

INSPECTION REPORT

WASHINGTON SCHOOL

Washington, Tyne and Wear

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108865

Headteacher: Ian Lane

Reporting inspector: Terry Parish
15465

Dates of inspection: 17th – 20th March 2003

Inspection number: 249144

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Spout Lane
Washington
Tyne and Wear

Postcode: NE37 2AA

Telephone number: 0191 416 0000

Fax number: 0191 219 3848

Appropriate authority: Washington School Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Dorothy Butler

Date of previous inspection: 27th January 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
15465	T Parish	Registered inspector		<p>What sort of school is it?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements.</p> <p>How well are the pupils taught?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p>
13786	S Walsh	Lay inspector		<p>Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development.</p> <p>How well does the school care for its pupils?</p> <p>How well does the school work in partnership with its parents?</p>
17923	M Shaw	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12499	M Durkin	Team inspector	English English as an additional language	
30825	K Hayton	Team inspector	Science	
22906	B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology	
17868	E Metcalfe	Team inspector	Art and design Religious education	
2491	D Beaumont	Team inspector	Design and technology	
11300	B Smith	Team inspector	Educational Inclusion Special educational needs	
30911	J Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	

18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music Citizenship	
20192	T McDermott	Team inspector	Physical education	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
8070	J Haves	Team inspector	Geography	
31191	D Sylph	Team inspector	History	
15163	E Deeson	Team inspector	Business studies	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Washington Community School is a comprehensive school for boys and girls between the ages of 11 and 16 years. It is popular and has more pupils than at the time of the last inspection; it is now about average in size. Most pupils are from the local area and are white; a very low proportion of pupils are from ethnic minorities. Pupils come from a wide range of backgrounds and are broadly average in makeup, though their academic attainment when starting at the school is below average overall. The school includes a unit for pupils with special educational needs, the Curriculum Access Provision (CAP) unit. Consequently, the proportions of pupils with statements of special educational need, and with special educational needs, are well above average. The range of their special requirements includes provision for physical needs as well as educational needs.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school overall. Pupils achieve well due to consistently good teaching, and a significant proportion of lessons are very good. However, standards of work remain, overall, below average through Years 7-11, though better than when pupils entered the school. Pupils' behaviour, their relationships with each other, and relationships between pupils and teachers are all very good. The curriculum is inclusive and very well supports able and gifted pupils and pupils with special educational needs but has unsatisfactory provision in physical education and religious education. Leadership and management are good overall and some features, for example those related to staffing and staff development, are very good. The headteacher is enabling the school to move forward though fostering a strong desire to improve amongst staff; he is an excellent teacher and consequently leads classroom developments by example. The school receives substantially more money than average due to national initiatives such as Excellence in Cities. Most of this 'extra' money is spent on providing teachers and resources. The school gives satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- There is good teaching and learning and pupils achieve well
- Behaviour and relationships are very good and support pupils' learning
- The breadth of the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 provides good opportunities for most pupils; the gifted and talented are particularly very well served
- The work of the Curriculum Access Provision unit for pupils with special educational needs is very good
- Provision for science is very good and extensive
- Dramatic and musical performances are very well acclaimed by the public; musical performance seen during the inspection was very good; much of the teaching of both is very good
- There is a very strong pastoral system that cares well for pupils and establishes values
- Links with the community and other educational providers are very good

What could be improved

- The statutory curriculum for religious education is not met in Years 10 and 11; insufficient time is provided to learn about aspects of the locally agreed syllabus
- The provision for physical education is unsatisfactory; there is an imbalance between improving knowledge, skills and understanding and playing games. The teaching of older pupils and their learning are consequently unsatisfactory
- Those pupils in Years 10 and 11 not following an ICT examination course do not have their ICT experiences tracked, consequently it is unclear if they experience all the work with computers expected nationally
- Teachers' assessment methods, which should help pupils do better, are inconsistent and sometimes not effective enough to help standards rise further.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in January 1997. All significant issues identified in the last report have been addressed. Teaching and learning are much better now, both across the school and particularly in mathematics; there is a much higher proportion of very good lessons. GCSE standards overall have risen faster than national standards. The curriculum now includes a broad range of vocational courses and some innovative ways of challenging more able pupils. Improvement since the last inspection is very good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
GCSE examinations	D	C	D	B	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

In 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades in GCSE was higher than might be expected in similar schools. English results were better, whilst mathematics results were as expected and, in science, results were much better than might be expected. GCSE results over the last five years have improved faster than national results, though in 2002 results dipped; boys' results slipped down the most and widened the gap between their performance and that of girls. However, such gender differences vary from year to year and are within those experienced nationally.

Standards at the end of Year 9 in 2002, measured by national tests in English, mathematics and science, were well below average in English and in mathematics and below average in science. Overall, they were below results expected in similar schools. This unsatisfactory performance has been addressed through a school focus on teaching and learning; pupils are now achieving well overall.

The school's 2002 statutory target for the proportion of pupils attaining five or more A*-C grades at GCSE was exceeded, whilst the proportion attaining at least one A*-G was not met.

Standards of work in English and in mathematics are below average; in science they are broadly average. Standards in art and design are well above average. In design and technology, in information and communication technology (ICT), and in music, standards are average. In geography, standards are below average in Years 7-9 but average in the options in Years 10 and 11. In history and in modern foreign languages, standards are below average in all years. In physical education, standards, of the limited range of work done, are average, whilst in religious education, average standards in Years 7-9 decline to below average standards in Years 10 and 11 as there is too little time to cover the work required. Standards in business education are broadly average in Years 10 and 11 but pupils achieve unsatisfactorily as they acquire insufficient breadth of knowledge and understanding. By Year 9, pupils achieve well in most subjects, satisfactorily in design and technology, history, religious education, and physical education. They achieve very well in science and in art and design. There is a similar picture in Year 11; pupils achieve well in most subjects, very well again in science and in art and design, satisfactorily in modern foreign languages, unsatisfactorily in physical education and in religious education. It is unclear how well all Year 10 and 11 pupils attain and achieve in the use of computers; those not following a GNVQ course do not have their use of ICT monitored.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are cheerful and articulate. They are proud of their school.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. In classrooms it is often excellent. Around the school pupils move with care and consideration and enjoy the social atmosphere at lunch.
Personal development and relationships	Very good overall. Relationships between pupils and between pupils and teachers are particularly strong. Opportunities for responsibility are taken on; the school council is very good.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance rates are broadly average. They tend to hold up well in Year 11.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
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.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good; aspects of science teaching, such as high expectations of pupils' work and planning to help them reach them are better. Mathematics teaching is relatively weaker in ensuring the development of basic skills in literacy. Assessment of work is very good in science and much better than in English or mathematics; this helps science examination results be better. Pupils learn well in all three subjects but are involved in less independent work in mathematics. In all other subjects, teaching and learning are most often good in all years. In art and design they are very good; planning, pace, interest and effort are stronger than in most other subjects. Music teaching is very good in Years 7-9, good in Years 10 and 11; high expectations of pupils are supported by the infectious enthusiasm of the head of music. History teaching and learning are satisfactory in Years 7-9 but good in Years 10 and 11, whilst in modern foreign languages the reverse is true. The differences are down to expectations, pace, planning and the use of assessment. Religious education is satisfactorily taught in all years, often by non-specialists, but learning in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory for those not entered for a GCSE course. Though teaching and learning within physical education lessons are satisfactory in Years 7-9, the thin curriculum restricts opportunities for pupils to learn more, and both teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Teachers' assessment in physical education is also unsatisfactory. Citizenship is taught broadly satisfactorily and some lessons are better; learning is good as pupils have opportunities through activities such as the school council.

Literacy is taught well and numeracy satisfactorily. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met well overall and very well in the CAP unit. Pupils, who are particularly able, gifted and talented, have very good learning opportunities and teaching styles cater well for them. The exception is physical education where the curriculum, particularly in Years 10 and 11, does not support high levels of performance.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The range is good; plenty of vocational opportunities; AS-level science for the most able and extra subjects for pupils who want them. Pupils with special educational needs are also served very well and have equal opportunities. The range of extra curricular activities is good. However, the curriculum does not meet statutory requirements for religious education in Years 10 and 11; there is a significant imbalance in the physical education curriculum, and it is unclear how effectively pupils in Years 10 and 11, not taking an appropriate examination course, receive

	their entitlement to ICT.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good overall. Very good in the CAP unit.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Very few pupils may use a language other than English at home. A specialist teacher most often provides intensive support; pupils then work alongside their peers.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall. Good moral and social development is reflected in the very good behaviour and personal relationships which are a feature of the school. Opportunities are missed within schemes of work and in the 'thought for the day'.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Care for pupils' welfare is very good. Procedures for personal support and guidance are good. Assessment practice is not rigorous or consistent enough.

