

INSPECTION REPORT

WELLFIELD MIDDLE SCHOOL

Whitley Bay, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108649

Headteacher: Mr Brian Rickwood

Reporting inspector: Mr Rod Spinks
2783

Dates of inspection: 7 – 10 October 2002

Inspection number: 249139

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 - 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Kielder Road
Wellfield
Whitley Bay
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Appropriate authority: Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs E Cole

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
2783	Rod Spinks	Registered inspector	Design and technology Special educational needs	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements. How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Vicky Lamb	Lay inspector	Educational Inclusion	Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
19599	Carmen Markham	Team inspector	Religious education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? How well does the school care for its pupils?
12827	Shirley Hackett	Team inspector	Information and communication technology. Physical education	
30827	Sandra Withnall	Team inspector	Art and design	
4388	Neil Rathmell	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
1523	Trevor James	Team inspector	Geography History	
4884	Mike McAleavy	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
22076	Martin Bonathan	Team inspector	Mathematics	
17799	Tony Stoddart	Team inspector	Science	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Wellfield Middle School is situated on the inland edge of Whitley Bay. It serves an area of mainly private housing and takes a number of pupils from further north in the county of Northumberland. The pupils, aged 9-13, mostly come from advantaged backgrounds where parents support the work of their children. There are below average numbers of pupils with special educational needs and average numbers with a statement of need. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although a few have emotional and behavioural difficulties and several have varying levels of hearing impairment. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals is broadly average. Nearly all pupils are of white British heritage. There are just two pupils who speak English as an additional language, which is well below the national average. Pupils' attainment on entry is generally above average although the full ability range is represented. Currently pupils transfer to two main high schools at the end of Year 8 but there have been proposals to re-organise the schools in the area.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Wellfield Middle School is a good school. Good management ensures that pupils receive good teaching and make good progress to attain standards which are well above average when compared to standards nationally and for similar schools. Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning which enhances the progress they make. The school gives value for money

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress to attain high standards particularly in English and mathematics.
- The provision of a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- Good teaching.
- The contribution of performing arts to pupils' personal development.
- The behaviour of pupils and their positive attitudes to work.
- Above average attendance levels.

What could be improved

- Teachers' marking and assessment of pupils' ongoing work.
- There are too few opportunities for the spiritual development of pupils.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since the last inspection. The quality of teaching has improved and is now consistently good. Aspects identified as areas of weakness in that inspection have been tackled effectively and are now good. In particular, standards and teaching in modern foreign languages are much improved and are now good. However, standards in religious education have fallen, partly as a result of changing the locally agreed syllabus being used by the school.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				<i>Key</i>
	All schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
English	B	A	A	A	well above average A
Mathematics	A	A	A	A	above average B
Science	D	B	A	A	Average C
					below average D
					well below average E

Standards in English, mathematics and science in the Year 6 tests were well above average in 2002. Standards in English, mathematics and science are well above average compared to those of similar schools. The results were either above or well above average on all the standard measures. This represents good progress made by pupils of all abilities. There is little difference between the attainment of boys and girls. The most able pupils attain the high standards which reflect their ability. Pupils with English as an additional language attain standards which accurately reflect their ability and pupils with special educational needs frequently exceed the targets set for them. Pupils continue to make good progress in Years 7 and 8 and are attaining well above average standards in English, mathematics and science.

During the inspection overall standards observed in pupils' work over time and in lessons shows standards to be well above those normally found for pupils by the end of Year 6 and Year 8 in English, mathematics and science. In Years 5 and 6 standards in the other subjects of the curriculum were above average for history, modern foreign languages and music, close to the average in art and design, design and technology, geography, information and communication technology and physical education. Standards were below those normally found in religious education. In Years 7 and 8 standards were above average in geography, history, modern foreign languages, information and communication technology and music. Standards were closer to the average in art and design, design and technology and physical education. Standards were below those expected in religious education.

Standards in the key skills of literacy and numeracy are well above average and pupils are able to utilise these skills to make good progress in many subjects of the curriculum.

Pupils enter the school with above average levels of attainment and make good progress in response to their positive attitudes to learning and the good teaching they receive to attain standards in many subjects, which are well above those typical for their age. The school sets challenging targets for both individual pupil and whole school attainment.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils are keen to come to school to learn and make progress.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. Pupils concentrate well and remain on task throughout lessons. They move about the school in a very orderly manner.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils are confident and self-reliant which enables them to work well on their own. They also co-operate well when working in pairs and small groups. They are well prepared for their move to high school at the end of Year 8.
Attendance	Very good. Attendance levels are very high when compared to national averages.

The pupils' personal attitudes and their willingness to respond well to their lessons are a strength of the school. Pupils develop well as young people showing good levels of personal commitment and responsibility. Performing arts makes a significant contribution to the personal development of many pupils.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 – 6	Years 7 – 8
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Overall the quality of teaching seen in the school was good. Teaching was judged to be good in all years. In all, inspectors observed 85 whole or part lessons and judged 29 to be satisfactory, 37 good and 18 very good or outstanding. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory.

Teaching of English and mathematics was judged to be good throughout the school with some examples of outstanding merit. Teachers in all subjects have good subject knowledge. They use this knowledge well to plan appropriate lessons, which challenge pupils of all abilities and enable them to make good progress. Teachers have high expectations, especially in Years 7 and 8, to which pupils respond well making good progress and attaining above average standards, preparing them well for the next stage in their education. Lessons are delivered at a brisk pace and teachers use a range of different approaches to deliver interesting and motivating lessons.

Although all teachers marked pupils' work the marking did not always identify what pupils knew and could do and did not identify what pupils needed to do to improve. Teachers do not always use the

assessment information from their marking to challenge pupils even further. Where lessons were judged to have weaknesses, for example in religious education, teachers were unclear as to the exact requirements of the course being taught thus confusing pupils as to what was required of them.

Teachers of all subjects very effectively developed pupils' literacy and numeracy skills and this was especially the case for pupils with special educational needs and the few for whom English is an additional language. As a result these pupils make good progress in all subjects particularly where support staff enhanced the learning opportunities in lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Overall satisfactory. There is some imbalance in learning experiences for some pupils in design and technology and personal and social education in Years 5 and 6. Provision of extra-curricular activities is very good.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. There are effective systems to identify individuals' needs and then they receive good support for their learning.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The few pupils involved receive good targeted support in English language, enabling them full access to learning experiences in lessons.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. There are too few opportunities for pupils to explore spiritual issues within the curriculum and collective worship. Pupils' moral and social development is very well provided for. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory but there are limited opportunities for pupils to learn about the multi-cultural society in which they live.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. The school cares very well for its pupils. There are effective systems for monitoring pupils' academic and personal progress. Good use is made of learning targets for individual pupils. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not consistently identify what they need to do to improve.

The curriculum meets statutory requirements for the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, pupils' practical skills in design and technology are not consistently developed in Years 5 and 6. The personal and social education programme for Year 5 pupils is limited when they have swimming lessons.

The provision and support for pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language is good. All pupils also have access to good mentoring support should they be faced with personal or education difficulties.

Overall there is a satisfactory partnership with parents. Parents support their children well and co-operate with the school to ensure that homework is completed.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and senior staff provide good leadership in planning for the continued development of the school. Other staff with management responsibility are now making a significant contribution to school improvement.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. Governors know the strengths and weaknesses of the school and seek to continue the established improvements in standards by continuing to monitor and evaluate the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Effective analysis of data enables challenging targets to be set for the continued raising of standards.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. The school environment has been well maintained but there are weaknesses in library resources and in resources for modern foreign languages and geography.

There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced teaching and non-teaching staff to enable specialist subject teaching across the school except in religious education. There are some weaknesses when teachers lack experience in teaching their second and third subjects. The accommodation is good with a good range of specialist rooms for science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology and physical education.

The school has good leadership, which is confidently addressing the long-term development of the school under the difficult circumstances of possible re-organisation. The governors are fully involved in development planning. They are not yet applying the principles of best value to the effectiveness of the school.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' behaviour. • Good teaching. • Good standards. • The personal development of pupils. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approachability of the school. • The timing of annual reports and teacher/parent discussions. • Homework.

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Inspectors fully agree with parents that this is a good school. Pupils are positive about their learning and behave well. Pupils work hard, making good progress and attaining above average standards. Pupils' personal development is good and this is enhanced for many pupils through the performing arts programme. There is a flourishing Parents and Friends Association, which contributes significant sums for school improvements, many of which are identified by pupils through the school council.

Whilst recognising the school's difficulty in producing the annual progress reports for parents last summer, inspectors judge that parents could have been better informed as to the circumstances. Generally parents are kept well informed about the work of the school and the amount of homework pupils are expected to complete is similar to that found in other schools covering this age range.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The inspection was carried out in October 2002 and the data used in the summary report refers to pupils' attainment in the summer of 2002. Inspectors based their judgements on an analysis of test and assessment results, direct observations of pupils in lessons and a detailed scrutiny of pupils' present and past work. Discussions were held with pupils, where other evidence was limited to establish what pupils knew and could do.
- 2 The assessment of pupils when they were aged seven indicates that pupils' attainment on entry covers the full range. However, the proportion of lower attaining pupils is smaller than usually found. The majority of pupils have attained at least the nationally expected standards at the end of Year 2 in the first schools. School assessments indicate that pupils have made good progress and are attaining broadly above average standards when they enter the school in Year 5.
- 3 By the end of Year 6 pupils are attaining standards which are above the national average. In the 2002 tests and assessments for 11-year-olds, the percentage of pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 was well above the national average for English and mathematics and very high for science. The percentage attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics. Based on national benchmark information standards were well above the national average for English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, the proportion of pupils attaining at least the expected Level 4 was well above average for English, mathematics and science. The proportion attaining the higher Level 5 was well above average for English and science and above average for mathematics.
- 4 Attainment in national assessments at age 11 has risen at a rate similar to that found nationally although from a starting point above the national average. Both boys and girls are attaining standards above the national averages with the difference between boys' and girls' attainment being marginally less than found nationally.
- 5 From a review of pupils' current and past work standards in many subjects are above or well above those normally seen, both at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Pupils in Year 6 are attaining standards in English, mathematics and science which are well above average. Standards in history, French and music are above those typical for this age group. Standards in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, geography and physical education are similar to those normally found. Where standards are only average teachers are not providing sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop the subject specific skills which would enable above average standards to be achieved

- 6 Pupils in Year 8 are attaining standards that are well above average in English, mathematics and geography, above average in science, history, French and music and close to the average in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and physical education.
- 7 Standards in religious education are lower than expected in comparison with the other subjects of the curriculum. However, the course being followed by the school does not identify sufficiently clearly the standards pupils are expected to achieve by the end of Year 6 and Year 8. This makes definitive judgements on the standards pupils are attaining less secure.
- 8 Overall, pupils respond well to the good teaching they receive and are making good progress to attain the above average standards. Where progress is more limited and standards lower, such as in design and technology, this is because the planned programme for learning in Years 5 and 6 limits skill development, or where teachers have more limited experience of teaching the subject, for example, in religious education.
- 9 Standards in literacy and numeracy are well above average by the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Pupils have many opportunities to use and extend their skills across the curriculum. For example, pupils in Year 8 are encouraged to learn and use the vocabulary appropriate to their design and technology projects.
- 10 Overall, pupils of all abilities and backgrounds, including those identified as gifted and talented, having English as an additional language and those with special education needs, are achieving well. Pupils enter the school with broadly above average levels of attainment in Year 5 and by the end of Year 8 are attaining standards above and well above the national average. In particular high attaining pupils are challenged well in their lessons and so attain the higher standards of which they are capable. Standards have shown significant improvement in French, music and physical education. However, standards in religious education have fallen but this is more a result of changing the locally agreed syllabus being used by the school.
- 11 Pupils' attainment at the end of Year 9 in national tests and assessments provided by the high schools pupils move to at the end of Year 8, show that progress is at least good in Years 7, 8 and 9. Significant numbers of pupils attain well above nationally expected levels whilst very few attain below.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 12 Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development, including behaviour, are a strength of the school. Pupils like school and respond very well to the values that the school promotes. They generally work hard in lessons and demonstrate an excellent level of interest and involvement in the activities provided. Parents are highly satisfied with behaviour in the school and that their children are learning to behave in a mature and responsible way. Attendance levels are very high when compared to similar schools nationally.

