupils in the cramped computer room, which is situated at the back of the library.

148. Teachers generally have a desire to move forward and a significant proportion have undergone some training in basic skills. A lot of teachers hold extensive records and details of lessons in files on the school network. The school is relying on the New Opportunities Fund training to address many issues, but significant training in using computers within

lessons is long overdue. The software available to support subjects is very limited and not always appropriate.

149. Development plans do exist to increase computer provision in 2001 and funding is being found through the Technology College status bid. It is also recognised that another room of sufficient size, with a suite of computers, will be needed and that clusters of machines need to be provided in key areas.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

150. Standards achieved in French are average by the time pupils leave the school. The good quality of teaching and learning, excellent behaviour and positive attitudes of the pupils enable pupils to achieve broadly satisfactorily in the subject.

151. By the end of Year 6 the majority of pupils respond appropriately in French to simple routine instructions and questions about themselves. They take part in short exchanges using set phrases to describe events simply in the present. For example, they exchange greetings, name objects and give basic information about themselves and their family. The majority label items fairly accurately and match printed words with meaning. Most reproduce familiar phrases and words from memory in songs and games but are less confident when using the language to exchange information and are dependent upon written prompts and notes to do this. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in Years 5 and 6.

152. By the end of Year 8 pupils increase their range of language and describe events simply in the present, past and future and express simple opinions using set phrases, substituting words to change meaning. Higher attaining pupils and some average attaining pupils are beginning to identify and apply patterns in the language. The majority write accurately and recognise key words and phrases from short texts. Listening skills are well developed. Pupils respond appropriately to instructions and questions in French but many need prompts to help them to participate in dialogues when working on their own. Some pupils find difficulty in responding spontaneously to questions about themselves or others. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs encounter difficulties when working without the help of the teacher but on the whole make good progress in Years 7 and 8.

153. Pupils' literacy skills are good and aid pupils' learning. Pupils' reading standards are good. They read aloud confidently and accurately and they have effective skimming and scanning techniques. Standards of accuracy and presentation are high in pupils' written work and they write for a variety of purposes often imaginatively.

154. The quality of teaching and learning overall is good. It was satisfactory or better in 87 per cent of lessons observed and good in half the lessons seen. In Years 5 and 6 the quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory; two thirds of the lessons being satisfactory or better. In Years 7 and 8 teaching and learning are good. All the lessons seen were satisfactory or better and almost two thirds were good.

155. Teachers use flashcards effectively to present new language and reinforce learning; pupils are keen to participate in class oral work and gain in confidence and competence in using the language themselves when responding to visual cues. Songs and games are also used effectively to increase confidence and to reinforce learning and pupils join in enthusiastically. When pupils are given the opportunity to work in pairs to practise new

language they rapidly gain in confidence and they work together sensibly, concentrating on the tasks set, some using their initiative to complete tasks, for example, in role play situations. In most lessons, however, tasks are restricted to rehearsal and pupils are not required to use the language often enough to gather information or use more than one skill at a time. Pupils make good progress in developing skills when the pace is brisk and there are a variety of activities. The rate of learning slows when activities require pupils to listen for lengthy periods without being given the opportunity to practise informally or try out the language for themselves. In these situations they become restless and lose concentration and interest.

156. In most lessons teachers use their good command of the language effectively. They match the language they use well to pupils' experience and capabilities when giving instructions and questioning pupils. This is effective in reinforcing learning and developing pupils' listening skills. However, this is not consistent across all classes and in a minority of instances the language used by teachers is inaccurate and translations are given too readily by the teacher which eliminates the need for pupils to listen for themselves. In the best lessons teachers use skilful questioning to enable pupils to contribute in oral work and to identify patterns in the language for themselves. In most cases activities are well planned and well sequenced enabling pupils to build effectively upon previous learning. However, resources are not always sufficiently adapted or activities planned in sufficient detail to provide an appropriate challenge to higher attaining pupils or be accessible to lower attaining pupils. In some classes there is inappropriate emphasis on the written form of the language to the detriment of speaking and listening; this inhibits pupils' oral work and is counterproductive in increasing their competence and confidence in using the language independently. The use of ICT is under developed and the statutory requirement of the National Curriculum is not met because of the lack of appropriate software and access to facilities.