The school works well with parents but reports on pupils' work sent to parents each year need greater consistency; they do not always give clear information about standards and how they may be improved.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Both leadership and management are good overall. There are strong features that have improved teaching and learning, the quality of middle management, and fostered the very good relationships enjoyed by all in the school. The headteacher leads very well by example in these aspects. Innovation has been very strong; consolidation is now needed to move all subject provision towards the best. The school is in a very good position to improve further.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Administration and monitoring the use of resources are mostly well done. Governors do a satisfactory job overall but there are issues about the curriculum that need resolving.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good overall. The school has done well in addressing shortcomings in its performance last year. It has not been rigorous enough in ensuring consistently good assessment practice or in establishing what the physical education curriculum provides.
The strategic use of resources	Additional funds the school receives, for example for special educational needs, are very well used. However, some money could be better directed towards using ICT to support administration. Best value issues relating to comparing, challenging and consulting are satisfactorily addressed. Staffing, accommodation and learning resources are good overall.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children make good progress • Teaching is good • They are comfortable about approaching the 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour in the school is not good enough • Homework is insufficient, too much or variable

<p>school</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The school expects their children to do their best• The school is well led and managed	
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Around 12 per cent of parents replied to the questionnaire that is used to arrive at the statements above. In effect this means only two percent of parents indicated some dissatisfaction with behaviour. Inspectors broadly agree with all positive comments. They disagree with any criticism of behaviour. They agree there are some inconsistencies in homework and, more significantly, inconsistencies in marking, so that pupils are not always clear about how their homework can be improved.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report, as judgements made there are not necessarily repeated here.
2. Pupils achieve well by the time they leave school and achieve standards above those in similar schools. More able pupils, often designated as 'gifted and talented' achieve success in extra examination opportunities such as taking three sciences, an AS-level in the Public Understanding of Science, GCSE statistics, and Spanish. Standards are not particularly high in Spanish, but as able pupils are doing it in very little time as a 'bonus' to other language work their achievement is significant. The achievement of pupils in physical education is marred by the unbalanced curriculum, which does not permit them to do as well as their peers in most schools. A significant proportion of pupils, around a quarter, do not follow a course 'rich' in ICT, such as the GNVQ course. The ICT experiences these pupils have, often quite broad, are not monitored or recorded. Consequently it is not possible to say that all pupils achieve satisfactorily within the field of ICT. All pupils follow a course in religious education in Years 10 and 11 and the most interested, about a quarter, take a GCSE in it; these pupils are successful and achieve satisfactorily. The rest have insufficient time to meet all the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and consequently do not do as well as they might if they did.
3. Pupils' literacy skills are below average by the end of Year 11. Over time, pupils achieve well because well below average literacy skills adversely affected their learning when they entered the school in Year 7. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary. In science, music, English, drama and history pupils use technical language to good effect. Skills are less secure in mathematics and physical education. Standards in essay writing are good in English and history but, generally, pupils' writing of longer pieces of work requires development in most subjects.
4. Standards of numeracy are below average. Pupils enter the school with weaker numeracy skills than are generally found but these standards are rising. Washington School is helping to raise the standards of numeracy in local primary schools through activities including 'master classes' and half-day mathematical activities for children in Years 5 and 6. By the end of Year 11, pupils can carry out the nationally expected range of mental arithmetic. This is better than was found at the previous inspection.
5. In most subject areas, there is little difference in the standards achieved by different groups, although in Years 10 and 11, boys are attaining less than girls in mathematics and geography. Although Curriculum Access Provision (CAP – special educational needs) pupils in Year 9 ICT lessons are attaining at a lower level than their peers, they are progressing as well as might be expected.
6. There are 193 pupils currently identified under the special educational needs Code of Practice, 78 at School Action level, 63 at School Action plus and 52 pupils with statements of special educational needs. Of the total of 193 pupils, a figure that is above the national average, 29 are attending the CAP unit, a Local Education Authority (LEA) designated unit housed within the school. The attainment of pupils with special educational needs ranges from below to well below the national average on entry to

the school and for many at the end of Year 9. However, the special educational needs department has many successes at a variety of levels and analyses those successes carefully. In 2002, nine pupils with statements of educational need left the school at the end of Year 11. On entry, they had been working at English levels 1 and 2 (very low) with reading ages between five and seven years. By the end of Year 9, they were working at up to level 3 in English. At the end of Year 11, all pupils were working partly in mainstream classes and all achieved grades at GCSE. One pupil with Dyspraxia gained a B for religious education in Year 10, and nine A*-G grades in Year 11, of which seven were between grades A*-C. Another pupil, with emotional and dependence problems, gained eight A*-G grades. All CAP pupils gained certificate of achievements (a qualification deemed less than GCSE) in English and in mathematics and in a number of other options. In addition, pupils supported in mainstream classes by teaching assistants all achieved A*-G grades. There was also success in a number of other areas including the Lord Mayor's Award. These results represent good levels of achievement through all years. Pupils in the unit make good and often very good progress in lessons and those receiving support in the mainstream make good progress in English, mathematics and science lessons and at least satisfactory progress in other subjects. ICT provision in the special educational needs department is good. Most rooms have a number of computers and they are often in use, with a variety of programmes available. Pupils are familiar with computers and demonstrate good keyboard skills, shown to advantage in a Year 9 literacy workshop, and in a mixed group of Year 7 and 8 pupils in a Dyslexia workshop. The department maintains a very good library of texts to suit all reading ages. There are very good and productive links with a wide range of outside agencies.

7. The achievement of pupils who speak English as an additional language is good. This is because of dedicated teaching in the CAP unit, support in lessons, and appropriate work in subjects. Most such pupils learn very quickly and adapt very well.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have good attitudes to school and behave very well. They are very welcoming to visitors, cheerful, articulate and have good manners. Pupils are keen to get involved with the wide range of activities available outside lessons. There is great enthusiasm for music, and although groups such as the choir and orchestra have been established relatively recently, those involved are extremely committed. Drama productions have also involved a hard working and dedicated group of young people. Good attendance at revision clubs and Easter revision school reflects the way that the majority of pupils take their schoolwork seriously.
9. Year 7 pupils are bubbly, enthusiastic and full of ambition. During a personal and social education lesson pupils confidently described their hopes for the future, which ranged from joining the RAF to becoming a zoo keeper. Pupils have especially good attitudes in art lessons; they concentrate carefully on their work. Pupils respect each other's differences, for example in physical education lessons where there is mutual respect for one another's physical performances. During a drama workshop a visiting instructor was treated with respect. Pupils followed his instructions seriously; they wanted to do well. Occasionally, such as when lessons in religious education and business studies lessons are less interesting, pupils can become restless and inattentive. Pupils with special educational needs behave very well in their lessons. They enjoy their work and show a lot of enthusiasm, seen in Year 7 lessons in which pupils put sentences and pictures together to tell the story of Romeo and Juliet. They concentrate well especially with good support, and most demonstrate a growing confidence in what they do.

10. Behaviour is very good. This is reflected in the very low rates of fixed term exclusions. Permanent exclusions are rare. Behaviour around school is very good. There is a nice social atmosphere in the dining hall and around school at lunchtime. Movement between classes is orderly. Behaviour in lessons was often very good and sometimes excellent. This is because teaching is good and pupils are managed well. Good attitudes and very good behaviour promotes good achievement. Bullying is rare and is usually restricted to name calling. Pastoral staff take all incidents of bullying seriously and try to resolve issues of bullying or 'fallings out'. There is good racial harmony. The school records racial incidents and actively discourages racism. In an English lesson about the poem *Search for my Tongue* pupils were able to learn the importance of respecting cultures and values.
11. Relationships are very good. Warm relationships between pupils and staff and lessons that are often taught with a touch of humour make school enjoyable. For example, in a science lesson where relationships were excellent, pupils were swept away by the enthusiasm of the teacher. In a sensitive sex education lesson in Year 11, the use of humour broke down barriers and promoted good learning. There are very good relationships between form tutors and their pupils. Form tutors teach personal social and health education in Year 7 and this gives form tutors the opportunity to get to know pupils. For example, in a Year 7 lesson about perseverance, the teacher's lively approach, together with a very good use of humour kept pupils interested and involved and increased their self-esteem and social skills.
12. Personal development is good. Pupils have good opportunities to take on responsibility and to develop initiative. There are year councils and a school council, which allow pupils to express their points of view. These councils are extensively involved in fundraising, which is organised by pupils themselves. Pupils in the CAP unit have the chance to take on responsibility through the 'buddy' system. University visits and links help higher achieving pupils to develop mature attitudes in lessons and pupils often have the chance to work together; there is good collaboration and co-operation between them.
13. Attendance is satisfactory. Attendance rates are very similar to the national average and have risen in line with national attendance patterns. Most pupils attend school regularly and take advantage of the good provision for them. Satisfactory rates of attendance are sustained in Years 10 and 11. Pupils taking holidays in term time has a particularly detrimental effect at the beginning of the school year. Rates of unauthorised absence appear low but the recording of unauthorised absence needs more careful monitoring.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary report, as what is said there is not necessarily repeated here. Examples of lessons are found in subject report sections.
15. The quality of teaching in lessons is a significant part of the evidence inspectors use to judge teaching. The quality of work in pupils' books, marking and assessment practice, and the results of pupils' assessments are other evidence. Almost all lessons were satisfactory or better, seven out of ten good or better, and about a quarter very good. Six lessons were excellent. The quality of pupils' learning in lessons very closely matched the quality of teaching; a very well taught lesson resulted in very good learning. The school has a marking policy, which provides the

guidelines for all subjects, and which allows subjects to decide on their own mark schemes. Although work is marked, there are many inconsistencies, and in some cases teachers do not follow the school policy, with either work not marked, or insufficient detail in comments to help pupils improve their work. Neither is homework provision consistent or the homework timetable adhered to.

16. Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory in physical education in Years 10 and 11, particularly Year 10. This is partly due to the narrow curriculum. Pupils in Year 11 are limited to a visit to the local leisure centre each week to play games such as ten pin bowling, and consequently do not have opportunities to learn the breadth of skills stipulated within the National Curriculum. Neither does teaching help raise literacy, numeracy or involve the use of ICT; pupils' basic non-physical skills are not improved. Assessment of work is also unsatisfactory. Teaching and learning in business education are variable; basic business skills are generally taught well but pupils' knowledge and understanding are not developed well enough and, again, improvement in basic skills such as literacy are not fostered enough.
17. An emphasis on improving literacy is a feature of learning in most subjects. The National Literacy Strategy has been used to aid teaching and most staff are convinced of its worth in raising standards in their subject. Most subjects take the teaching of basic literacy skills seriously and, consequently, so do the pupils. Through the use of guides to writing, glossaries and study aids, pupils gradually make improvements to their spelling, reading and writing skills, particularly in Years 7 to 9. By emphasising pupils' comparative strengths in speaking, the school succeeds in improving listening skills. Library induction courses are effective in teaching information and retrieval skills because of good teaching and planning. The English department has dictionaries and thesauruses available in each classroom and key words are displayed prominently in most subject classrooms to familiarise pupils with specialist vocabulary. However, dictionaries are not generally available in other subjects.
18. Good quality training has developed mathematics teachers' skills in teaching numeracy. Teachers use the National Numeracy Strategy and most lessons start with quick practice of numerical skills. This means that pupils use calculators only when necessary. Teachers show pupils where they can use their skills in other lessons such as when Year 11 pupils measuring the circumference of a circle were reminded of the measuring they do in science. In English, pupils learn the importance of pattern for each line of a poem. In art they appreciate how proportion makes a work effective. In music, pupils understand how the symmetry of an arch can be used in a composition. However, in other subjects, including physical education and religious education, teachers are not sufficiently aware of the contribution they can make to develop the numerical skills of pupils.
19. The use of ICT in many subjects across the curriculum is good. This is because of the extensive New Opportunities Fund training teachers have had, which has given them skills and confidence in using new technology. All departments have access to computers, not always in their own area, to a variety of software and access to the school intranet. The use of ICT in science is particularly good, with simulations, data logging and graphical presentation. In mathematics, pupils show confidence in using software to create graphs. Pupils in design and technology make good use of ICT in diet analysis to create graphs to display a balanced diet. Pupils are also learning how to use computer assisted design and computer assisted manufacturing produce objects. Teaching in art and design is enhanced by the use of slide shows to help pupils understand and learn about two-dimensional perspective. Although all subjects

have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work, this is not always fully implemented, mainly because some departments have recently received new hardware and software. English, modern foreign languages and music have yet to use ICT significantly to support teaching and learning. In Years 10 and 11, pupils make considerable use of word processing and presentation software as they complete projects in many subjects, particularly in business studies and in both GCSE and GNVQ ICT.

20. Pupils who learn English as an additional language at Washington School receive specialist support from a teacher working with special educational needs department staff. Some pupils are withdrawn from lessons for a brief, intensive, course of teaching and return to lessons when they can understand and cope with work in them. This is not consistent and one pupil floundered in a mathematics lesson because of a lack of specialist support.
21. There are very positive teachers' attitudes towards inclusion (enabling all pupils to do as well as they can) and these attitudes result in most pupils progressing well, summed up perhaps by the provision made for a Turkish pupil in Year 11. Although not a low attainer, he is receiving appropriate language support within the CAP unit and mainstream classes, making good progress and enjoying the work.
22. Many teachers make a positive contribution to pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and address racism in their schemes of work. In English, teachers' choice of texts and use of class discussions make good contributions to multi-cultural studies. In geography and history, teachers are conscious of the need to address racism and multi-cultural studies and provide schemes of work to do so. In music, pupils show great respect for the music of other cultures introduced to them by their teacher.
23. Pupils with special educational needs are catered for in a number of ways that focus prompt and appropriate support, particularly in areas of deficiency in literacy skills. The organisation of the support is such that a minimum of disruption is caused to a pupil's mainstream education. In all aspects of the work of the special educational needs department, one of the chief objectives is to maintain pupils within the mainstream curriculum. This often puts added pressures on the school that are handled well. Pupils may do a large part of their work, in some cases, within the CAP unit, but many more are supported in mainstream lessons by a team of experienced and qualified teaching assistants. Each pupil has an individual education plan (IEP) that, in conjunction with the special educational needs register, held by all teachers, gives comprehensive information on pupils' needs, targets, and strategies that may be best used to help them. IEPs are now on the school intranet and are updated on it by teachers and monitored by the special educational needs co-ordinator. Use of IEPs by subject departments varies, but they are not usually immediately to hand, modern foreign languages being an exception. However, all those on the special educational needs register are clearly identified in lesson plans. IEPs are reviewed at least twice a year. In addition to the support offered by the teaching assistants and IEPs, most subject areas use well differentiated and appropriate materials to help learning. This is not yet universal and there are gaps in such provision in religious education, physical education, and within sets in mathematics.
24. Provision, overall, is good for pupils in the mainstream, but the special educational needs department needs to be aware of monitoring opportunities to check the use of the IEPs and in particular to review and revise the use of teaching assistants in classes. There is very valuable support in English, mathematics and science, but in

other subjects, although individual teaching assistants are good, their deployment might sometimes be more effective. Teaching within the CAP unit is overall good and often very good.

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

25. The school aims to provide a forward looking, innovative, flexible, and fully inclusive curriculum to meet the needs of all of its pupils.
26. The very good range of courses, both academic and vocational, operate successfully, and are underpinned by an effective learning support system accessible to pupils of all abilities. The highest attaining pupils have the opportunity to sit some examinations a year early, or to follow higher level courses. All students can select from four vocational options in addition to the traditional offer, and there is very good curriculum access provision for pupils with special educational needs. The school also provides good work-based learning options for those pupils whose needs are not best met in the classroom. The very small number who find difficulty in settling to education in school have alternative work-based provision or attend the local further education college for work-related courses.
27. In Years 7 to 9, pupils follow a wide range of 16 subjects, including life-skills and business studies. At the end of Year 9, pupils receive good advice and guidance to support them in choosing the subjects and courses they wish to study in Years 10 and 11. Almost the full range of National Curriculum subjects is offered, and these subjects are supported by several vocational and 'accelerated learning' options, which are laid on according to pupil demand and recommendation. The school offers a very wide range of good quality learning opportunities, which have both breadth and balance, and which give all pupils the chance to gain success.
28. However, in Years 10 and 11, the curriculum offered by the school is unsatisfactory because it does not meet the statutory requirements in respect of religious education, it is unclear how well ICT requirements are provided for all older pupils, and physical education provision is very narrow. In religious education, pupils do not have sufficient teaching in all the elements of the locally agreed syllabus. Those pupils not taking GNVQ ICT do have ICT in other lessons but what they do is not monitored. The curriculum in physical education has a large imbalance in favour of games rather than other forms of physical activity. This imbalance is huge in Year 11. Consequently the physical education taught in this school does not reflect that taught nationally.
29. The school continues to build very good links, and to sustain continuity, with different stages of education. Through its physical education department, it is a part of the Area 1 cluster of schools in the City of Sunderland school sports co-ordinator programme; the school gives the equivalent of two specialist teaching days per week to working with primary schools in its near vicinity. In its role as a designated technology college, the school offers master classes to primary age pupils, in science, mathematics, and technology; younger pupils come into the school to strengthen and enrich their range of knowledge, skills and understanding in these particular areas of learning. Links with the further education sector are flourishing. The Flexible Learning Centre noted in the previous inspection report continues to support lifelong learning, and the newly created Virtual Learning Environment is enabling Year 7 pupils to engage fully with the 'e-world' of learning. Clear plans are in place, with realistic regimes for monitoring and evaluation, to roll out this very exciting new facility in a controlled manner, and to extend its breadth in years to come. Both of these learning initiatives are run in co-operation with Sunderland College.

30. Governors are linked to specific departments to review provision, and this enables them to assess the strengths and weaknesses in the curriculum. Areas identified for development in the curriculum in the previous inspection report have mostly been addressed, with the exception of physical education – “in Year 11 progress (in physical education) is being impeded because of the more recreational bias of the curriculum.” (Last report)
31. Pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated into all aspects of school life, and have access to the same full curriculum as their peers. Most pupils with learning difficulties are identified early through good liaison with primary feeder schools. Initial assessment is thorough and effective and ensures that all those with needs receive proper care. After assessment, pupils are catered for in a number of ways, which focus prompt and appropriate support especially in areas of literacy deficiencies. These include ‘catch-up’ groups, Speech and Language withdrawal groups and workshops for borderline literacy pupils and those with Dyslexia. All Year 7 pupils are screened and tested for reading and other data such as national test results are used to identify pupils for the catch-up programme. The mathematics department determines numeracy levels within the first week in Year 7. Although a number of pupils are withdrawn for specialist classes on a regular basis, the school makes a great effort to avoid disrupting their entitlement to full curriculum access. Withdrawal is on a rota basis over a monthly period and CAP pupils lose one lesson of French and German in order to pursue literacy skills. The system is reported as being beneficial to pupils by the modern foreign languages inspector. The overriding impression is of a school and department that do their utmost to address individual needs while at the same time allowing full access to the whole curriculum.
32. A termly newsletter raises the profile of literacy for staff and pupils. Whole school training days and subject workshops have helped to raise the awareness of literacy and its part in improving teaching and learning. This has been effective in raising standards in Years 7-9 and is emerging as a strength for pupils in Years 10 and 11. The ‘catch up’ programme for pupils at level 3 (below expectations) in English when they enter the school raises the standards of pupils quickly and effectively.
33. The school has drawn up a policy to help teachers in all subjects develop pupils’ numerical skills. The teacher co-ordinating this work only started at the school at the start of the academic year. He has found out what skills are being used in all subjects.
34. Provision for extra-curricular activities, overall, is good, with over half of pupils in the school participating at least once a year in some out-of-hours activity. In music and in design and technology, extra-curricular provision is very good; in most other subjects it is good. In physical education it is satisfactory, and in religious education it is unsatisfactory. Most subjects offer opportunities for pupils to engage in revision, extension work, or homework classes and clubs. The school stages drama productions, is involved with dance shows, and has an annual exchange visit to France. Groups of pupils also undertake short and longer residential visits to the Kingswood Computer Centre, and to the Derwent Hill Centre for study, which involves the geography and physical education departments. The school also offers recreational visits to successful pupils as a part of its system for rewarding achievement in many different areas.
35. There is good provision for personal, social and health education. The programme is of good quality and pays good attention to social and health education, including education about sex and drugs. Form tutors teach personal social and health