- 13 In lessons pupils are very willing to learn. Pupils are co-operative, interested and keen to answer questions and share their ideas. They settle quickly to their tasks, work steadily and pay attention to their teachers. They talk about their work confidently and try hard to improve and succeed. When given the opportunity to work independently, pupils apply themselves conscientiously. They concentrate and persevere when work is difficult. On a very few occasions pupils become distracted, lose concentration and interest in their lessons and fidget and chat. However, they respond very positively when teachers remind them of what is expected.
- 14 Relationships are very good. In the playgrounds and dining hall relationships are relaxed and friendly both between pupils and pupils and adults.
- 15 Pupils' behaviour is very good. Boys and girls and pupils of differing abilities and backgrounds work and play together very well. In the playgrounds pupils make very good use of the space available to them and are all happily occupied during breaks. They organise themselves into teams for games of football, play with small apparatus in pairs or small groups or sit at the tables or benches provided, chatting in friendship groups. At lunchtime and assemblies pupils keep to the school routines without fuss. Their behaviour when entering and leaving the hall for assemblies is particularly respectful. However, there are occasions during lesson changes when the corridor is crowded and pupils do not always give way to each other and adults without jostling.
- 16 Pupils who find it difficult to maintain the high standards of behaviour expected in school respond very well to the guidance provided by staff. Consequently, the school rarely needs to resort to its ultimate sanction of exclusion from school, either permanently or for a fixed period. Two pupils have been excluded from the school for a short period each in recent years. This compares very favourably with similar schools nationally.
- 17 Pupils' personal development is very good. They learn to develop good working habits and can organise themselves well. When given the opportunity, they display appropriate levels of independence and develop self-confidence and a very good level of personal responsibility as they move through the school. They are able to approach teachers and support staff confidently and respectfully. Older pupils have the opportunity to volunteer to be monitors and those selected carry out their duties conscientiously, acting responsibly and with maturity. They present themselves as very good role models to younger pupils. In particular, monitors make a very significant contribution to the management of lunchtime procedures by supporting the supervisory team in keeping queues moving and reminding pupils to move and wait in an orderly way on the few occasions that this is necessary. They also provide a valuable service in the playgrounds by befriending any pupil who seems to be isolated or upset, and particularly keep a close eye on younger pupils so that any support needed can be given quickly. Members of the School Council have developed good skills at holding meetings, seeking opinions and presenting their ideas to adults. During assemblies pupils respect the nature of the occasion but have few opportunities to join in reflectively. Pupils enjoy the clubs on offer and are extremely well motivated to perform publicly. There are regular performances by pupils singing, dancing and acting both in school and within the

wider community. Pupils respond sensibly when their views are sought, for example, at the School Council, and take pleasure in receiving recognition for their efforts.

- 18 Pupils' attendance is very good in comparison to similar schools nationally. Parents and staff work well together to ensure that all absences are appropriate and there is very little unauthorised absence from school. Pupils arrive at school on time and go quickly to their classrooms at the start of each session. There are very few pupils late each morning. Registration procedures are conducted efficiently and lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 19 In most subjects pupils are taught with others of the same age in sets or bands and by specialist subject teachers for. In all, 86 whole or part lessons were observed by inspectors.
- 20 Overall the quality of teaching is good with just less than two thirds of that seen being good or better. Pupils respond well to their teaching and make at least satisfactory progress throughout all age groups to attain standards that are broadly above average in most subjects and well above average by the end of Year 8 in English, mathematics and science.
- 21 The teaching observed was at least satisfactory in 99% of lessons. Sixty-five per cent of teaching was judged to be good or better with 21% judged to be very good or outstanding. Only one lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory.
- 22 The teaching in Years 5 and 6 is good overall. In total 38 lessons were observed of which one was outstanding, six very good, 16 good, 15 satisfactory and none unsatisfactory. Teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the specialist subjects they teach except in religious education where understanding of the syllabus is more limited. They plan lessons effectively and use a range of different approaches to deliver brisk and lively lessons which motivate pupils to work hard and make progress. They organise their classrooms well and manage pupils very well so that behaviour is always at least good. For example, in a Year 6 literacy lesson on writing a suspense story the teacher read a brief story which helped to communicate the use of language to create suspense and held the pupils' attention so that they responded readily to later questioning.
- 23 The teaching in Years 7 and 8 is good overall. In total 48 lessons were seen of which three were outstanding, nine were very good, 21 good and 14 satisfactory. One lesson was judged to be unsatisfactory. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and plan lessons that challenge pupils to achieve. Work is generally well chosen to enable pupils of all abilities to make good progress. Pupils consequently concentrate and work hard and briskly to complete the tasks they are set so ensuring that they make good progress. Where teaching is very good and outstanding, teachers enthuse and motivate their pupils to achieve very high standards. For example, in a Year 8 mathematics lesson on finding the mid-point of a line by construction, the teacher used a wide range of strategies to involve all the pupils and to extend their vocabulary as well as their understanding of the construction theory they used.

- 24 Teachers' plan well and mark pupils' work regularly. However, the quality of marking is inconsistent. Some teachers clearly identify what pupils know and can do and then set clear targets for further development whilst others use effective praise but do not indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Few teachers systematically use the information they gain from marking pupils' work to plan what they should teach next. For example, in some science work seen some lower attaining Year 7 pupils showed some confusion in their learning about energy changes but there was no evidence of follow up work correcting their misunderstanding.
- 25 The teaching of literacy is good overall. Teachers make very good links between the literacy programme and the other subjects of the curriculum. The work pupils produce in subjects such as science frequently shows the strategies they have learnt in literacy lessons being applied. The strong focus on applying literacy skills throughout the school has had an impact on raising the standards pupils attain.
- 26 The teaching of numeracy is good. Teachers use pupils' numeracy skills to enhance their learning in other subjects such as when measuring in design and technology in Year 6 or presenting data collected in their science lessons as bar charts and line graphs.
- 27 The teaching of English and mathematics is good. Teachers have adopted more structured lessons from the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this has improved the quality of teaching. The teaching of science is good overall with specialist teachers providing a good range of learning opportunities. The quality of science teaching is not as good when lessons take place in classrooms and not the science laboratory.
- 28 In the other subjects of the curriculum it was not possible for inspectors to observe lessons in every class, but a representative sample for all subjects across the whole school were seen. The quality of teaching in the foundation subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education was good overall. There were many strengths and few weaknesses in most lessons.
- 29 The key strengths in the teaching seen in the foundation subjects was teachers' secure subject knowledge which enabled them to present lessons which were challenging for pupils of all abilities. This enabled both high attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to make good progress. Teachers planned lessons which were appropriate to the age and ability of the set or class to which pupils responded positively and learning was enhanced.
- 30 The key weakness inspectors observed was that the marking of pupils' work did not always identify what pupils had achieved and what they needed to do to improve. In a small minority of lessons the pace of learning was too slow and pupils made less progress. In some lessons the need to divide classes into practical and theory groups, for example in design and technology, also affected the pace of learning.
- 31 Only in a few lessons were opportunities for enhancing pupils' spiritual and cultural learning taken, for example in geography. These were not clearly identified in teachers' planning and occurred in response to the experiences teachers or pupils brought to the lesson. One

significant exception to this was the planned use of musical instruments from a wide range of different cultures and the cultural diversity of materials used in art and design.

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

- 32 The curriculum provision is satisfactory throughout the school and all elements of the statutory curriculum are in place. There is a suitable range of activities and experiences designed to meet the needs, interests and aspirations of the pupils in school. The curriculum in Years 5 and 6 covers all National Curriculum subjects and religious education. However, the majority of pupils in these two year groups do not receive regular lessons in personal, social and health education. There are also difficulties arising from the decision that in one Year 6 group in design and technology pupils experience only 'resistant materials' and no 'food' technology. This leaves them disadvantaged higher up in the school as they have not experienced 'food' technology for two years. This has an impact on progress in Years 5 and 6. Pupils begin their modern foreign language course in French in Year 6 and many pupils can study German for one lesson a week in addition to French in Year 8. The Year 7 and 8 curriculum delivers the National Curriculum subjects, religious education and citizenship effectively. All pupils are grouped according to ability in Year 5 after the autumn break until the end of Year 6. In Years 7 and 8 pupils are taught in ability groups for English, mathematics, information and communication technology, science and modern foreign languages.
- 33 Policies and schemes of work are in place for all subjects. They provide good support and guidance for all staff to ensure that pupils' learning builds from year to year. The good liaison with first schools also ensures that pupils' learning programmes build upon the work pupils have done in Year 4. The schemes of work are usually detailed, indicate links to other curriculum subjects and the school aims. They are cross-referenced to the National Curriculum where appropriate. The teachers' lesson plans are clear and the majority indicate the objectives they intend to cover in lessons.
- 34 There have been improvements in curriculum provision since the previous inspection. The total teaching time has been increased throughout the school so that it meets the minimum requirements for pupils in all year groups. All subjects, including French, now have adequate time to cover all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education. French continues to be taught in Year 6 and German is introduced for one lesson a week in Year 8, except those with statements for special educational needs. All pupils also have a timetabled lesson each week of information and communication technology which did not take place at the time of the previous inspection. Information and communication technology is also used to support learning in other curriculum areas. For example, in mathematics a range of web sites are used to support learning and software is bought to support the needs of particular pupils.
- 35 Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. The banding and setting ensures that pupils with specific educational needs have those needs met in small teaching groups and this is working effectively. The recent decision to link the role of the special educational needs co-ordinator and the learning mentor has also improved the

provision for these pupils. Teachers are able to make very good use of pupils' individual learning plans that are available to them. Classroom assistants supporting pupils with special educational needs are all provided with planning sheets for each lesson to ensure their full involvement and they are asked to evaluate their contribution to lessons they support. This is working well. Trained volunteers to support pupils in reading are having a good impact on the development of reading and literacy.