157. The department maintains good liaison with the high school and other middle schools to ensure consistency and continuity. Since the last inspection standards have been maintained. The subject co-ordinator is aware of the need to develop consistency in the quality of teaching and expectations, especially in Years 5 and 6. She has attempted to achieve this by the introduction of a more appropriate course, demonstration of teaching strategies and sharing ideas. However, effective monitoring of teaching is difficult because of timetable constraints and because Year 6 classes are taught at a distance from the main languages area. The procedures for the assessment of pupils' progress and attainment are good but as yet information gathered is not used effectively to plan the progress of groups of differing ability within teaching groups or to involve pupils in tracking and planning their own progress through the levels of attainment of the National Curriculum. Overall the leadership and management of the subject are good.

## **MUSIC**

158. Standards in music are above average by the age of eleven and average by thirteen. Teaching overall is very good. It is good in Years 7 and 8 and very good in Years 5 and 6. The musicianship of teachers and the very good attitudes of almost all pupils are the key reasons why standards are above average. In Year 8 a small minority of pupils, all with educational behavioural difficulties, are disruptive for parts of some lessons. This leads to the progress of all pupils being slower than in other year groups and standards in lessons are pegged at average levels for most pupils in Year 8. However, many pupils, including those in Year 8, achieve standards that are above average as a result of their commitment to many extra-curricular activities.

159. For the majority of pupils in all four years, music lessons are enjoyable and enriching

experiences. The teaching is energetic, imaginative and often inspired. Pupils respond enthusiastically to the level of musicianship and expertise of the teaching. In lessons with Year 6, for example, the teacher introduced African tribal chants as a vocal warm-up exercise. In one class these were managed with such expertise that pupils worked on a rhythmically complex canon of such quality that they experienced the sense of achieving something special that set a tone of high expectancy and achievement for the rest of the lesson. Pupils worked with significant sensitivity to each other's musical response and produced remarkable, yet simple, compositions in the tradition of the contemporary music of professional composers. This was possible because of the very good classroom organisation of the teacher. It also owed much to the teacher's skilful intervention at various stages of its creation as she ensured that pupils were aware of the scope of the sounds and instruments available to them.

160. Not all of the music taught in the school is as experimental as this example. All pupils learn the recorder and around a quarter receive instrumental lessons; some achieving standards far in advance of what is usual after such a short time. The school orchestra of some forty players perform a wide repertoire of classical and popular music. The school has been innovative in raising the interest and singing standards of boys by having two choirs; whilst that for girls attracts around a hundred members, boys are well represented in a choir of about forty. There is clear evidence that so many boys would not have joined a mixed choir; the success of this venture is rarely repeated in other similar schools. Both choirs are about to join other schools in performing excerpts from Bart's 'Oliver' in Young World 2000 as a massed choir of mixed voices. The singing in the school, heard in lessons, assemblies and at one choir rehearsal, is a strength of the school's music, notably for the quality of its pitch, tone and articulation and the range of sources used in the school's repertoire.

161. All pupils are included in musical activities within lessons. Teachers offer support to those with learning difficulties and these pupils make good progress. A learning support assistant effectively manages the behaviour of one pupil in Year 7 with a statement for his behavioural difficulties. Other boys with educational behavioural difficulties in Year 8 classes are well managed by teachers for most of the time and make progress. For example, they participated in some three-part singing based on a range of chants and achieved success.

162. Pupils in Year 7 were quick to understand a given structure within which to write their own melodies and lyrics, using staff notation and tonic solfa. Pupils worked independently at keyboards or in computer-assisted composition. The majority of pupils understood the structure of the melody and some were arranging backing tracks for their melodies. The teaching successfully used Beethoven's 'Ode to Joy' from the Ninth Symphony to show how the same structure as the pupils' compositions could be developed through orchestration. This broad view of ways of making effective music is a strength of the work of the school.

163. Teaching ensures that all pupils are able to participate fully in the full range of activities in the lesson. There is no significant difference in the standards achieved by boys and girls. Teaching is good or better in 89 per cent of lessons and none of it is less than satisfactory.

164. Pupils in Year 5 are reminded that in earlier civilisations music did not exist without dance, or dance without music. Some especially effective, brave and imaginative teaching gave pupils first-hand experience of these connections. This year group is participating in a Greenwich Meridian Line Project in which music from countries along the line, including Northumbrian folk and ancient music, is explored through playing, singing and dancing. The school's own teaching has moved this on to levels that at the time of the inspection were above average. In many of the lessons there is a sense of inspiration in the teaching and learning that is contributing significantly to pupils' spiritual as well as cultural experiences. The singing in the whole-school singing practice was accompanied by the school's ceilidh band. The richness and immediacy of these learning experiences are successful because of the standards of performance demanded by the teachers. Teaching is analytical and precise as well as expansive; its energy and pace make for very good and demanding learning. As a result the quality of the work is generally above average. Year 5 pupils also work on raps about moral and social issues such as pollution, animal rights, litter or bullying.