education (PSHE) in Year 7 and this helps them to get to know their pupils. Specialist teachers teach older pupils PSHE. This arrangement works well. Pupils are especially appreciative of sex education and education about drugs which they find informative and appropriate to their age.

36. There is good provision for careers education. Careers education is delivered through the PSHE programme in Years 9, 10 and 11. All pupils have access to a careers interview with a specialist careers advisor. Good provision results in Year 11 pupils having a very good idea about what they want to do in the future and the qualifications that they will need.
37. Links the school has with the community and other schools and colleges are reported on in the community section of the report.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development of its pupils is satisfactory. Provision is not identified specifically or explicitly in many schemes of work in different subject areas.
39. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Pupils attend one year group assembly each week. There is no daily act of collective worship, and this is a missed opportunity. There is a 'thought for the day', part of a weekly theme, broadcast over the school tannoy system, to which class groups pay proper attention, but there is no time for reflection on the thought. In music and art, provision is good, and the spiritual and emotional dimensions of those subjects are clear for all to see in performance and execution. Geography overtly seeks ways to promote thinking and reflection about world issues. In science, the spiritual dimension is written explicitly into the work being planned, and is seen to be carried out in lessons. On occasions, in other subjects, pupils' responses show delight, for example about a particularly high level of skill performance in physical education. However the spiritual dimension does not have a high profile in the school.
40. Provision for pupils' moral development is good. The school clearly promotes an ethos of fairness, and all pupils know the difference between right and wrong. Staff provide good role models. There is an atmosphere of mutual respect in most areas of school life. Behaviour, relationships and an awareness of the needs of others are good. In ICT, pupils are made aware of the issues of data protection. The moral and ethical issues of the Internet are discussed. In most subject areas, there is an overt focus on doing the right things.
41. There is good provision for pupils' social development. This is clearly seen and felt in all areas of the school. Pupils behave very well both in classrooms and around the school, and they co-operate well. Pupils have a good awareness of the needs of others; they share ideas, resources, and equipment sensitively and sensibly. The very large majority of pupils understand their personal and group responsibilities, they take these responsibilities seriously, and they hold to them consistently. The school provides a range of extra curricular activities in which pupils can develop their social skills. Choirs, bands, teams, dramatic productions, residential visits, trips, and a good rewards programme, all combine to foster mature and positive attitudes. All pupils in Year 10 undertake a two-week work experience placement as an introduction to the world of work, and as a preparation for life after school.

42. Provision for the cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Pupils have opportunities to visit theatres and art galleries and play a variety of musical instruments. Cultural activities, such as dance, have been recently introduced. Two and three-dimensional art work is on display in many areas of the school, and there are some very impressive design and technology pieces. However, there are too many opportunities missed, particularly in religious education, history, and geography. Discussion of the diversity of our cultural heritage is not actively fostered.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

43. The school quite rightly takes pride in its motto 'achievement through caring'. Standards of care are very good. There is an established pastoral system and pupils usually retain the same form tutor and year head during their time at Washington School. This ensures that form tutors and year heads know the pupils very well and staff at all levels have warm relationships with pupils. There is often a touch of humour and humanity. Staff genuinely like the pupils and want to ensure that pupils have a successful experience of school. The positive atmosphere encourages pupils to achieve well. However, although the arrangements for assessment of pupils' attainment and progress in departments are often good, and in some cases better, the monitoring of pupils' academic performance is inconsistent, particularly in Years 7-9. In Years 10 and 11, where more data is available, the monitoring of pupils' progress is more secure, and good use is made of a commercial assessment system for predicted grades and target setting.
44. The 'traffic light' system used to set targets for pupils in all years is in early stages of development. Currently, data from external tests and information received from primary schools helps departments place pupils in achievement categories of A-E. The allocation of pupils into such categories appears inaccurate and does not reflect pupils' attainment levels against national criteria.
45. Where assessment of pupils' attainment is good or better, in science, ICT, art and design, and mathematics, good use is made of criteria developed from National Curriculum levels. This enables these departments to make accurate judgments on pupils' attainment by the end of Year 9, when levels of attainment must be given in annual reports to parents. In these subjects, and in modern foreign languages, pupils are aware of how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve and reach a higher level. However, there is some inconsistency even within departments in how these levels are used – sometimes in lessons, sometimes in marked work. In science and in ICT the 'traffic light' system is used extensively to help pupils set clear targets for improvement in all years. This is possible because these subjects have well developed subject assessment systems.
46. The school meets fully the statutory requirements of provision as outlined in pupils' statements of educational needs. The special educational needs department has switched very efficiently to the new Code of Practice and all teachers hold an up to date register. Reviews are regularly carried out and records are kept up to date and secure. Pupils' progress is very carefully tracked through a variety of schemes; many related to computerised courses that pupils follow in reading and spelling. The information given in the Governors' Annual Report is minimal and might give more information about the CAP and its success. The appointed governor has had little effect on the work of the department.
47. There are very good arrangements for child protection and to meet the needs of children in the care of the local authority. Senior staff, year heads, form tutors and

learning mentors all work very well together to ensure that pupils with additional emotional needs are identified and well supported. Arrangements to ensure the safety of pupils are good. However, toilets, especially the girls' toilets, are in poor condition and do not reflect the high standards that the school sets for itself.

48. There is very good educational and personal support and guidance for pupils. Matters such as the completion of homework, punctuality and behaviour are carefully monitored. Pupils who are underachieving or who appear to need extra care are well supported by learning mentors. There is very good academic support. Prior to examinations, there are revision clubs for most subjects. Pupils who need extra help are targeted and encouraged to attend and many pupils attend because they want to do well. A very successful revision school was held last Easter which led to a measurable increase in attainment in GCSE examinations. Pupils have access to good careers advice and pupils find the guidance they receive in PSHE lessons very useful. A good effort is made to ensure that pupils have a choice of good quality healthy foods.
49. There are good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour. Many teachers are very skilled at managing behaviour. High expectations, very good relationships and interesting lessons promote high standards of behaviour. Good teaching usually promotes high standards of behaviour. Only when teaching was dull were instances of inappropriate behaviour seen during the inspection. Procedures for reporting and monitoring behaviour are consistently followed. Teachers and pastoral staff can refer pupils to the behaviour support unit. This removes badly behaved pupils from their friends and they have to get on with their work in a very isolated environment. Consequently, most pupils have no wish to spend more time than necessary in the unit. This unit is successful in managing the behaviour of most pupils and is instrumental in reducing the numbers of exclusions. However, the school is aware that it lacks a learning support unit where patterns of behaviour might be modified. Heads of year have a thorough approach to dealing with bullying. Within the school, cases of bullying are rare and are usually limited to name calling, but pastoral staff are sensitive to pupils' feelings and try to address all situations where pupils might feel hurt.
50. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good attendance are satisfactory. Year heads and learning mentors work well together to identify those pupils whose attendance is affecting their achievement. Learning mentors are often used to support these children. If they find their efforts to be ineffective cases are passed to the educational social worker who is based in the school. Year heads and senior staff carefully monitor rates of attendance but less attention is paid to rates of unauthorised absence. The school uses an innovative 'dream team' league to promote attendance. This league, which operates in a similar way to a football league, creates a good deal of interest and helps pupils to realise the value that the school places on good attendance. The school does not use a computerised registration system and a great deal of time is expended on calculating attendance figures. Although learning mentors make early calls to the parents of absentees, the information they receive is not adequately transferred into registers. There is too great a variation in the ways that absence is recorded in registers and the distinction between authorised and unauthorised absence is not clear enough. Low rates of unauthorised absence are not properly reflected in registers. This makes it difficult to judge whether the low rates of unauthorised absence reported are accurate.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Washington School is popular and has a good reputation in the local community. Parents have good views of the school. Pupils' planners provide parents with a good opportunity to monitor their children's homework and behaviour but tutors and parents do not always sign or comment in them.
52. The school provides very good information about the work of the school. The glossy prospectus is very attractive and there is a second booklet, which gives very full information about the day to day working of the school. Regular newsletters are very high quality and give an excellent overview of school life and events. The governors' report to parents meets statutory requirements but some sections, such as those on provision for pupils with special educational needs, are brief.
53. A minority of parents was not satisfied with the information that they receive about their children's progress. The school has satisfactory arrangements for parents' evenings but written reports are of inconsistent quality. Too many reports contain very little information about what pupils have studied. A school system of grades is used to represent attainment. These grades are confusing and are difficult to compare with national expectations. Written comments are not always subject specific and often refer to a child's attitude and behaviour rather than academic progress. Most subjects do not give pupils targets or strategies to improve. However, art and design and modern foreign language reports most often have well defined academic targets for pupils to aspire to.
54. A significant minority of parents felt that the school did not have a good enough partnership with parents. Inspection found pastoral staff have extensive contact with parents and parents find staff very supportive. There is a well-supported community group, which addresses educational issues and fundraises, in addition to being involved in the wider community. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and their children's education. However, unsatisfactory reports and irregular use of homework planners restrict parents' opportunities to become involved in their children's education.
55. Parents are kept fully informed of all developments regarding the support and progress of their children with special educational needs. Parents are invited to all reviews and many attend, the department taking pains to fit in with parental availability. There is an open door policy and parents are welcome to come and look at work. There is currently one parent helper who visits three days each week.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