- 36 Provision for pupils with English as an additional language is good. The small number of pupils for whom English is not their first language are well supported by visiting specialist teachers. Support is also provided in English lessons by voluntary support assistants for whom detailed guidance is provided by the class teacher. The progress of these pupils is regularly assessed and carefully monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator.
- 37 In Years 7 and 8, the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies have been implemented in English and mathematics lessons. The provision for both is very good. Co-ordinators are in place and all staff have undertaken training. There has been a whole school emphasis on the development of vocabulary in all areas of the curriculum. This relates both to language used on a daily basis and language specific to particular subjects. Examples seen include the use of interesting verbs and adverbs in work on Moses, the use of 'stigmata' by a pupil in a lesson on prayer, technical terms displayed in design and technology and a good discussion in French on nouns and the indefinite article. The head of mathematics monitors mathematics planning and the school has worked hard to develop appropriate resources.
- 38 There is very good provision for extra-curricular activities. Over half the school are involved in regular performing arts productions. All pupils wanting to take part are included and this makes a good contribution to pupils' personal and cultural development. Pupils are able to take part in a range of clubs including singing clubs, mathematics challenges, homework clubs, care of animals, sports activities and many more. The school has an annual summer school offering a full range of activities and pupils are able to visit France to develop their skills in the language. In addition pupils are very aware of the needs of others and they support a wide range of charities.
- 39 The equality of access and opportunity to the curriculum is satisfactory. Pupils have the opportunity to learn about equal opportunities and discrimination of all types in religious education and in personal and social education including citizenship. There are also opportunities to explore this in English, geography and history. Pupils are not usually excluded from school activities but they are expected to contribute to the cost of materials in design and technology and this could mean that some pupils are unable to take part in the lessons. Also the lack of opportunity to follow a personal and social development course throughout Years 5 and 6 and issues relating to some pupils not having access to 'food' technology in Year 6 need to be addressed.
- 40 Currently provision for personal, social and health education is unsatisfactory in Years 5 and 6 as there is inconsistent provision where pupils have swimming lessons instead of personal, social and health education. Currently for most pupils it is taught through other curriculum subjects particularly science for sex and drugs education and religious education for

citizenship. There is also a drugs awareness course for all Year 6 pupils. The school believes that there is insufficient time for more input on personal, social and health education for these pupils. In Years 7 and 8 provision is satisfactory. These pupils have a lesson each week for personal, social and health education. A good policy and scheme of work indicate that provision is good for these pupils. Some aspects continue to be delivered effectively through other aspects of the curriculum.

- 41 Overall provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Although there are some good aspects, provision for spiritual development is unsatisfactory. No lessons were seen that attempted to create spiritual awareness by encouraging pupils to understand the deeper meaning of the topics they study. Indeed in religious education the reading of some prayers failed to recognise their spiritual value. Provision of collective worship meets statutory requirements. However, the quality does not meet the basic requirements of consideration and reference to the spiritual in that it does not encourage pupils to consider questions about life. In the majority of form periods, where there is a requirement to consider the thought for the week, this was not done and, where they did, there was no inclusion of the spiritual. The quality of collective worship is therefore also unsatisfactory.
- 42 The moral development of pupils is very good. Pupils are very aware of the needs of others and they are keen to support charities that help others; for example their support for 'Jeans for Genes' and a special care baby unit. The school has been awarded the Adidas 'Fair Play' Award. The 'Thought for the Day' programme develops many moral themes. For example, the pupils were asked to consider the Aesop fable of the Hare and the Tortoise and its implications for life in school. Pupils are taught the difference between right and wrong and the good behaviour in and around the school illustrates that they are able to put their learning into practice.
- 43 Provision for pupils' social development is very good. Pupils in school understand the importance of personal responsibility and they have opportunities in school to be monitors and 'buddies'. The 'Buddy' system enables younger pupils to be supported by older pupil 'buddies' in the playground so that they feel safe and are able to play in groups where they can learn games and make friends. Pupils have opportunities in class to work in pairs and in groups. The extra-curricular activities extend these opportunities into the holidays in the form of summer schools, visits to France and activity weeks. Citizenship has been developed effectively in the school curriculum and the active School Council provides the opportunity for pupils to learn about and take part in the democratic process. When there are opportunities in school for pupils to become monitors, they are asked to apply formally with a letter of application to give them an understanding of the process of applying for work.
- 44 The school's provision for cultural development is satisfactory. In terms of the provision for learning about local and national culture the provision is good with the commitment to performing arts making a very important contribution. Music, photography, singing and links with the Opera North Project are also part of this provision. However, there was limited evidence of multi-cultural provision in the school. Some work is done in religious education

in relation to faiths other than Christianity but there were no examples of this during the inspection and the 'Thought for the Day' programme does not develop this aspect. The music room has on display fabrics and instruments from other cultures but this is the limit of the evidence. Pupils need to be made more aware of the contribution of non-European cultures to history and to themselves as they have limited experience of children or adults from other cultural or ethnic backgrounds. They could be better prepared for the multi-cultural society in which they will live.

- 45 There are satisfactory links with the community with pupils providing direct support, for example, through the distribution of Christmas hampers. The community also contributes to learning through volunteers supporting reading in school and Newcastle United Football Club supporting football coaching in school. The local environment is also used for field visits in religious education, geography and history.
- 46 The school has good links with other schools. There are strong links with the first schools and high schools in the local pyramid. Curriculum leaders attend local subject meetings with other schools. This is helpful in supporting the work of different departments and in ensuring that pupils' learning builds effectively on their work in the first schools and that pupils are prepared well for their studies in Year 9 at high school. The modern foreign languages department has particularly good links to the Languages College and is currently developing a video conferencing link to further enhance pupils' learning.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 47 The school has good procedures for child protection, health and safety and the welfare of pupils. Parents with children with a broad range of abilities are pleased with the way the school cares for their children. The pastoral system is well established. The staff know pupils very well and the pastoral care of pupils is of a high standard. Senior managers have overall responsibility for pastoral care while the class teachers have day to day responsibility for pupils in their class. This works well and everyone knows the arrangements. The head of pastoral care in her role of 'mentor manager' works closely with the co-ordinator for special educational needs who is also the learning mentor, to ensure that pupils who need help and support receive it. Parents are also able to ask for help for their child from the learning mentor. The school operates a 'drop in system' for pupils who wish to consult the school nurse. This service is well used and appreciated by pupils.
- 48 The procedures for health and safety are satisfactory. First aid procedures are very good and incidents seen during the inspection were dealt with efficiently with a high level of care and consideration. The headteacher has responsibility for child protection and the appropriate procedures are in place. Overall the school is a safe environment with appropriate fencing installed around the school and a car park away from the areas that pupils use.
- 49 Procedures for the educational and personal support of pupils are very good. The work of the learning mentor is very important in this respect. Pupils who are gifted or talented have been identified and teachers are beginning to take account of their needs in lesson planning.

Good use is made of the individual education plans drawn up to support pupils with special educational needs. The work of the School Council is important in caring for pupils because it is able to develop initiatives in response to need; for example the 'buddy' system providing playground support. The size of the school also makes it possible for class teachers to support pupils effectively. The procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are also very good. The school has clear strategies to address these areas. The form teacher informs the learning mentor of concerns and she then takes action.

- 50 The school has high expectations of acceptable behaviour and this is identified in the behaviour policy. Procedures to monitor and promote good behaviour are good. The school has sanctions that it uses when necessary. These include exclusion but this is rarely used. There have not been any permanent exclusions in recent years and no fixed term exclusions in the last year. Pupils at Wellfield Middle School care about each other and behave well. The personal, social and health education programme addresses the topic of bullying in school effectively and an Anti-Bullying Policy identifies the procedures for monitoring and dealing with oppressive behaviour.
- 51 Procedures for monitoring the pupils' academic performance and personal development are very good. All statutory requirements are met in relation to assessment at the end of Year 6. Good progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. On entry to the school pupils' performance in English, mathematics, information and communication technology and science are assessed and compared to the data provided by the first schools to give a clear indication of every pupils' achievement to date. This is used to accurately measure their performance and to set individual longer term pupil targets in these curriculum areas. A new database is being used to record this information and to make it available to teaching staff. This is very effective and pupils and parents know what needs to be achieved in order for progress to take place. This information is attached to pupils' books.
- 52 However, current procedures for assessing pupils' day to day attainment and progress and for using this assessment in planning work that will move each pupil's learning forward is only satisfactory. It is better in some subjects than in others. It is good in English but inconsistent in mathematics. There is no clear whole school policy to develop and guide marking and the regular assessment that takes place. Marking does not consistently identify what pupils know and can do and how they can improve. Only limited progress has been made in this area since the last inspection. Pupils are aware of their longer term targets but are not clear about what needs to be done from lesson to lesson to achieve those targets.
- 53 Each term parents receive a flyer from the mathematics department informing them of how they can help their child to achieve the targets set by the school. Annual reports to parents are informative and advise parents as to how their child's work can be improved. However, last summer there was little opportunity for parents to consult with teachers following the receipt of the report. Parents have voiced their concerns about this.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 54 Parents are happy with most aspects of the school's work, and many make very good contributions to their children's learning at home and school. However, there are a few areas that they would like to see improved.
- 55 The great majority of parents are satisfied that their child likes school. Parents particularly like the way the school expects their child to work hard and achieve his or her best and they are satisfied that behaviour and teaching are good. Parents are least satisfied with the information they receive on how their child is getting on and feel that the school does not work closely enough with parents.
- 56 The quality of information provided for parents is satisfactory overall. The prospectus is clear about the attitudes and values that the school seeks to promote and provides a good outline of day to day procedures and school life generally. However, it does not contain all of the information that parents are entitled to receive. For instance, the parents are not informed of their right to withdraw their child from religious education should they wish. The planners that children are provided with to record their homework and achievements give parents very high quality information to extend that provided in the prospectus and to provide a means of communication between home and school. They also give parents details of homework set and study tips to share with their child. A very good feature of these planners is the inclusion of the Home-School Agreement which draws together the different responsibilities of the school, pupils and parents and serves as a daily reminder of expectations. During the inspection the planners were well used by pupils to record homework and a scrutiny of a sample indicated that parents and tutors monitor them well.
- 57 Annual written reports give parents a very good picture of how well their child is getting on and identify targets that can help parents to support their child's further progress. The school provides parents with an opportunity to meet teachers to discuss their child's progress at least once a year. However, the distribution of the written reports at the end of the last summer term meant that there was insufficient time for parents and staff to meet to discuss the contents. Consequently, some parents feel that they are not informed early enough in order to best support their children, especially if the report is the first indication they have that their child is not progressing as expected. Newsletters provide additional details about a wide range of school events and the school website and homepage give parents access to school policies and newsletters.
- 58 The school has a good range of links with parents to enable them to be actively involved in their child's education. Parents are expected to encourage their child to work hard, to support the school in encouraging a high standard of behaviour and to support school events and policies. Parents' involvement has a very good impact on the work of the school. They ensure that their child attends school regularly, is appropriately dressed in the required uniform and provided with equipment at the appropriate times, for instance swimming and physical education kits and cookery ingredients. Parents use the planners to check homework and inform the school in good time when their child is absent. A few parents help in school and by taking children to sporting events. There is a very active friends group that makes a very significant contribution to the life of the school. The Friends organise social events such as discos and fairs and raise substantial additional funds for extra activities