165. The wide range of work in languages other than English leads to an understanding of intonation and how meaning and communication with others are conveyed through the spoken or sung word. Pupils' ability to use sequences and patterns of sound in order to manage complex non-European rhythms helps pupils in their development of the skills of numeracy. Year 7 pupils used the computer as an aid to their composition of melodies in a structured form; this too required a sense of numerical sequence.

166. Responsibilities for extra-curricular activities are shared. The subject is well managed, largely through regular informal meetings, but more formally when needed. Teachers work together collaboratively and from time to time observe each other teaching in order to share good practice. Instrumental teaching is also well managed and lessons are staggered during the year so that pupils are not always withdrawn from the same lessons. Good resources and a large, attractive music-workshop room contribute to the successes achieved by pupils. Every opportunity is taken to involve pupils in work with practising musicians and in festivals and events beyond the school. Music is a strength of the school. It was recognised as such at the time of the previous inspection; since then it has further improved and developed.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

167. Standards in physical education are above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Standards in swimming are good. Pupils' very positive attitudes and the well planned teaching ensure that pupils make good progress in lessons and achieve well in relation to their starting point in Year 5. Girls and boys achieve equally well.

168. Most pupils achieve the expected standards in swimming by the end of Year 5 and many achieve higher standards. The small number of Year 5 pupils who do not meet the expected standards have the opportunity to have more lessons the following year. Year 6 pupils perform to a good standard in gymnastics. They plan simple sequences on the floor and on apparatus. They move with good control and use an imaginative range of actions. A small number include more difficult actions in their sequences. They evaluate each other's performances, using the language of the subject accurately. They use what they learn from their evaluations to plan improvements to their own work. Pupils continue to improve their work in gymnastics at a good rate partly because there is plenty of time allowed in the planned curriculum. This enables pupils to make significant gains in gymnastic skills and increase their understanding of what features are needed to make good gymnastics. Year 8 boys plan complex and imaginative sequences on their own, in groups, and both on the floor and on apparatus. A good number of boys include more difficult balances on the apparatus. They evaluate each other's work constructively. Girls display high standards in netball. Most



have good footwork skills and use a range of passes appropriately in a game. They know the playing positions, most of the rules and can use basic attack and defence principles of play.

169. Pupils know how to warm up safely but are less aware of how different activities contribute to fitness. Pupils have a good understanding of the need for safety when handling equipment, working together and in preparing themselves for activity. Higher attaining pupils achieve well through their involvement in a wide range of sports clubs and team practices. However in some lessons higher attaining pupils are not sufficiently challenged to consider more deeply what they can do to improve. Teachers know the pupils with special educational needs well. They ensure that the lesson activities match their needs and consequently pupils make good progress.

170. The teaching is good throughout the school and consequently pupils learn at a good rate. Specialist teachers use their knowledge of the activities well to help pupils to improve their skills and techniques in both gymnastics and games. However higher attaining pupils are not always fully challenged. Teachers ensure that there is a good pace to lessons and that pupils work hard physically. The teaching is well planned. Teachers have clear targets for their lessons which they share with their classes and refer to throughout the lessons. Consequently pupils are very focused and know what they are trying to improve. Teachers make good use of key words displayed in the gymnasium when they pose questions to pupils. This ensures that pupils learn and use the language of the subject. Fewer opportunities are planned for pupils to talk to each other about their performances.

171. Teachers use a good range of approaches. In gymnastics pupils are taught some skills directly and at other times encouraged to use their imaginations when planning sequences. Teachers encourage pupils to observe and analyse each other's work but in some lessons this is not well structured. Consequently pupils tend to emphasise faults too readily and some pupils can become discouraged. Teachers have very good relationships with the pupils and have high expectations of them. Pupils respond well to this and are very well behaved, work very hard in lessons and are keen to improve. Well developed systems for assessing and recording pupils' progress give both teachers and pupils a clear understanding of their achievements and what they need to improve upon. These are particularly helpful in games, athletics and health related fitness activities but they do not always identify how best to challenge the highest attaining pupils.