56. Leadership is good overall and promotes a good school with some very good features. Those features are exemplified by the headteacher's presence. He knows all the pupils and can talk to them about their problems and achievements. His presence fosters the very good relationships around the school. He is also an excellent classroom teacher, regularly taking classes. This provides an example to other teachers of the standards expected. The headteacher's leadership has also maintained innovative developments in the curriculum, such as AS-level science. However, this is marred by losing sight of other areas of the curriculum, physical education, religious education and, until recently, ICT. Though management is also good overall, staff appointments and delegation of management roles have been mostly very well handled. Consequently, the school is in a good position to improve; heads of department are doing a good job. There are areas where too much work is beginning to pile up on staff, for example a combined history and religious education role, and the growing demands of citizenship.

57. The school does a good job of monitoring its overall performance and provides extra support to pupils to help them excel or come up to scratch. It recognises when it does not do well enough, for example in end of Year 9 tests in 2002, and has effectively addressed most weaknesses relevant to that, for example, by using National Key Stage 3 teaching and learning strategies. The school also recognises that assessment systems in use are not consistently well applied and that some subjects are doing a better job than others. However, it has done insufficient about this; hence it is an area for improvement in this report. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching, and associated performance management, is satisfactory. Teaching is not monitored consistently well in all subjects but the fact that around two thirds of lessons are good or better does mean that it has improved significantly. Priorities for development in the school improvement plan are good and mostly focus on improving standards and the quality of learning. Areas for development identified in this report do not figure large in them, however. The school's statutory targets for GCSE were well met, the school aspires to more than it needs to do, hence it has a very good capacity to do even better.
58. The governing body does a satisfactory job. They are very loyal to the school and involved in much work and debate to support it. Finances are well controlled and the small deficit the school runs does not get out of hand. Specific money received for such aspects as special educational needs and Excellence in Cities, is very well spent and monitored. Statutory responsibilities at the reporting and committee level are generally well met; information about provision for special educational needs could be better in the annual report. However, governors have not addressed, or are unaware of, shortcomings in religious education, ICT, and physical education, whilst they are aware of innovative new curriculum developments.
59. Best value issues, comparing what the school does to what others do, challenging itself about provision, consulting parents and pupils, and competing with others if necessary, are satisfactorily addressed, though the race to be innovative does conflict with current curriculum requirements. When applied to purchases or building, value for money is sought but it is unclear how this influenced the choice of how the new science block was built. Neither have large amounts of money spent on ICT equipment resulted in many 'interactive whiteboards'. These are increasingly common in schools and have a marked, positive, effect on teaching and learning. Nor has the school invested in computer based registration and assessment analysis systems. The lack of the first means a quick and accurate picture of attendance (and absence) cannot be created, and the second contributes to the issues about assessment mentioned earlier.
60. Legal requirements for the provision for pupils with special educational needs are met. There is a clear policy, and comprehensive job descriptions showing responsibilities of teachers and teaching assistants. Guidance is full and clear. Management and leadership are strong, sympathetic and efficient and are backed by a hard working dedicated team totalling four teachers and eight teaching assistants. There are regular meetings of the team and of the link teachers in place in each subject area. Training needs are carefully assessed and team members participate in internal and external courses each year, mainly on the different types of special educational need found in school. At the last inspection there were issues regarding CAP admissions criteria and the curriculum entitlement of CAP unit pupils. These have been fully addressed and measures taken are clearly recorded and successful. Improvement has been good.

61. Overall, staffing is good. In science, geography and art and design staffing is very good. In physical education staffing is unsatisfactory as there are insufficient teachers to teach the National Curriculum. Generally, well-qualified and experienced specialist teachers, with a good knowledge of their subjects, staff departments. Religious education is the only subject where there are several non-specialist teachers. Teachers are also well trained in the use of ICT in their subjects. New teachers are very well supported when they start at the school as are quite large numbers of students. Though participating heavily in teacher training is one of the best ways of ensuring the school is well staffed in the future, an eye needs to be kept on the effect of student 'overload' on pupils' learning. Provision of support staff is good overall and includes a range of technicians and a language support assistant. The amount of practical science taught stretches the capacity of two technicians to support it. Technical support in design and technology is very good.
62. Overall, resources are good. The learning resource centre is an attractive space with a good range of ICT provision, though the book stock is out-dated for some subjects, particularly mathematics. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail. Resources in departments are of a variable standard with very good provision in science but only adequate provision in mathematics and in English. However, the ratio of computers to pupils, in the school, is very high and has a very positive effect on pupils' learning. The provision of dictionaries in all subjects would help improve pupils' literacy.
63. Accommodation is good overall. Accommodation for science, technology and physical education is very good. Accommodation for mathematics is unsatisfactory; three of the six rooms are not appropriate, including one that also acts as a corridor. Since becoming a technology college considerable improvements have been made to the accommodation. The original science block and original technology block have been replaced. Rooms for most subjects are now close together, so that resources can be shared more readily. Governors have a good maintenance programme but lack the funding required for it to be implemented in the short term.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

64. To improve the school further and ensure that statutory requirements are met, the school and governors should:
- (1) Ensure requirements for the locally agreed syllabus for religious education are fully met in Years 10 and 11. (Paragraphs: 28, 56, 58, 165)
 - (2) Review the provision for physical education in all years and particularly in Years 10 and 11 so that it better follows current national guidelines and intentions and teaching is improved. (Paragraphs: 16, 28, 58, 159, 161)
 - (3) Ensure that the ICT work, done by pupils in Years 10 and 11 who are not taking an ICT examination course, is well tracked so that the school can be sure they receive their curriculum entitlement for ICT. (Paragraphs: 2, 28, 56, 58, 140)
 - (4) Use assessment information better and more consistently across all subjects so that pupils are clear about their academic targets, how well they are meeting them, and what they must do to improve and make better progress. (Paragraphs: 15, 44, 45, 53, 56, 57)

In addition to the significant areas for improvement above, the school and governors should consider incorporating the following points into their action plan.

The provision of homework is inconsistent, in terms of amount and quality.
(Paragraph: 15)

Annual reports to parents about their children's progress need to be clearer and give better information about what pupils can and cannot do and how they may be helped to improve. (Paragraph: 53)

THE CURRICULUM ACCESS PROVISION (CAP) UNIT

Within the Curriculum Access Provision (CAP) the school maintains an LEA designated unit for the support of those with special educational needs, mainly pupils with statements of special educational needs. The LEA designated unit can cater for 40 pupils and currently supports 29. The need to attend CAP is written into statements and pupils may come from outside the school's catchment area. Funding for the unit comes with CAP pupils. Although statemented pupils have priority, other pupils on the special educational needs register may attend the unit for periods of time. Those pupils in the CAP unit are not isolated, but whenever and wherever possible are included in mainstream classes. They are supported through the school's pastoral system and they receive specialist subject teaching in mainstream classes, either in mixed ability groups with support, or in small CAP sets. Other lessons, particularly for literacy and numeracy, are attended in the unit and taught by specialist teachers and teaching assistants. The school and the unit are determined to ensure full access to mainstream classes for all pupils and the attention to individual needs is detailed and effective. As part of the overall special educational needs provision of the school, pupils attending the unit benefit from the same high standards of identification, assessment and provision as all those on the special educational needs register.

Pupils who attend the unit are well and often very well taught. Lessons are well planned and taught with enthusiasm and friendliness that ensures high levels of pupil participation and at least good progress. Pupils are friendly and willing to talk about the work they are doing. The whole unit is run, in conjunction with the main school, with an impressive degree of flexibility in order to help pupils get the most from the school. An indication of the integration of the unit within the school is seen in the numbers of CAP pupils participating in mainstream lessons effectively, and in the number of older pupils involved in work experience.

Although many CAP unit pupils enjoy success at GCSE they are also involved in a wider curriculum aimed at preparing them for life after school. To this end they participate in the Lord Mayor's award that teaches skills likely to be of use to them in the future. This was seen in a Year 10 lesson on First Aid dealing with cases of poisoning. In Year 11, pupils learn the principles of driving with the help of a local driving school, resulting in greater comprehension of a range of skills, such as recognising signs, applying for insurance and co-ordination.

The provision offered by the CAP unit is very good and pupils who attend are given high quality care and teaching.