and resources. School events, such as open nights and school productions are very well supported by parents. The school seeks parents' views during information sessions on new developments and more informally through discussions with members of the friends group. However, the school does not seek parents' views formally. The school's Chartermark Award is an indication of its commitment to a strong partnership with parents through good working relationships and a regular review of provision.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 59 The headteacher has established a clear direction for the work of the school to continue to improve standards and the quality of education since the last inspection. As the leader of a team of senior managers, he has led by example to ensure that the Key Issues identified at the last inspection have been most effectively addressed. This is shown well by the marked improvement in standards and pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development. The development of this school has been affected by local education authority proposals for a possible change of status. However, the school is now planning appropriately for future development as a middle school. Since the last inspection the work of subject co-ordinators has improved significantly but further development is needed, particularly with respect to monitoring the work of the school even more closely and using the information gained to raise standards still further.
- 60 There is a good ethos in the school with a drive towards improving standards and an atmosphere that enables all pupils to learn in a positive and caring school society. The school's improvement plan is detailed and has had an impact on improving standards and the quality of education, for example, the significant improvements in the quality of teaching. The plan reflects the aims of the school and is seen as an effective tool for school improvement.
- 61 The school's aims are clearly reflected in its daily work. The very good relationships and behaviour of pupils, their concentration and hard work and their care for one another all positively enhance their learning and the standards they achieve.
- 62 The senior managers and the governors share a commitment to develop Wellfield Middle School into an even more effective school. The school has the capacity not only to sustain the current improvement but to continue to improve the quality of education and the standards pupils attain.
- 63 The governing body effectively carries out its role. Governors are committed to their work. There is an effective committee structure, which enables the governing body to work efficiently.
- 64 Governors have begun to monitor the work of the school and are beginning to have a clear picture of the school's strengths and weaknesses. For example, governors with a responsibility for literacy and numeracy have visited the school and observed the work in classrooms. They are well informed by managers and are beginning to set challenging priorities for the future development of the school. They are involved in producing the

- school's improvement plan and have established a secure process for linking the plan with setting the school's budget. Although the budget shows a significant under-spend this year, payment for recent significant improvements to the building and grounds will account for most of this. The governors plan to increase spending on learning resources with any remaining balance.
- 65 Recent national assessment information has been evaluated in depth to measure the overall effectiveness of the school in meeting the needs of all pupils. The headteacher also compares the school's effectiveness with the data available for similar schools, sharing this information with staff and governors. As a result of the very good relationships with first and high schools a wide range of additional assessment information is made available to staff. The information on pupil attainment at the end of Year 9 is particularly helpful in maintaining the high standards currently seen in Years 7 and 8.
- 66 Subject co-ordinators use the analysis of pupils' results in national assessments in English, mathematics and science to identify specific weaknesses in pupils' attainment across the whole range of the National Curriculum for these subjects.
- 67 The governors have established clear procedures for the performance management of staff and have set clear and challenging targets for the headteacher to achieve.
- 68 There are very effective and efficient systems of financial control. The good use of computer systems by support staff ensures that regular budgetary information is available for senior managers and governors so that they can monitor spending and ensure that agreed priorities are being met.
- 69 The governors are not yet fully applying the principles of best value. They do compare academic performance with other schools and set challenging targets. However, they do not regularly consult parents as to proposed development, nor compare the school's financial performance with that of similar schools. All spending is carefully considered and targeted through the school's improvement plan which is produced through consultation with the senior managers. Recent developments such as building improvements have been fully costed. Governors seek to ensure good value for money in its purchases. As a result of the progress pupils are making to attain improving standards, the good quality teaching and the effective use of resources the school gives satisfactory value for money.
- 70 There are sufficient well-qualified and experienced teachers to deliver the curriculum except in religious education. Both teachers and classroom support assistants effectively support pupils with special educational needs, to make satisfactory progress. There is a learning mentor who supports any pupil who may have a personal or educational difficulty and this provides very good support to these pupils. Pupils with English as an additional language are well supported by specialist teachers as well as their normal subject teachers.
- 71 The school building provides a good range of accommodation. There are sufficient classrooms but the school hall is very small and cannot accommodate the whole school for assemblies. The hall is also used for indoor physical education and performing arts. The building is in good decorative order and the recent corridor improvements have improved

the learning environment still further. The cleaning staff are very effective and the school provides a welcoming environment for pupils to learn and play. The school environment is further enhanced by a wide range of well presented displays of pupils' work, which celebrate their achievements. There are safe outdoor play areas and playgrounds are well marked out and equipped for play. There is a range of seating available for pupils wishing to sit and talk rather than play active games. The school grounds provide grassed areas for play, football pitches and an environmental area.

- 72 Generally there are sufficient resources for learning although the range of reference books in the library is limited and resources for French and geography are in need of review and replacement.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

- 73 In order to continue the development of the school and to raise standards still further governors and senior managers should:

- (1) Ensure that:
 - i) the marking of pupils' work is consistent across the school;
 - ii) teachers use assessment information to plan work for pupils to promote higher standards.
[24, 30, 52, 93, 100, 103, 110, 114, 124, 134, 167]
- (2) Improve the provision for pupils' spiritual development by:
 - i) ensuring that teachers identify and use every opportunity to enhance pupils' spiritual development within their subjects by promoting consideration and understanding of fundamental questions.
[31, 41, 92, 102]
 - ii) ensuring that assemblies have opportunities for spiritual experience and learning. [41]

- 74 In addition senior managers and governors may wish to address these areas of relative weakness in the school.

- (1) Ensuring the continuous development of pupils' practical skills in design and technology. [5, 8, 32, 39, 112]
- (2) Improving the teaching of religious education so that pupils attain standards similar to those found in the other subjects in the school. [7, 70, 163, 165]
- (3) Increasing opportunities for pupils' multi-cultural learning. [44]

The numbers in brackets relate to the main paragraphs of this report where these issues are mentioned.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	86
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	36

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	4	15	37	29	1	0	0
Percentage	5	17	43	34	1	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	322
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	11

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	5
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	38

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	4

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	13
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.6
National comparative data	6.3

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
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 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	41	34	75

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	39	37	41
	Girls	31	32	34
	Total	70	69	75
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	93 (90)	92 (87)	100 (96)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	29	34	38
	Girls	26	28	33
	Total	55	62	71
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (74)	81 (79)	92 (94)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	317	2	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	2	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	1	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5 – Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	21

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	53.5

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	26
Key Stage 3	27

Financial year	2001
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	£
Total income	650,866
Total expenditure	624,526
Expenditure per pupil	1,989
Balance brought forward from previous year	76,773
Balance carried forward to next year	103,133

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	322
Number of questionnaires returned	173

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	37	58	3	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	32	54	7	1	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	31	62	2	1	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	18	57	18	3	4
The teaching is good.	34	58	1	0	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	12	49	25	8	7
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	40	44	10	4	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	44	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	16	47	25	4	8
The school is well led and managed.	34	55	2	3	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	38	50	4	1	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	23	47	12	4	13

Other issues raised by parents

A number of parents expressed concern over the late issue of the annual reports on pupil progress which limited their opportunity for discussion of the contents with teachers.

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

ENGLISH

Overall, the quality of provision in English is **very good**.

Strengths

- Very high standards of attainment in all years.
- The standard of reading, especially reading aloud.
- The quality of teaching.
- The high standards achieved by able pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Sharing best practice within the department.

- 75 The standards achieved by pupils in national tests at the end of Year 6 are high. In 2001, 89% of pupils achieved the benchmark Level 4 or above and 36% achieved Level 5. In 2002, test results improved still further, with 93% achieving Level 4 or above and 39% achieving Level 5. These results are well above the national average and better than results achieved by similar schools. There has been a steady improvement in standards since the last inspection.
- 76 The high quality of pupils' work in English is maintained in Years 7 and 8. The most able pupils in Year 8 have a mature vocabulary and write with an impressive sense of style. For example, a homework task in which pupils had been asked to write a dream sequence based on the novel they were studying produced work of a very high standard. Many pupils in this higher ability set showed the ability to use stylistic devices and descriptive language to create an atmosphere and engage the reader.
- 77 Written work in all years is almost always neat and well presented. Most pupils have good handwriting. The standard of spelling, punctuation and grammar is generally high. Pupils are able to use a variety of methods to develop and improve their work, brainstorming, making notes, discussing ideas with each other, drafting and re-drafting, before producing a finished piece of work.
- 78 Pupils in all years are confident readers. They are able to analyse texts of different kinds and explore the ways in which writers use language to create particular effects. They are able to identify features of grammar and style, using correct linguistic terms to describe them. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils looked closely at an extract from a novel and picked out words and phrases which they thought were particularly effective, explaining why they thought so and, at the end of the lesson, summarising the different ways in which the author had used language to create atmosphere. In a Year 5 lesson, pupils were able to discuss the ways in which Roald Dahl creates characters and then use the same techniques to invent their own character for a Roald Dahl story.