172. The subject is well managed and co-ordinated. Since the last inspection pupils' standards of work and the quality of the teaching have improved. The specialist staff have produced detailed schemes of work which help to support the work of non-specialist teachers. The monitoring of teaching across the subject has not yet taken place. Teachers are hard working and committed to providing a good range of extra-curricular activities and to bringing in local sports coaches and organisations to work with the pupils. These activities make a significant contribution to the standards achieved overall. However not all pupils who are keen and want to be active are included. The accommodation is extensive and helps to produce high standards of work. There are, however, a number of health and safety concerns that have been recognised by the school in their risk assessment but are not yet resolved.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

173. Standards in religious education throughout the school are above the levels expected from the locally agreed syllabus and are similar to those reported on the previous inspection. By the age of eleven all pupils have a good understanding of the nature of God through Bible stories. Pupils are able to explain some of the ways in which God might be interpreted to be at work in contemporary society, relating this to the positive qualities of love, determination and bravery. One pupil in Year 6 described God as 'a fluffy sofa which is there to comfort you when you are feeling down'. Pupils show good knowledge and understanding of Islam in Year 7, and can describe and explain the importance of Mecca to Muslims, the Ka'bah and the Islamic commandments. By Year 8, pupils have begun to appreciate the nature of belief in religion, as well as personal beliefs and their contribution to the development of a moral code. Through self-evaluation, pupils are able to list their own beliefs and consider the impact on others of any actions stemming from their beliefs. These strong features add significantly to pupils' moral and cultural development and contribute successfully to the overall good achievement.

174. Achievement is good at both key stages. Pupils develop a good grasp of technical language, so that in oral and written work, they use terms such as mosque, belief or commandment with confidence and accuracy. Conceptual development is also good. Pupils develop the notion of higher power, the wonder of miracles and the importance of parables. Their understanding of these issues is heightened by the teacher's very good use of drama and groupwork. Pupils are able to reflect on the meaning of a story as they debate and rehearse it, and then give added impact to that as they act it out. Especially good examples of this occur in Year 6 as pupils follow the theme of the lost sheep. Through the very good quality of debate and subsequent discussion, feelings of being lost and found, and feelings of love and caring are explored and developed. These are then related to giving as a Christian concept, so pupils learn to appreciate the joys of both giving and receiving. By Year 8, pupils have developed this further, so they are able to debate their own personal beliefs and explore the advantages and disadvantages of having firmly held opinions. Such features make a very good contribution to pupils' moral development. Pupils' attitudes are very good in all lessons. Behaviour is similarly very good and contributes substantially to the learning in lessons.

175. Higher attaining pupils make good progress and achieve well in both key stages. They are given frequent opportunities to further their own value systems through personal reflection and debate. They explain their feelings and views, such as beliefs on vegetarianism and anti-racism, to a high level. Lower attaining pupils also achieve well in all years. This includes pupils with statements of special educational need, and those with individual education plans. The very generous amount of oral work provides pupils who have poorer written skills with many opportunities to join in debate and to express their ideas orally, which they accomplish well. In other work, lower attaining pupils express themselves through drawing, as in Year 6 as they design stained glass windows with a motto to explain the power of God.

176. Pupils benefit from specialist teaching, which makes use of very good techniques to include all pupils. Subject knowledge and planning are very good. The pupils benefit from very good teaching in all years and all pupils participate fully in the learning process. Consequently pupils' achievement is very good over time. Pupils are fully engaged from the start of lessons and they are keen to participate, answer questions and take part in plays and drama. The very good emphasis on varying the teaching between talk, debate, acting, drawing and presentations by pupils ensures that the pace of lessons is brisk and that the rate of learning is high at all times. The teaching is also challenging. In all lessons pupils are expected to think, reflect and respond which contributes very well to pupils' spiritual and social development. Some work is modified so that lower attaining pupils have less difficult texts to read, or extension activities allow higher attaining pupils to explore issues in more depth. This

is a further improvement since the previous inspection. Good links with literacy are also to the forefront of planning, so that the teacher uses and encourages the use of technical language throughout, and longer pieces of writing where appropriate.

177. The subject benefits greatly from experienced teaching, specialist knowledge and very good levels of management. The curriculum has been well adapted from the locally agreed syllabus and other commercial sources to cater well for the needs of all pupils. Assessment has improved since the previous inspection and is now good. Tests are now conducted and a portfolio is kept of pupils' work across the years. Very good self-assessment techniques and better targets for pupils have been introduced. Departmental targets for improvement have now been set, which include rectifying the one noticeable weakness – the lack of use of ICT. The co-ordinator has paid good attention to the previous report and has used funds from the parents' association to buy in a good range of artefacts to help stimulate interest further. The overall level of resources is very good. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.