COMMUNITY LINKS

The school has very good links with the local community. It has formed effective partnerships with other local providers in order to extend the educational opportunities available to both pupils and adults who live in the area. There are a wide variety of courses available in the daytime and evening. As might be expected in a technology college, many of the courses focus on improving ICT skills, but there is access to a wide variety of other courses including those designed to develop basic skills. These effective partnerships are very much focused on raising educational standards and promoting high aspirations and self esteem. The school is very involved in the local community and supports local events that celebrate the area's association with the United States of America. This reinforces pupil's understanding of local cultures and gives music and drama pupils the opportunity to perform in front of a wider audience. Links with local businesses have been forged and are improving. Unusually the school has formed a Community Group, which involves parents, governors, staff, and pupils rather than a traditional Parents Teachers Association. This recently formed group focuses its attention on meeting the needs of the local community, as well as continuing to be involved in fund raising and educational matters.

The school has very good links with other educational institutions. There are well developed partnerships with local primary schools. Strong curricular links include bridging projects that involve pupils starting pieces of work about The Lambton Worm in primary school. This work promotes their skills in English, geography and history and is finished off in secondary schools. Washington School provides 'master classes' for gifted and talented Year 6 pupils. In its role as the local technology college the school has been able to provide good support for ICT in local primary schools. There are effective partnerships with local colleges and schools that provide tertiary education. This ensures that pupils are well aware of the options available to them when they leave this school. The school has sought opportunities to work with local universities and those further afield. This has allowed able pupils to have a residential experience of university life and to gain a better understanding of the advantages of a university education.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	189
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	32

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	40	87	53	3	0	0
Percentage	3	21	46	28	2	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	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	1038
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	223

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	52
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	193

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	10

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	21
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	8.2
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.4
National comparative data	1.2

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	2002	100	105	205

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	37	51	57
	Girls	67	57	61
	Total	104	108	118
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	51(51)	53(57)	58(55)
	National	66(64)	67(66)	66(66)

TEACHERS' ASSESSMENTS		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	45	54	54
	Girls	75	67	63
	Total	120	121	117
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	59 (65)	59 (65)	57 (60)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	17(22)	22(30)	18(14)
	National	32(31)	4(42)	34(33)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	87	103	190

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	27	69	76
	Girls	51	95	97
	Total	78	164	173
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41(45)	86(92)	91(95)
	National	50(48)	91(91)	96(96)

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

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	35.2(37.4)
	National	39.8(39.0)

Figures 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	1018	33	1
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	4	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	1	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	4	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	1	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	3	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	2	0	0
Any other ethnic group	3	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**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	67.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	15.5

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	21
Total aggregate hours worked per week	685

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	78.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	22.2
Key Stage 4	18.6

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	14.6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	15.4
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2001/02
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	£
Total income	3 328 265
Total expenditure	3 243 058
Expenditure per pupil	3 124
Balance brought forward from previous year	- 7 292
Balance carried forward to next year	- 52 000

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1000
Number of questionnaires returned	135

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	32	55	10	2	0
My child is making good progress in school.	41	52	4	1	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	30	48	15	3	3
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	51	13	4	1
The teaching is good.	45	50	3	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	42	45	10	2	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	34	5	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	65	32	2	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	49	35	12	2	2
The school is well led and managed.	60	34	1	1	5
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	44	5	2	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	50	38	5	1	5

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 **good**.

Strengths

- Strong leadership and management are improving standards
- Good teaching leads to good learning
- Well-planned and structured departmental documentation results in clear lesson planning
- Pupils, including the gifted and talented and those with special educational needs, achieve well

Areas for improvement

- Marking is inconsistent, targets for improvement are unclear and reports uninformative
- There is insufficient use of ICT

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
National examination and test results	Well below average	Well below average
Similar school comparisons	Below average	Above Average
Overall achievement	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

65. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were worse than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years is inconsistent but overall is in line with the national trend of gradual improvement. Results in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen because a relatively new head of department has produced more tightly structured schemes of work, concentrated on teaching for test success and used the National Literacy Strategy to target improvement in basic skills. Consequently, standards have risen in the last year. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 do not agree with test results because teachers underestimated pupils' standards.
66. Test results in 2002 were lower than those in similar schools because teaching initiatives, now in place, had not been developed. The appointment of the new head of department has succeeded in raising standards.
67. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was low. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was average. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are better than might be expected; the proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was above average as was the proportion gaining A*-G grades. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupil's end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results are satisfactory. Hence, in 2002, pupils' achievement was satisfactory.

68. Results in 2002 were poorer than in 2001 but the trend in results over the last three years is generally consistent and reflects improving standards.
69. By Year 9, pupils can read and understand Shakespearean texts, write clear, understandable essays and factual accounts and speak with clarity and authority. For example lessons on spooky stories prompted this response from a Year 7 pupil, "Running faster and faster I ran away from the terrible ghost that was following me." In a lesson on persuasive writing based on *A Midsummer Night's Dream* a Year 8 pupil wrote, "My dear friend. Please do not abandon your father and friends for one man. Think about what you are throwing away and the lives that you will ruin." However, pupils cannot read and evaluate more sophisticated texts, write easily with flair and confidence or listen appropriately. Their standards on entry were well below average, especially in writing and that hinders achievement. By Year 11, pupils can read with more critical appreciation, write detailed and informative essays, speak with clarity and with a sense of audience and listen carefully. Work on creative writing produced a moving response on the lack of a father from a Year 10 pupil, "If only he knew...I wonder if he misses us like the sea misses the water. If only are the only words I can say. If only, if only, he had stayed." However, pupils cannot draw inferences from text or write sustained critical evaluations. Speech is not always appropriate for the audience and listening to their peers is less focused than listening to their teachers. Good behaviour and attitudes improve learning. Insufficient use of ICT misses opportunities to improve pupils' presentation and drafting skills.
70. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because of well structured lesson planning that targets individual pupils and support from special educational needs staff. Specialist support in the CAP unit also provides intensive teaching to accelerate pupil's progress. The most able pupils make good progress because they are identified and extra work is provided for them, both in their lessons and for homework. Pupils who may not use English as the first language at home make good progress because they are supported in lessons by learning assistants and the class teacher structures their work so as to make it more accessible.
71. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Two thirds were good or better. In Year 9, a very good lesson revising *Macbeth* energised pupils because of the teacher's high expectations, planning for a variety of activities and involvement of pupils in the work. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson in Year 7 bored pupils because there was a lack of variety, pace and pupil involvement. In Year 11, a very good poetry lesson successfully revised structure and meaning because of the teacher's very clear exposition, relevance to GCSE criteria, and encouragement of pupils' intellectual capabilities. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson lacked variety and a range of different work, resulting in pupils being unclear about what to do. Teachers' concentration on the teaching of literacy has resulted in higher standards of basic skills.
72. Leadership and management are good because the relatively new head of department has developed new teaching strategies and lesson planning directly targeted at examination and test success. She effectively monitors teaching and learning and has created a loyal, hard-working and effective team. Her clear vision promises continuing improvement. Assessment procedures are good because each pupil is carefully tracked and monitored for progress. The department uses National Curriculum levels of attainment and GCSE grade data to help assessment and target setting for pupils; this is more effective than the overall school system. The quality of marking is unsatisfactory overall; although most work is marked thoroughly and includes achievable targets, marking of other work is brief, uninformative and bland.

Reports to parents are unsatisfactory because they do not include sufficient information about standards achieved, targets for improvement or a clear description of the work done. The contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good because of good teaching that includes reflection, tolerance of different views and responsibility as members of society. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory; standards, achievement and teaching and learning now are similar to what they were then.

Drama

73. The teaching of drama is an asset to the school's curriculum. This is because the verve and commitment of the head of department have developed the quality of learning in lessons and provided a good contribution to extra curricular activities. The quality of teaching is very good, resulting in similar learning. The teaching of drama not only broadens the curriculum but also improves standards elsewhere because pupils are able to transfer the skills they have learned. The head of department is committed to the subject and successfully emphasises decision-making skills, providing opportunities for pupils to think for themselves. Pupils learn very well overall because lessons are well prepared and maintain a brisk pace. Consequently, most pupils gain very good insight into the subject as well as gaining knowledge of a wide range of sophisticated drama skills. Emphasis on varied activities, personal development and collaborative work enhances the enjoyment and motivation of pupils. In a Year 11 lesson, dramatic rehearsals were professional, carefully planned and executed, and skilful. This was because of the teacher's high expectations and carefully targeted lesson planning. Pupils relish the subject and their enthusiasm and enjoyment is evident in all lessons. Very good relationships between teachers and pupils create an atmosphere of high achievement and mutual respect. The contribution made by the department to the social and moral development of pupils is also partly responsible for their success. They are able to discuss serious issues such as race, war and justice in an informed and sensitive manner.
74. A wide range of extra curricular activities contributes to the positive ethos of the school. In the prestigious annual production, staff and a large number of pupils work with many departments, which encourages collaboration in different disciplines and develops relationships.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- An imaginative range of activities helps pupils learn well
- Good teaching produces good learning
- Good procedures to record pupils' progress have been set up
- The new head of department has a very good vision of what he wants to achieve

Areas for improvement

- Not all teaching is to the same good standard
- Parents are not given enough information about what their child has learnt
- Some rooms in which mathematics is taught are not suitable for effective learning

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average ⁽¹⁾
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average ⁽¹⁾
National test & examination results	Well below average	Well below average
Similar school comparisons	Below average	Above average
Overall achievement	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

(1) Girls' work is closer to average than that of boys in Years 10 and 11.

75. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were worse than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years is one of slow decline. Results in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen because the National Key Stage 3 Strategy is raising standards and the new head of department is improving the quality of teaching. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 do not agree with test results because procedures for assessing pupils were inaccurate and not as they are now. Test results in 2002 were below those in similar schools because pupils' standards in mathematics when they started in Year 7 were low.
76. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was low. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was low. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are better than might be expected. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was as might be expected whilst the proportion gaining A*-G grades was better than might be expected. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results were good. Hence pupils' achievement is good. Boys' results were worse than girls' results because their attitudes to their work are not as good. Results in 2002 were poorer than in 2001. The trend in results over the last three years is down because pupils have been entering the school with lower standards in mathematics.
77. By Year 9, pupils do everyday calculations accurately and quickly. However, they cannot apply their arithmetic to as wide a range of situations as is usually found. This is because standards when they entered the school were well below average. By Year 11, pupils can draw graphs and handle statistical data. However, they cannot suggest reasons that might explain the statistics they are working with.
78. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are taught in smaller groups. Teachers know their needs well. In many classes, classroom assistants provide good support to help them learn. Pupils in the CAP unit make good progress because the work meets their needs well. The most able pupils make good progress because they are allowed to work at an accelerated rate so that they can take GCSE a year earlier than normal. They respond well to this challenge. There are too few pupils, who may not use English as the first language at home, to make a judgement on how well they learn.
79. There was just one unsatisfactory lesson. Three fifths were good or better. There was one excellent lesson. Teaching has improved considerably since the previous inspection. This is the main reason why there has been good improvement since then. However, good practice is not currently spread to all teachers of the subject. For

example, some teachers help pupils learn by adding very helpful comments when marking work. Others simply add a few words such as “Good” or “Well done” without explaining what merits that praise. Some teachers use the time available in each lesson much more effectively than others, some use homework better than others.

80. In Year 8, a good lesson led to pupils quickly learning how to solve simple equations. The teacher used everyday situations, such as opening and closing a door, to introduce pupils to the idea of inverse operations. This led to pupils naturally seeing addition and subtraction as opposites. In contrast, in an unsatisfactory lesson, pupils in Year 9 found work on reflections too difficult because the teacher did not present material well. Pupils were not given sufficient explanation of how to do the work. This led to many of them having to wait for their questions to be answered. Whilst waiting, they lost interest in the work. In an excellent Year 11 lesson, pupils who did not find mathematics easy enjoyed forming and testing ideas about patterns of numbers. The superb structure of this lesson meant that pupils worked independently and rapidly gained in confidence. They also swiftly developed their ability to express their ideas, orally to their partners and in writing. At the end of the lesson, one girl spontaneously commented, “I’ve learned more today than in many lessons”. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson in Year 10, the teacher told pupils how to work out cubic numbers without using three-dimensional objects. Pupils did not understand work they were doing and the work provided for any pupil who had finished was more of the same; the new work did not extend their learning further, so best use was not made of the time available.
81. The head of department took up the post at the start of the school year. He has a very good view of how he wants to develop his team. He is a very good teacher of the subject and knows how to make the subject attractive so pupils are motivated to learn. He rightly places great importance on pupils being able to develop and try out ideas for themselves. There is a large increase in the use of ICT and this now makes a good contribution to pupils’ learning. A good system to monitor pupils’ progress has been set up. This will help teachers plan their work and help pupils know how well they are doing. Year 7 pupils enjoy the challenges they meet at the weekly ‘Maths Club’. Revision classes are run in holiday periods. Good links with primary schools, including ‘master classes’, are helping to raise standards in those schools.
82. Plans are well advanced to run classes to help parents support their children with their mathematics. Currently, parents receive unsatisfactory reports about the progress their child has made in the subject. These reports do not tell parents what a pupil has learnt or how to make further improvements.
83. Last summer the school was unable to fill a teaching post in the subject. A temporary appointment was made but the teacher is not a mathematics specialist. The school has already appointed a specialist teacher who will start shortly. Some of the classrooms for mathematics are of poor quality. In one room pupils are frequently disturbed as others pass through the room. One room has very little natural daylight. In another, wind noise disturbs pupils and some rooms are too small for pupils to move into groups. The computer room gets too hot. Pupils in these classrooms do not learn as well as they might.
84. Pupils are helped to develop their sense of morality when they look at the different ways in which statistics are used, for example to show unemployment. Regularly working in pairs or groups helps pupils develop socially. The subject does not make a great contribution to pupils’ spiritual development or their cultural awareness. Pupils’ citizenship is developed when they use percentages to look at loan rates and VAT.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good
- There are very good assessment procedures which help standards rise
- Accommodation and ICT resources are good
- There has been a steady improvement in standards over the last few years

Areas for improvement

- The marking of books and the setting of short-term targets are inconsistently done
- Textbooks are only issued to a few high sets, not to most pupils
- The sharing of good practice in teaching is not regular

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Average
National examination and test results	Below average	Below average
Similar school comparisons	Well above average	Well above average
Overall achievement	Very Good	Very good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Teaching	Very good	Very good
Learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

85. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were better than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years is one of gradual improvement. Results in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen, which is better; new teaching strategies are continuing to improve standards. Test results in 2002 were much better than they were in similar schools because teaching and laboratory resources are particularly good.
86. In 2002, GCSE results, overall, were below average compared to those in all schools, but girls achieved results comparable to their national average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was below average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was average. When compared to those in similar schools, GCSE results were much better than might be expected. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was well above average whilst the proportion gaining A*-G grades was above average. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results were good. Hence they achieved well between Year 9 and Year 11; they achieved very well from Year 7 to Year 11. Boys' results were not as good as those of girls mainly because boys did not respond as well to the nature of the course and to the revision programme. A new GNVQ course has been introduced to try and motivate boys better. Results in 2002 were poorer than 2001 but the trend in results over the last three years is up.
87. By Year 9, pupils can design an investigation and understand the principles of controlling variables and fair testing. Higher attaining pupils have developed good research skills, using book, Internet and CD ROM resources and can write and

express themselves orally with accuracy and clarity. Lower attaining pupils understand the basic principles of their science studies but their written work is hampered by below average literacy skills. By Year 11, pupils have developed good investigational skills and have a good understanding of the relevance of science in their lives. The highest attaining pupils have already achieved a high grade in the GCSE examination taken at the end of Year 10 and are following a challenging AS-level course with confidence and success. Lower attaining pupils have a sound understanding of scientific concepts such as energy transfer. However, the quality of work in their books is not up to the standards they show in the classroom.

88. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are taught in appropriate sets and their learning is supported by the use of good handouts and effective teaching. The most able pupils make very good progress because they are placed in express groups from the early years in the school and challenged by both the pace and level of the courses, aiming to take GCSE dual award science a year early and then take an AS-level in the Public Understanding of Science in Year 11. Results, and the work seen in lessons, indicate the success of this policy. Another group takes all three GCSE science subjects, biology, chemistry, and physics in Years 10 and 11, providing another stimulating challenge. Pupils who may not use English as the first language at home make similar progress to other pupils.
89. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Over three quarters were good or better, over a quarter very good and one lesson was excellent. Teaching and learning are very good overall and all pupils make at least good progress. Teaching is supported by some good work to help literacy skills and there is a lot of support, ranging from an emphasis on key words displayed in all laboratories to the use of writing prompts where appropriate. ICT is widely used to good effect and a useful simulation exercise on ecology was seen in a GNVQ lesson. All teachers are well trained in the use of ICT and good facilities are widely used. Numeracy is well supported and pupils draw good graphs. Textbooks are only issued to higher attaining pupils; this slows down development of research skills by other pupils and inhibits work pupils can do at home. Although teaching is good, strategies for monitoring and sharing good practice need to be further developed.
90. In an excellent Year 8 lesson, on expansion and contraction, pupils were given a wide variety of practical experiences, pace was lively, the work entertaining and pupils were involved in and challenged and stimulated by all activities, being swept along by the teacher's enthusiasm and expertise. All lessons in Years 7 to 9 were good. A very good, well planned, lesson in Year 10, on the topic of metals, combined skilful question and answer sessions with practical work; pupils enjoyed the lesson and learnt well. Learning was less effective in a Year 11 lesson on electromagnets, where pupils were less involved and the pace of the lesson was allowed to drop.
91. The management and organisation of the department are good. There are very good systems in place for day-to-day running. Planning and curriculum development are very good. There are very good methods of assessment and pupils are aware of their attainment through an effective 'traffic light' system. However, marking of work is not effective enough; pupils are not told specific ways in which they can improve in order to meet their next target. At present the work of pupils is checked and some marked in depth but comments and guidelines for progress are few. The recent dip in the performance of boys in GCSE has been carefully analysed and practical teaching strategies are being put into place.