- 79 Many pupils show an unusually high degree of confidence and skill in reading aloud. They read fluently and, in many cases, expressively, understanding the need to vary pace, tone and volume in order to engage the listener's attention. There are frequent opportunities for pupils to practise these skills, both in lessons in other subjects and through the work of the performing arts team out of school hours. Speaking and listening skills are generally very good. Pupils are able to engage in discussion, offering their own views and listening attentively when others are speaking.
- 80 The standard of attainment of pupils on entry to the school is generally above average. Pupils make good progress in all years, responding well to the demands which are made on them and achieving standards which are well above average by the time they leave the school. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress as a result of well targeted and carefully planned support. There are no significant differences in the standards achieved by boys and girls or by other groups of pupils, such as those for whom English is not their first language. The progress of all pupils is regularly assessed and carefully monitored.
- 81 The quality of teaching is good. None of the lessons observed during the inspection was less than satisfactory and several were very good or excellent. Lessons are planned very thoroughly within a common framework which all teachers follow. Teachers always explain to pupils what the purpose of the lesson is and what they are expected to achieve. Whole class teaching and effective questioning techniques ensure that all pupils are fully engaged and appropriately challenged. In a Year 5 lesson on heroes and villains in literature, the teacher used questions very skilfully to encourage pupils to think for themselves rather than simply accept what they were told. She was rarely content with the first answer which pupils gave but asked them to explain in more detail what they meant and invited other pupils to offer their views. In a Year 8 lesson on the techniques used by writers to create an emotional effect, able pupils were challenged by questioning which used mature vocabulary and demanded a high level of concentration.
- 82 Homework is set regularly and forms an integral part of teachers' lesson planning, ensuring that homework tasks are interesting and relevant. Pupils' written work is regularly marked, with helpful and supportive comments which show pupils how they can improve the standard of their work.
- 83 Behaviour in lessons is excellent. Pupils work hard and respond very well to the high expectations which teachers have of them. There were very few instances of lack of concentration in the lessons observed during the inspection. In one case, the teacher had not explained clearly enough what pupils were expected to do. In another, the lesson lacked sufficient pace and variety to hold pupils' attention.
- 84 Resources of all kinds, including computers, are well used to support and enrich pupils' learning. However, the library is based in a classroom and is therefore not accessible during lesson times. The subject makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development, which is further enhanced by the opportunities provided by the performing arts team. Pupils' first-hand experience of the diverse range of cultural influences within contemporary

society and of the role of writers in this could be extended by providing more opportunities for pupils to meet and work with visiting authors.

- 85 There have been significant improvements in most aspects of the work of the English department since the last inspection. Pupils in Year 8 are well prepared for their move to high school and information from the high schools shows that pupils attain high standards at the end of Year 9.

MATHEMATICS

Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards are well above national average.
- Pupils make good progress throughout their time at the school.
- Teaching is good in all years.
- Pupils have very positive attitudes to learning.

Areas for improvement

- Increased use of information and communication technology within the maths curriculum.
- Marking needs to be more consistently used to support pupils' learning.

- 86 By the time pupils leave school at the end of Year 8 their attainments are well above the average compared with other schools. At the end of Year 6 the results of standardised national tests show that pupils are achieving well above the national average and the average for similar schools. Over the last three years national test results in mathematics have improved at a higher rate than in other similar schools nationally.

- 87 There is no significant difference in the attainments of boys and girls. Although the range of ability on entry to the school is generally higher than average, less able pupils achieve well, as do those with English as an additional language. More able pupils attain very high standards. Since the last inspection standards in mathematics are significantly higher.

- 88 By the end of Year 6 pupils make good progress in their learning. Nearly all are able to make mental calculations using all four number operations when given number problems to solve and can use fractions and percentages and apply them to real life situations. Most pupils know the properties of various regular shapes and can calculate area and perimeter using a formula. They are also able to order data of various kinds, for instance shoe sizes of class members, then present and interpret the data in the form of charts and graphs.

- 89 By Year 8 they have made further good progress and built on their mathematical abilities from previous years. By this stage the great majority of pupils are developing an understanding of algebra and the ability to apply this to various number problems. Most have an increasing understanding of geometry and can, for instance, use compasses and rulers accurately to bisect angles and lines. They know the properties of quadrilateral shapes and can work out problems involving polygons and intersecting and parallel lines.

For most pupils, their understanding and use of mathematical language and vocabulary is well advanced and higher attaining pupils can explain accurately complex mathematical ideas.

- 90 Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good. Pupils of all abilities show very high levels of concentration and tackle their work willingly and with interest. When asked to, they work together on various mathematical tasks very productively. For example, a Year 7 class suggested that by working in pairs they would be better able to collect data for frequency charts. They consequently worked more quickly and achieved more by the end of the lesson. Through activities like this, they show good appreciation for the achievements and efforts of others. They also work well independently and show good initiative in their responses to learning challenges. They show a good knowledge of the application of charts and graphs in other settings such as hospitals, industry and commerce. Undoubtedly, their high level of motivation makes a strong contribution to their levels of achievement while at school.
- 91 Teaching is good. In Years 5 and 6 it was good or better in approximately half the lessons seen. In Years 7 and 8 about two thirds of teaching was good or better. In the best lessons, where teaching is exemplary, it has a very significant impact on pupils' achievements. There is a very strong emphasis, in better lessons, on the development of mental skills, mathematical language and thinking and the use of a range of strategies for problem-solving. Questioning is used within lessons to challenge and extend pupils' learning. A strong feature of good teaching is that the needs of the more able and less able are met equally well. In the lessons seen where teaching was satisfactory, there were fewer opportunities for pupils to work independently and the pace of learning was less brisk. In a small number of lessons, teachers sometimes miss opportunities to challenge pupils, particularly the more able. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on using bar charts pupils quickly completed this task and then waited for the others to finish before moving on. In all lessons, at the time of the inspection, there was insufficient use made of computers to support the mathematics curriculum. However, this is an area currently being developed and planned for within the school.
- 92 Mathematics teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development, through the opportunities for collaborative work and the very positive relationships within the class. However, because there are very few opportunities provided for pupils to reflect on the importance and nature of mathematics or to consider the impact of other cultures on mathematics, it makes a very limited contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
- 93 Leadership and management of the mathematics department are very good. This is due partly to the very good partnership between the head of mathematics and the numeracy co-ordinator. They work well as a team and share the same strong commitment to the subject. There is now, as a consequence, a very clear educational direction for mathematics based on the management of both the National Numeracy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 Strategy. These national initiatives have been carefully introduced into the school and further developed through a structured programme of monitoring planning and teaching. As a result

of the monitoring of the plenary sessions in lessons there has been significant improvement in the way in which they are now used. There has also been very good use made of various performance data to analyse teaching and learning and to inform teachers' planning. However, an area of weakness that remains is the inconsistent use of marking to ensure that pupils understand how to improve their work from lesson to lesson. Overall, leadership and management have clearly had a very strong impact on the improvement in standards in mathematics over the last four years.

- 94 Resources have also improved in the last four years and are now at a satisfactory level. However, in order to improve current standards even further, greater investment is needed to improve information and communication technology resources for all pupils and to ensure that there are sufficient specialist resources for pupils with special educational needs.
- 95 There has been good improvement in this subject against the issues identified in the previous inspection. There are now many opportunities for pupils to apply their mathematical understanding to real-life situations and to develop their thinking and problem-solving skills within the mathematics curriculum. Also, the degree of challenge for older pupils has been improved and this is resulting in an improvement in standards when pupils leave school.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- The improving trend and above average test results.
- The improved teaching and learning.
- The very good behaviour of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- The use of teachers who are not qualified in science.
- The use of rooms not suitable for teaching science.
- The teachers' comments on homework to help pupils improve their standards.

- 96 Overall standards in science are above average. Results in the National Curriculum tests for 11-year-old pupils were close to the national average at the time of the previous report and have improved since then, with the exception of the year 2000 when they were below. In 2001 the number of pupils gaining the benchmark Level 4 or better improved and was about 10% higher than the national average, though the proportion gaining a Level 5 was closer to the average. In 2002 all pupils gained a Level 4 or better with two thirds gaining a Level 5 or above. The proportion gaining a Level 5 almost doubled and is close to twice the national average. There is no long-term difference between the performance of boys and girls.
- 97 Standards of work seen for 11-year-olds are above what might be expected from pupils of this age nationally. They plan and carry out practical work to test their hypotheses on a range of topics such as viscosity of liquids, thermal insulation and, at an early age, which

type of Bunsen burner flame produces the most heat. Higher attaining pupils draw diagrams of apparatus carefully. Most pupils understand the functions of some organs in the human body, how plants reproduce and why living creatures prefer certain habitats. All pupils use scientific terminology well but lower attaining pupils make more errors in spelling and diagrams are not always to an accurate scale.

- 98 Building on work done in earlier years, the standard of work seen for 13-year-olds is above average. Higher attaining pupils produce very neat, tidy work. Most pupils use a range of measuring instruments competently, do practical work safely and note results carefully. Graph-drawing skills are well developed and pupils choose appropriate scales, label axes with the correct units and draw lines to a good standard, although curved lines are sometimes a series of straight lines joining point to point. The concept of a 'fair test' is well understood. Pupils can name different forms of energy, understand how they are converted to other forms and can successfully calculate the amount of heat given to a known amount of water. The work of many pupils is of a similar above average standard but some lower attaining pupils show erratic spelling and a lack of understanding of energy transformations. Work sheets are used sensibly to structure lower attaining pupils' learning.
- 99 Overall, teaching is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen and almost six in every ten were good or better. Good teaching was brisk and interesting with well-planned activities. In such lessons, pupils enjoyed their science, particularly when they did practical work. They learned effectively and could express their own ideas clearly. Because pupils' behaviour is good, teachers do not waste time maintaining discipline and lessons are productive as a result. Pupils make good progress through the school as a result of the good teaching they receive. However, more than one third of science lessons are by non-specialist teachers in ordinary classrooms. Pupils' progress in these lessons is maintained only by a careful selection of activities. All lessons are planned by the head of department to ensure consistency and overcome difficulties faced by non-specialist teachers. Because there is inadequate technician support, it is difficult to arrange demonstrations in classrooms to add variety to lessons and stimulate curiosity. As a result of these factors, classroom lessons are not as effective in promoting good progress as those in the laboratory.
- 100 All pupils' work seen had been marked. However, the lengthy comments, although praising and supportive, gave little indication of how pupils could improve their standards. On occasions, unfinished or inadequate work had not been rectified so pupils' learning was not fully effective. Similarly, incorrect spellings were indicated but there is no system to ensure that the correct spellings are learned. Examples of individually researched projects were seen but the school library has limited stock and is unavailable during the school day for class research projects on topics such as, The Solar System.
- 101 Pupils with special educational needs make progress at the same rate as other pupils, in some cases because teachers devote extra time to help them understand and keep up with the work. The work of pupils who are identified as being gifted and talented showed that they made good progress. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.

- 102 The department makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social education. It gives opportunities for cooperative work in practical lessons and pupils learn to share ideas and divide tasks between themselves by discussion. The constant attention to safe working by teachers is a good example of the morality of caring for others. There was little evidence of the 'big questions' in science contributing to pupils' spiritual development. Nor was there evidence of the impact of scientists from other cultures on the development of scientific understanding.
- 103 Improvement since the previous inspection is good. Test results and overall standards have improved from close to average to their present high levels. The quality of teaching and learning has also improved. The department now has new computers and equipment which can be used in the laboratory to log data, word process work or be used as a research tool. Pupils' work is assessed regularly, progress monitored against targets and pupils set their own targets for improvement. However, teachers' marking of pupils' work does not always show them how to improve. The continuing lack of qualified technical support hinders progress, particularly in Years 7 and 8. Teachers spend time on necessary but routine maintenance and preparation which limits the time available to plan new experiences, for instance computer work or extra-curricular activities, or to develop new demonstrations or experiments.
- 104 Leadership and management of the department are good. Standards are improving. There is a well-organised scheme of work and lessons are planned on a weekly basis by the head of department for use by the non-specialist teachers. Similarly, there are frequent carefully planned room changes to alleviate the difficulties caused by teaching in non-specialist rooms and to allow practical work to be done at the appropriate place in the programme of study. The laboratory has colourful displays of pupils' work and useful lists of Key Words and material to match work in progress at the time.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Art and design makes a good contribution to pupils' cultural development.
- The development of pupils' literacy skills is well promoted within the subject.
- The effective use of the specialist art and design room.

Areas for improvement

- The use of information and communication technology in pupils' work.
- The development of pupils' practical and critical skills.
- Marking and assessment procedures to help pupils understand how to improve.
- Extending pupils' experiences through visits and visitors.

- 105 Standards of attainment in art and design are typical of those found nationally at the end of Year 6 and at the end of Year 8. They remain the same as they were at the time of the previous inspection. The range of work in art and design covers the requirements of the

National Curriculum programme of study, with the exception of the use of information and communication technology. Although computers are available and schemes of work for art and design plan their use, there is no suitable software to extend the range of media available so as to develop pupils' creative skills. The computers are not yet linked to the internet, and therefore pupils are not able to develop their research skills in lessons.

- 106 Most pupils in Year 5 understand visual and tactile elements such as tone, colour, line, texture and shape. They were able to use these elements satisfactorily in a practical way when composing a still life arrangement. However they lack confidence in their ability to draw what they see, and asked the teacher if it was going to be hard, when they were required to sketch part of their still life. Many pupils find it difficult to work within the constraints set for their task, for example selecting no more than five or six objects, or drawing only what they see within the viewfinder. Pupils in Year 6 practise and improve their drawing skills, for example, working on facial expressions, body movement and proportion. They build on what they have learned, when representing the human form in a three-dimensional way. In one lesson observed pupils used wire mesh to create a supporting armature for their models. They persevered well despite difficulties presented by the material, because they enjoy the 'making' aspect of their tasks. In Year 7 pupils explore more abstract themes such as symbolism, producing collages which reflect their own personalities. In tasks such as these pupils lack the skills to continually evaluate their work in order to adapt and improve, or to judge the appropriate point to stop. Pupils extend landscapes using small pictures as starting points and achieve success in continuing the shapes of the environmental features. However, they do less well in mixing paints to match the existing colours. Pupils in Year 8 produce some striking and interesting work based on Aboriginal art, recreating rock paintings and using natural images in repeating prints on fabric. All pupils have sketchbooks but they are not used sufficiently for pupils to practise and experiment, in order to improve drawing or colour mixing skills.
- 107 Opportunities which contribute well to pupils' cultural development are built into each unit of work. For example, each year group learns about the work of famous artists, designers and crafts people from Britain and Western Europe, as well as from different cultures such as Aboriginal, African and Islamic. Pupils' spiritual awareness and literacy skills are also developed well, when they respond to the images they have seen or created, expressing their feelings in verbal or written form.
- 108 The progress pupils make in their art and design lessons and over the longer term is satisfactory in most aspects of the subject. Pupils would make better progress and subsequently attain higher standards if their basic skills in drawing and painting and in evaluating and refining their work, were developed further.
- 109 Pupils' attitudes to art and design are satisfactory overall. Pupils say they enjoy lessons in art and design; and their attitudes and behaviour during the practical parts of lessons are good. They work cheerfully and with interest. However, they do less well when they are required to listen during introductions and plenaries, often fidgeting or being inattentive.

- 110 The quality of teaching is satisfactory with some good features. The specialist teacher who teaches all pupils has a good subject knowledge. This has enabled her to develop an interesting scheme of work to motivate pupils and to help them to acquire new skills and knowledge. Her thorough planning ensures that each lesson develops sequentially and at a good pace. The teacher's demonstrations of new techniques have a positive impact on pupils' learning, as does her use of subject specific vocabulary. She is very positive in her relationships with pupils and supportive of pupils who have special educational needs. The marking of pupils' work is always very positive, but does not always include advice on how pupils might improve their work. At the end of each unit of work, the teacher involves pupils in assessing how they have done, but this assessment is not sufficiently linked to the levels of attainment associated with the National Curriculum.
- 111 The subject is managed satisfactorily and resources are sufficient to meet the needs of the National Curriculum, with the exception of the information and communication technology element, where resources are inadequate. There is an extensive range of reference books from which to draw information and examples of work by famous artists. There is a large storeroom, but attention needs to be given to its organisation and accessibility. As a result of a very recent refurbishment programme there were few displays of pupils' artwork around the school at the time of the inspection. Displays in the art and design room feature too heavily the work of famous artists, instructional notices and shabby posters and does not celebrate sufficiently current work by pupils. Pupils are rarely given the opportunity to visit art galleries or to work with professional artists, both of which would help to extend the range of pupils' experience in art and design and provide new challenges.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory and improving**.

Strengths

- Very positive pupils who are keen to work hard.
- Practical approaches to processes of problem-solving, design, making and evaluating.
- The teaching of making skills.
- Teachers' effective planning.
- The capacity to continue to improve.

Areas for improvement

- The continuity of the learning of making skills for pupils in Year 5 and 6.
- Marking of pupils' work and the use of the assessment information gained.
- The use of information and communication technology to enhance design.

- 112 Overall, pupils attain standards by the end of Years 6 and 8 that are typical of those found nationally. Pupils show a good grasp of the design process frequently demonstrating imaginative ideas from which they select their final product, which is made to a good quality, and then its effectiveness evaluated. Generally boys and girls of all abilities and backgrounds are making at least satisfactory progress in the overall approach to design and technology as they move through the school. By the end of Year 8 making skills are satisfactory overall,

with some more able pupils showing the skill levels to produce very good quality products. However, the range of making skills that pupils in Year 6 demonstrate is too limited because curriculum organisation for some pupils limits their access to activities in ‘resistant materials’ and ‘food’ and ‘textiles’ to one or the other. This reduces the progress pupils make and results in only satisfactory standards in making skills by the end of Year 8.

- 113 Overall the quality of teaching is satisfactory. There are some good features, which are present in all lessons. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and have good levels of personal skills in the subject. This enables them to support pupils’ learning well. Lessons are effectively planned so that pupils’ progress is effectively promoted. However, in a significant number of lessons seen the pace of learning was slower than it might have been. Too frequently pupils are given over-generous amounts of time to complete the tasks they are set. This is more often the case at the design stage of the process than at the making stage. For example, half of the pupils in a class completed a cooking task from ingredients to completed cakes within the 55-minute lesson whilst the other half produced some limited theory and design work. Pupils clearly respond well to their lessons showing good levels of interest and concentration. They are able to work well independently as well as in pairs and small groups as the need arises but too often topics have a narrow design brief and allow little opportunity for pupils to show sufficient independence in their designs.
- 114 Overall, there has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection although weaknesses remain in the marking of pupils’ work which identifies their successes but does not inform pupils how they might improve their designs or products.
- 115 Pupils are prepared well in many respects for their move to high school with a thorough understanding of the design process which enables them to progress rapidly in Year 9 to attain above average standards at the end of that year.
- 116 The accommodation for design and technology is good with a materials workshop and a food/textiles room both used for all year groups. The accommodation clearly enhances pupils learning opportunities especially for pupils in Years 5 and 6. Resourcing is barely adequate and without the generous support of parents providing some materials the amount and quality of the pupils’ work would be much lower. Although there are computers available within the design and technology area the level of use is low and this is detracting from the overall progress pupils make.

GEOGRAPHY

Overall, the quality of provision in geography is **good**.

Strengths

- Challenging teaching for older pupils.
- Imaginative curricular provision, including the use of information and communication technology.
- Pupils’ enthusiastic responses.

Areas for improvement

- More consistency in marking in Years 5 and 6.
- Book resources.

- 117 Standards in geography are in line with those typically found nationally by the end of Year 6, and significantly above by the end of Year 8, the latter being a product of highly motivational and challenging teaching.
- 118 By age 11, pupils' written and oral work is generally satisfactory by national standards but, because the teaching is heavily fact-laden, the pupils have not been sufficiently challenged to move beyond the factual basis of geography to explore ideas and draw conclusions. For example, in Year 5 lesson on water supply the very interested pupils were not able to explore the impact of a lack of water supply on people in Kenya.
- 119 By age 13, pupils' written and oral work is significantly above national expectations. Pupils are seen to be making sophisticated deductions and making connections between various aspects of their work, and they have high levels of knowledge in both physical and human geography. They understand the inter-relationship between the physical and human, and this is exemplified by their high quality work related to local coastal weathering and erosion and its impact on leisure and tourism. They also make good use of information and communication technology, including using internet resources. They also have considerable strengths in making field sketches.
- 120 Achievement is consistently satisfactory in Years 5 and 6 because pupils are systematically building up their knowledge base for geography and their written work improves over time. Achievement in Years 7 and 8 is still better, being consistently at least good. This is because pupils are developing their geographical skills and bringing outside sources and experience to inform the process.
- 121 The high levels of achievement identified at the school are confirmed by end of Year 9 data from the high schools which confirms that many pupils secure very high attainment levels in geography.
- 122 Teaching is very good in Years 7 and 8 and consistently satisfactory or better in Years 5 and 6. In Years 5 and 6 much of it is largely knowledge-based and the skills dimension of geography is insufficiently explored. By contrast in Years 7 and 8 the challenge for pupils is high, reflected in the teachers' expectation and encouragement. The teachers' subject knowledge is extensive, of a high calibre and used well to develop pupils' skills. Planning is good. There is plenty of individual support for pupils. Reviews of learning within lessons are a strong feature, therefore making informal assessment very effective.
- 123 The curriculum is a strength in Years 7 and 8 because it does have a strong foundation in skills development. The provision for physical geography is particularly strong, with local and regional sites, such as the local coastline and Scarborough, being well-used. Information and communication technology is a strong feature of the curriculum in geography with information retrieval being a key element. The sensitive study of the outcomes of international tragedies, such as the Rwandan earthquake, is a valuable spiritual contribution

to learning, and the study of Brazil provides a cultural dimension. The manner in which coastal weathering is studied in relation to the attitudes and expectations of the local community is a valuable exercise in political literacy and, therefore, citizenship.

- 124 Assessment and marking are a strength in Years 7 and 8. However, in Years 5 and 6 it is inconsistent. This is related to previous instability in the availability of teaching personnel. This weakness can now be addressed in the present period of staffing stability.
- 125 Leadership in geography is good because there is good awareness of the present-day issues arising from the national Key Stage 3 Strategy. However, the differences in standards of older and younger pupils means that the management of geography needs to be strengthened by more effective monitoring and evaluation. There are inadequate levels of books for the subject even though significant levels of funding have been directed to geography since the last inspection.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **good**.

Strengths

- Thoughtful teaching which challenges pupils.
- Imaginative curricular provision.
- Pupils' enthusiastic responses.

Areas for improvement

- Marking.
- Use of National Curriculum levels and target-setting in assessment.
- Use of assessment information for future planning.

- 126 Standards in history are above national averages because the pupils respond very enthusiastically to challenging teaching.
- 127 By age 11, most pupils' written and oral work is above national averages, with particular strengths in deductive thinking where they use historical information well to create extended conclusions, in such work as the analysis of census data.
- 128 By age 13, pupils' written and oral work continues to be above national averages, with many boys and girls making sophisticated deductions from very challenging evidence such as messages given out by posture in photographs of important historical figures and in the art of providing context for portrait paintings.
- 129 Achievement is consistently good because pupils respond very positively to the challenges provided by the teachers. Their motivation is enhanced by the way teachers involve all pupils, including those with special educational needs, in learning which both enables them to participate fully and yet also enables many pupils to reach high levels of attainment. For example, when Year 7 pupils using role play explored how medieval monarchs kept control.

- 130 Teaching is good. In lessons seen it was always good and sometimes very good. It is based on teachers' good subject knowledge and good planning but this is accompanied by challenges which draw pupils of all abilities; by a strong sense of pace, which is frequently accelerated by pupils' enthusiasm; by individual support; and by regular checks of what pupils know and can do. Whilst teachers are good at assessing what pupils have learned in a particular lesson, assessment and marking generally are areas for development. Formal assessment of pupils' work does not relate to National Curriculum levels and does not identify sufficiently what strengths and weaknesses have been identified in the pupils' work or what they need to do to improve further.
- 131 The curriculum is a strength because it has a heavy emphasis on the development of pupils' skills, especially in the area of using primary evidence, such as photographs and paintings or census data. It also covers a broad range of topics and contexts. The study of the Indus Valley in Year 6 and of the Islamic Civilisation in Year 7 are important contributions to pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. Features of the methodology used in the history curriculum, such as the analysis of photographs and paintings, are important exercises in political literacy and, therefore, of citizenship.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching.
- Pupils' attitudes to learning, and their confidence when using information and communication technology.

Areas for improvement

- Consistency of assessment and marking.
- Use of information and communication technology to enhance teaching and learning in other subject areas.

- 132 Standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 are at least in line with national averages and are often better. All pupils are working at or near Level 4. They are able to enter data into a spreadsheet, add rows and columns and use simple formulae to calculate values. Year 6 pupils during the inspection were searching and identifying relevant links for work on the Indus Valley. By the end of Year 8 pupils are achieving national expectations, with many achieving beyond this. Almost all pupils were confident searching the internet for pictures and information to add to the *PowerPoint* presentations they were creating, while Year 8 pupils showed a range of skills when adding pages and creating hyper-links to their emerging web sites. Pupils are prepared well for their move to high school. Assessment information from the high schools indicates that pupils attain above average standards by the end of Year 9.

- 133 Overall the quality of teaching is good. The quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6 is at least satisfactory and often good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, lessons are well planned and support staff are well briefed to further develop pupils' learning. The quality of teaching within Years 7 and 8 is at least satisfactory with some very good teaching. Characteristics of good teaching include teachers' high expectations, clear explanations of lesson objectives and the use of praise to reward pupils for their efforts. Less effective teaching results from occasional long teacher-led introductions. The school has invested significantly in the provision of modern hardware and software. This has enabled pupils to become involved in web design and creation providing appropriate challenge for the more able pupils.
- 134 Pupils enjoy information and communication technology. They are confident users and are keen to learn. Significant numbers of pupils have access to information and communication technology at home, which contributes to the standards they achieve. The quality of learning is good. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and usually achieve the targets set for them. The more able pupils can work with greater independence and often help to support the learning of other pupils, either through paired work or being identified as information and communication technology monitors. There is no difference in the standards achieved by boys or girls. They often work together in small groups and use the appropriate technical language to support their learning. Pupils are aware of their levels of work against National Curriculum standards. Many can identify what they need to do to improve or develop their work. However, marking of their work is inconsistent and assessment procedures have not been fully developed. The school has recently invested in a published assessment system to improve the effectiveness of the assessment process.
- 135 The leadership and management of the department are good. There is a shared commitment to improve, and the co-ordinator sets a good example for other members of the department. The co-ordinator has plans to monitor the other teachers of the subject but this has not yet taken place. There is a well-prepared handbook available to staff within the department and the school is well informed about the national Key Stage 3 information and communication technology strategy.
- 136 The school has made effective use of money from the *National Grid for Learning* and is a member of the *Northern Grid – Regional Broadband Consortium*. There are appropriate policies in place including an *Internet Acceptable Use* agreement, which is signed by parents and pupils. Teachers had completed their New Opportunities-funded information and communication technology training but many of the teachers trained have since moved elsewhere. The school has sufficient computers but accommodation in the computer suite is cramped especially for older pupils.
- 137 There are significant information and communication technology developments planned for the near future including the introduction of an interactive white board into mathematics, and the use of video-conferencing within modern foreign languages. The use of information and communication technology in the other subjects of the curriculum is currently underdeveloped, although good practice exists in geography and history.

- 138 Progress since the last inspection has been good. There has been a significant investment into resources for information and communication technology. All pupils cover the nationally required programme of work in this subject although provision for control and monitoring/measuring is still weak. The improved provision and timetable changes have helped improve the standards achieved by pupils of all ages.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **good**.

Strengths

- Standards of attainment are frequently above those nationally expected.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The newly appointed head of modern languages is demonstrating very good leadership and management of the subject.
- Lesson planning is excellent.
- Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good and they have an enthusiasm to learn.

Areas for improvement

- The schemes of work and department handbook.
- Learning resources so that:
 - there is a textbook available for each pupil in Years 7 and 8,
 - there are more appropriate resources for lower attaining pupils,
 - there is a greater range of software to enable more effective use of information and communication technology to support learning.

- 139 Modern foreign languages is taught in Years 6, 7 and 8. Pupils in Year 6 have one timetabled lesson each week. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 have access to a starter course in German. One specialist teacher is responsible for teaching modern foreign languages.
- 140 Standards in French are improving and are now above average by the end of Year 8. In Year 6, pupils had only had five lessons of French at the time of the inspection but had made a positive and confident start. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. In the early weeks of the Year 8 course the higher attaining pupils are already performing at Level 4 of the National Curriculum. They are able to write at some length about their school in generally accurate French, although there are some errors in verb endings and adjectival agreement. They are able to write compound and complex sentences, stating and justifying preferences. Lower attaining pupils can write three or four linked sentences to describe themselves and their homes. Higher attaining pupils and those of average attainment are able to conduct brief conversations covering familiar topics such as their family and school. Pronunciation and accent are good. Lower attaining pupils can give brief responses in clear French to questions on similar topics. In a Year 7 French lesson, there was a very good example of pupils developing the ability to recognise and

correct their own errors of usage. Pupils in Year 8 had made a positive start to their study of German.

- 141 Pupils have very good attitudes to the subject. They work with obvious enthusiasm for language learning. They are keen to take part in learning activities and show high levels of concentration when given the opportunity to work on their own or in pairs. Although pupils show an accurate awareness of the National Curriculum levels at which they are working, they are not aware of what they need to do to move on to a higher level. The newly appointed head of modern languages has recognised this, and is in the process of instituting an assessment scheme which will involve pupils in evaluating their progress and setting targets for improvement.
- 142 The quality of teaching is very good. The teacher has excellent command of the languages taught and uses the 'target' language well as a model for the pupils. There is a rigorous focus on accurate pronunciation. In a Year 7 French lesson, choral repetition was used effectively to rectify pupils' errors. Lesson planning is excellent, with clear objectives for each lesson and targets set for pupils to achieve. Assessment is used well to focus on key aspects of language within lessons. The pace is varied to suit pupils' needs. In a Year 8 French lesson brisk questioning elicited a lively and confident response, with clear evidence of pupils' gains in vocabulary and effective use of the language by the end of the lesson. Teaching is conducted in a calm, assured manner which establishes very good working relationships in the classroom. Work in exercise books is closely corrected and there are some helpful comments to show pupils how to improve the accuracy of their written work this term.
- 143 The recently appointed head of modern languages, showing good management, has set herself an achievable set of priorities to make further improvements based on an accurate analysis of the needs of the department. The schemes of work are in need of review as references to the National Curriculum pre-date the revisions in 2000, and they do not accurately reflect the current provision for language in the school. Pupils who have shown themselves to be talented linguists have the opportunity to work with foreign language assistants through links with a local Language College, but there are limited opportunities for other pupils to make contact with native speakers.
- 144 There has been very good progress since the last inspection. The current head of department has the capacity to make even greater improvements. Pupils' motivation and attitudes are now very positive and standards have improved. Lesson planning is excellent and the quality of teaching is consistently at least good. Time for modern languages is now adequate but there is a need to improve resources. The limited number of textbooks in Years 7 and 8 restricts opportunities for homework and independent study. The textbook used in Year 8 is not appropriate for lower attaining pupils and there is scope for greater use of information and communication technology to support learning.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- High standards of attainment in all years.
- The positive attitude which pupils have to music making.
- A well planned curriculum.

Areas for improvement

- Providing more opportunities for singing in Years 7 and 8.
- Giving pupils more strategies for improving and extending their compositions.

- 145 Music is taught to all pupils in a specialist room by the well qualified head of department.
- 146 The standards attained by pupils by the end of Years 5 and 6 are above the national average. Pupils have a good knowledge of the elements of music. Nearly all understand the meaning of terms such as tempo, pitch and dynamics. They can identify these features in music which they listen to and use them when making music themselves. Most pupils sing well and have a good sense of rhythm. Pupils in a Year 5 class sang clearly and tunefully in two parts, confidently changing parts during the course of the song. The same class, listening to recordings they had made in the previous lesson, understood the difference between pulse and rhythm and were able to identify strengths and weaknesses in each others' performances. The recordings of pupils' work showed that most pupils were able to keep in time with a partner playing a short percussion piece; and some were able to create more complex rhythmic patterns.
- 147 These standards are maintained in Years 7 and 8, where pupils encounter a wider range of musical styles and attempt more demanding tasks in performance and composition. Year 7 pupils working on individual compositions were able to use percussion instruments and electronic keyboards to create different moods within a three-part structure. In a listening test, pupils in Year 8 were able to identify musical features in songs by Schubert, showing that they had remembered things learned in previous lessons and that they were able to apply this learning to music heard for the first time. The same pupils were also able to use electronic keyboards to perform a melody by Haydn in a modern style. They could also compose variations which, in some cases, were incorporated into well structured and confidently performed pieces.
- 148 Pupils generally make good progress from year to year. However, the strong start which is made in singing in Years 5 and 6 is not maintained in Years 7 and 8, where the curriculum is mainly focused on using musical instruments and introducing pupils to a wider range of musical styles. Some pupils are given the opportunity to sing in school productions and other extra-curricular activities but most older pupils are not given sufficient opportunity to sing in lessons. Pupils behave well in lessons and enjoy making music. They co-operate well in group activities, take care of musical instruments and listen sensitively to each other when performing.
- 149 The quality of teaching is good. Lessons are well planned and effectively organised. The aims of each lesson are made clear and pupils understand what is expected of them. The

tasks set are well matched to pupils' ages and abilities. There is a good balance between different kinds of activity. Over time, pupils experience a wide range of musical styles and cultural traditions. Lessons are mainly practical and pupils are given the opportunity to use a variety of instruments, including percussion instruments from different parts of the world such as Africa and Asia.

- 150 In lessons which focus on composition, the tasks set are planned to give pupils' opportunities to develop their own ideas. Pupils' skills in composition could be further developed by giving more time to activities which involve the whole class and which enable them to explore different approaches to composing. Pupils in a Year 7 class working in small groups on a composition task, had good ideas but were not always sure how to realise them. They would have benefited from more frequent opportunities to explore problems with the rest of the class and find alternative solutions.
- 151 There have been significant improvements since the last inspection. Standards of attainment are now higher in all years, and the quality and range of resources are now much better. All music lessons are taught in specialist accommodation. Music makes a valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. This is further enriched by opportunities to take part in school productions and other events outside school. There is a strong commitment to maintaining and improving this standard of provision by the head of music and her colleagues in the performing arts team.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **good**

Strengths

- Quality and consistency of teaching.
- Quality and range of extra-curricular activities available to pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Refining the current assessment process to make it more manageable.
- Improving the storage of and access to resources.

- 152 The subject has made good progress since the last inspection.
- 153 Standards by the end of Years 6 and 8 are now at least in line with those expected nationally for these year groups. Most pupils in Year 6 are achieving the benchmark Level 4 in all aspects of the physical education curriculum seen during the inspection. They are able, for example, to organise themselves into mixed groups for dance, to practise football-shooting skills in small groups and then to apply them to a game situation. This progress continues through to Year 8 where most pupils are working at Level 5, and some are achieving higher levels in some aspects of the physical education curriculum. Pupils identified as gifted or talented receive good support and encouragement to attain very high standards. Pupils engage in warm up and cool down activities with enthusiasm. They

respond well to video and music stimulations in gymnastics, and dance to produce fluent floor sequences.

- 154 The quality of teaching in both key stages is satisfactory or better. The specialist teachers have good subject knowledge and high expectations. Lessons are carefully planned to ensure that pupils of all abilities are able to achieve the objectives set at the start of the lesson. Teachers demonstrate more complex movements and skills clearly to ensure that pupils are able to practice them safely. Most lessons proceed at a good pace.
- 155 Teachers have a good knowledge of their pupils. They ensure that the needs of all pupils are met, especially those who have special educational needs. Pupils with hearing problems benefit from the use of video demonstrations and music to set the rhythm for warm up activities. All pupils have access to the full range of curriculum activities that are offered through lessons and the considerable number of extra-curricular activities offered. Many pupils have representative honours for the school and district in a range of sporting activities including boys' and girls' football, swimming and athletics.
- 156 Pupils make good progress. They enjoy their lessons and work hard to improve their skills in all aspects and meet the high expectations set by their teachers. They are encouraged to take responsibility, for example in refereeing their own football games. More able pupils support less able pupils in assessing their group work in dance. In aerobic sessions, pupils followed the movements in a *Tae Bo* video carefully, and then applied the activities to their own warm up sequences. Boys and girls both participated in football activities seen during the inspection. The boys participated in a small game with little intervention from the teacher while girls focussed on developing the skills of chip passes and shooting.
- 157 The subject co-ordinator provides good leadership, ensuring that detailed guidance and planning are available to teachers to ensure that a balanced programme of work for each class is achieved. Good links have been developed with other schools and the local education authority's subject adviser. There is a wide range of good quality extra-curricular opportunities offered by staff, including the school caretaker, further supported by visiting experts. There is a detailed assessment procedure in place; but this needs further refinement to make it a workable procedure and to ensure its adoption by all members of the department. There is some time identified for the subject co-ordinator to monitor the teaching of the subject but this is not yet being used systematically to identify priorities for further improvement in teaching.
- 158 Staffing has improved since the last inspection. There is now a smaller team which is currently appropriately qualified to teach the subject. There is, however, a need to ensure that they receive access to on-going training and support to maintain the current high standards. Learning resources are appropriate. Some new equipment has been purchased but there is still a need to replace the older gym equipment in the hall. Outside facilities are generally good but overall storage space is unsatisfactory. It is limited, and some resources are inaccessible and some are inappropriately sited.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Interested and well motivated pupils.
- Good use of appropriate religious language by pupils.
- Good provision for pupils with special educational needs.
- Pupils' good progress in oral work
- Good classroom resources.

Areas for improvement

- Teachers' knowledge and expertise.
- Schemes of work so that what pupils will learn in terms of knowledge, understanding and skills are identified.
- Marking, assessment and target setting

- 159 In order to evaluate standards in religious education in the school it has been necessary to relate these to non-statutory Qualifications and Curriculum Authority levels as guidance. The locally agreed syllabus in use at the time of the inspection does not clearly identify the levels of attainment expected by the end of Years 6 and 8.
- 160 Pupils' standards in religious education on entry to the school, as shown by written work, are below average. Many of these pupils are still working regularly at the nationally defined Level 2 in knowledge and understanding and there is little evidence of work on evaluation and reflection. By the beginning of Year 6, able pupils are producing some work at the national benchmark Level 4. There is little difference in standards shown by the work of middle and lower ability pupils, whose work is of below average standard. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below those expected in relation to nationally defined levels.
- 161 Standards in Years 7 and 8 are lower than they should be. Samples of pupils' work show that standards are below those normally found. However, standards are higher in oral work in lessons than in written work. For example, in a lesson on prayer able pupils were able to talk about the stigmata and the influence of individual's interests and characters on the prayers said and language used.
- 162 Pupils are making progress in religious education as demonstrated in most of the lessons seen. However, this is not sufficient for them to attain standards similar to those in other subjects by the end of Year 8. Progress is better in Years 5 and 6 than in Years 7 and 8. Pupils in Years 5 and 6 respond well to effective questioning and are able to speculate and suggest reasons for events. For example, their explanations for the Plagues of Egypt were imaginative and they were able to speculate on how Moses would feel when asking Pharaoh for the freedom of his people. They used a good range of language including religious

language. These pupils understood the concept of responsibility to a community but were not aware of the power of God in relation to the Ten Plagues. A Year 5 group quickly learned about some of the symbolism of baptism and asked perceptive questions based on their new understanding.

- 163 Progress is slower in Years 7 and 8. Work samples do not indicate sufficient progress from the beginning of Year 7 to the beginning of Year 8 and there appears to be little difference in the achievement of more able and middle ability pupils. Written tasks relate mainly to factual knowledge with some limited elements of understanding the reasons for these facts. There is little evidence in written work of reflection on how religious beliefs and practice influence the lives of believers. The lack of identified personal responses by pupils to issues of belief and practice shows very limited opportunities for contributions to pupils' spiritual development. However, in a lesson a Year 7 class was able to successfully apply their learning about religious symbols to the cartoon strip they were designing to show the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Middle and lower ability pupils in Year 8 find work on prayer difficult. They know the words of the Lord's Prayer but are unclear about the purpose of prayer. They find the language of some of the prayers difficult to understand. However, more able pupils enjoy reading prayers and discussing their meaning and purpose. They are able to use the words of the prayers to speculate on the characteristics of some of the saints to whom the prayers are attributed. In oral work in class these able Year 8 pupils were making good progress.
- 164 Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. Teachers are aware of their needs and support these pupils well. Most of these pupils are interested and well motivated in religious education lessons.
- 165 There are no specialist teachers for religious education in the school. This is reflected in the relatively low quality of some of the tasks that are set and in some of the lessons observed. However, overall teaching is satisfactory. One unsatisfactory lesson was seen but the remainder were either good or satisfactory. Most of the lesson planning seen during the inspection was good, although the schemes of work for religious education from which teachers work, lack detail and do not give non-specialist teachers sufficient support. The schemes of work are based on the North Tyneside Agreed Syllabus. This syllabus does not contain definitions of levels of pupils' work to support the effective setting of tasks or the assessment of work. All teachers set clear objectives for each lesson they teach. Good use of language by teachers enables pupils to use the correct terms in all classes and this is a strength. However, teachers' lack of knowledge of the subject means that the expectations of the pupils are often too high or too low and this makes learning more difficult. For example, the task of sequencing the actions of baptism in a Year 5 lesson offered very little challenge to the pupils. Teachers also need to be clearer about what they want the pupils to know, do and understand at the end of each lesson. Regular use of the time at the end of the lesson to review what pupils have learned would improve teaching and learning. Resources are well used. Pupils respond well to most discussions and the practical tasks that are set. Teachers make use of The Children's Bible; and one teacher used music effectively in her lessons.

- 166 The school makes too limited use of the local and wider community. In Year 5, pupils have the opportunity to visit a local church but there are no other opportunities for similar visits in the other faiths studied. Members of the Salvation Army support the curriculum in school. Good use is made of homework that often involves pupils talking to their family about events in their own lives.
- 167 Marking and assessment in religious education are unsatisfactory and need to be developed if standards are to improve. Assessments are not related to identified standards. This means that accurate assessments cannot be made and useful targets for future attainment cannot be set for pupils. The school is waiting for the revised Agreed Syllabus to be published. In the meantime the department has started some work on assessment using the nationally defined standards. The day to day marking and assessment of pupils' work is unsatisfactory. Currently marking does not give pupils much information about their performance or what they can do to improve it.
- 168 Effective leadership has ensured that there are schemes of work relating to the locally Agreed Syllabus in place and that good resources are available. However, the schemes do not indicate sufficiently what is to be expected of pupils of differing ages and abilities. Teachers feel effectively supported by the subject leader. They meet with him once a term to explore issues relating to planning their work. The subject leader attends religious education meetings with the local schools once a term; but teachers have not attended any training sessions to develop their knowledge and skills in religious education as suggested in the previous inspection report.
- 169 The school has made limited progress in religious education since the previous inspection as the number of teachers teaching the subject has been reduced to create a small, more manageable team. However, current staff have very limited expertise and knowledge of religious education, particularly related to the Agreed Syllabus now being used. This is resulting in standards that are not as high as those in other subjects. Resources are now good with the exception of those in the library. There is little use of information and communication technology to support teaching and learning in the subject.