92. There is a good contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural education; examples were seen of an emphasis on the wonder of science, for example the birth of a child. The broader significance of science, and the way it impacts on our lives, was seen developed in several lessons to increase the meaning of topics being studied.
93. Since the last inspection there has been very good progress. All points made in the report have been comprehensively addressed. There is a new science block in place, teaching is good, and results have improved steadily. Assessment procedures are very well developed.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards of work are well above average
- Teaching is very good and contributes to pupils' very good progress
- There is some excellent work in ceramics and light sculpture
- Leadership and management are very good
- There are extensive displays of work celebrating pupils' achievement

Area for improvement

- The provision for three-dimensional work in GCSE is thin

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well above average	Well above average
Boys' standard of work seen	Well above average	Well above average
Overall achievement	Very good	Very good
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good
Teaching	Very good	Very good
Learning	Very good	Very good
Leadership and management	Very good	Very good

94. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 agree with the standards of work seen, because assessment is done meticulously.
95. In 2002, GCSE results were well above average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was well above average. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-G grades was very high. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results were very good. Hence pupils' achievement was very good. Results in 2002 were broadly similar to those in 2001 and 2000. Slight variations are due to the differences between the individuals who choose the subject.
96. By Year 9, pupils can create excellent work in ceramics and light sculpture. They draw with confidence and have a very good knowledge of the fundamentals of composition. They use a very wide range of mark making techniques to achieve tone and texture in their drawings and paintings. They show a good ability to draw in perspective. These skills are taught formally in all years. These very good skills form an excellent basis for GCSE. However, there is a limited range of three-dimensional work done in GCSE.
97. Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress, because they get individual attention in all lessons. They also benefit from very good teacher demonstrations, which often use computers to help get techniques across. The most able pupils make very good progress, because they too get individual attention and are given excellent advice on how to extend their ideas. Pupils who may not use English as their first language at home make very good progress, because they benefit from visual demonstrations and close attention from their teachers.
98. All lessons were at least very good and one in six were excellent in Years 7 to 9. Year 11 were doing their controlled examination test during the inspection, so no direct teaching was seen. There are excellent features in all lessons. Teachers display excellent knowledge and understanding and plan and prepare very thoroughly. In Year 8, an excellent lesson in two-point perspective enabled all pupils to learn the technique and overall standards were excellent. Boys in particular enjoyed the lesson and took great pride in going well beyond the requirements set by the teacher.
99. Leadership and management are very good. Assessment is very good, particularly in Year 9 and in GCSE. Pupils taking GCSE are aware of the complex system of marking and know what has to be done to improve each aspect of their work. This contributes significantly to their success. There are extensive displays of pupils' work in all areas of the school. Much of this is of an excellent standard. This celebrates pupils' success and greatly enhances the school environment. There is good improvement since the previous report. Staffing has improved; there is a new teacher with specific expertise in three-dimensional work. There is provision for a wider range of media.
100. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. All these aspects are considered in the work of the artists studied. There are very good links with artists in Africa that broaden pupils' vision of art.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The very good ethos of the school provides a fine base for developing citizenship
- The democratic structure of the school council provides good experience for pupils
- Each department has a policy on how to include citizenship in their lessons

Areas for improvement

- Monitoring of teaching and learning in citizenship across all subjects is not done
- Pupils' work is not assessed
- All teachers are not trained in how to teach citizenship

101. A teacher was given the responsibility for managing citizenship two years before the statutory date for this new subject to begin (September 2003). While there is evidence of a start having been made, pupils' work is not sufficiently advanced to provide evidence for judgements such as those made in other subjects. The co-ordinator also has many other responsibilities: personal, social and health education (life skills), careers, work experience, and girls' physical education.
102. Preparation has included training for the co-ordinator from a number of agencies. Necessary topics were inserted into the life skills scheme, taught by form tutors in Year 7 and by five teachers with special knowledge of life skills for all other years. The dates and topics that focus on citizenship are clearly identified in planning, though aims and objectives are not explicitly stated. A look at how citizenship across the curriculum could be taught took the form of a commercial draft policy for each subject being edited by subject leaders to reflect what aspects they could deliver. Some teaching and learning demonstrating this work was seen. In life skills lessons, pupils in Year 11 show an understanding of the human qualities valued by employers and wisdom about the pointlessness of complaining thoughtlessly. Mathematics and design and technology lessons in Years 8 to 10 enable learning about developing balanced views on employment, whilst using percentages and designing logos for companies. Year 11 pupils, in a geography lesson, show they understand the counter arguments for industrial development and protecting the environment. However no monitoring of classroom provision has yet taken place, so what is being done, or not done, is not recorded. No pupils' work has been identified for assessment related to citizenship. Consequently, standards in citizenship, within other subjects' lessons, cannot be reported on.
103. Learning about citizenship outside lessons is much stronger. Through many links with the community, pupils become aware of how societies are organised, of rights and responsibilities and of the part played by voluntary work. Democratic principles are experienced through the school council and the system of pupil representation throughout the school. The council issues minutes and has a notice board, post box and intranet site. Matters discussed and decided on are mainly domestic, though pupils show their awareness of important issues beyond their immediate environment. They demonstrate a mature attitude towards these for example, in discussing protest against the war in Iraq and referring to 'tabloids' and 'broadsheets'. Pupils generally show an above average degree of confidence and express their views clearly. There is much fund-raising work for charities involving direct contact with, for example, senior citizens and churches. The ASDAN group, of mainly disaffected pupils, showed initiative in getting permission from the town council to clean and decorate a nearby pedestrian underpass.
104. What remains to be done are the monitoring and assessment of citizenship work within lessons and some formal training in citizenship for all staff.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Improving standards at GCSE level
- Good teaching and learning across the subject
- Good use of ICT to raise standards
- Standards in food technology and in graphic products in Years 10 and 11
- The good progress made by pupils with special educational needs

Areas for improvement

- The skill of developing a design idea as pupils move through Years 7 to 9
- The consistent use of assessment strategies that help pupils to be more aware of the standard of their work
- Standards in systems and control elements of the curriculum

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Above average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

105. Boys achieve less well than girls by the end of Year 9 because they find difficulty in sustaining as much interest in their work. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 do not agree with the standard of work seen because there has not been sufficient moderation agreement between teachers, resulting in assessments that are too high.
106. GCSE results were just below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was just below average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was slightly above average. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results are good. Hence pupils' achievement is good. Boys' results were well below those of girls because boys find difficulty in sustaining standards over long-term projects. The work of boys needs to be more carefully managed and regularly assessed, to improve their standard of work. Too many boys also got low grades in the 'systems and control' examination. This course is proving to be too demanding. Nevertheless, boys' standards were similar to those found nationally. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. The trend in results over the last three years is up because teachers have clearer targets and a better understanding of the abilities of pupils.
107. By Year 9, pupils can work through the design process in a systematic way. They have developed good graphic skills and are becoming increasingly skilled in the use of ICT. Practical skills are satisfactory, but the quality of finished work sometimes lacks precision and refinement. However, pupils are relatively weak at developing a design idea. Too often they simply transfer an initial idea into a final product. Some good projects are spoiled by not using the more professional images that can be generated

on computer. By Year 11, the most able pupils can complete projects to a very high standard. These pupils have developed good research and analytical skills, and respond well to some very good teaching. Examples of high quality work are found in food technology, graphic products and resistant materials. However, some pupils find difficulty in sustaining their effort, do not work systematically, and often fail to meet deadlines for the completion of work. Teaching and assessment strategies need to be modified to enable these pupils to attain higher standards.

108. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are fully integrated in class and are very well supported by teachers. Expectations of them are high and, when appropriate, modified teaching materials of a good quality are provided. At times these pupils are also well supported by teaching assistants and by the department's technicians.
109. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Well over three quarters of lessons were good or better and a quarter very good. In Year 8, a very good lesson involved pupils working in teams as a bridge building company. The teacher provided very good resources and set clear tasks for the 'company' to achieve by the end of the lesson. Pupils had to produce their own ideas for the form, lettering and colour features of the company logo. These ideas were discussed and the best combined and used as the company logo. Pupils gained a good understanding of working in a team as well as developing lettering and colour skills. In contrast, in an otherwise satisfactory Year 7 lesson, pupils found difficulty in producing working mechanisms for a pop-up card. Although the teacher explained what was wanted using a whiteboard, pupils needed to see the teacher demonstrate what was wanted through actually making the varied mechanisms.
110. In Year 10, a very good lesson involved pupils in helping to meet the catering needs of the school play. In this practical lesson the teacher set up a batch production simulation for cheese scones. Strong links were formed with industrial practices, concentrating particularly on ways of achieving quality control, tolerance levels, hygiene standards and team roles and functions. At the end of the practical session, pupils were challenged to use their numeracy skills to calculate the cost of a batch of scones, to link this to the total number required and to work out a charge for the public, ensuring a healthy profit. The lesson established new knowledge and understanding and further developed important practical skills. In contrast, in a satisfactory Year 11 graphic products lesson, pupils were working on a range of activities towards completion of their GCSE projects. The teacher did not set out clearly enough what was expected of each individual by the end of the lesson. The teacher worked effectively with a relatively small number of pupils who made good progress. However, too many other pupils did not make significant progress towards completion of their projects.
111. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum is well planned and reviewed regularly. New vocational courses have been introduced and there has been a major initiative to train all staff in the use of ICT and nationally recognised design software. The improvement plan is well focused and supports whole school and departmental targets. Good policies are in place and implemented. Detailed analysis of examination results is undertaken and issues arising are brought to the attention of staff. This has resulted in changes to GCSE courses. Developments, which include more detailed monitoring of teaching and learning, better assessment practices in Years 10 and 11, and moderated assessments at the end of Year 9, should help to raise attainment still further. Extra-curricular activities are very good. All staff participate fully at lunchtime and after school. The workshop technician makes an excellent contribution, with

pupils, to community-based projects. The department is making a significant contribution to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, and to citizenship. Opportunities for work have been carefully traced through the curriculum. However, teachers rarely make overt reference to these matters and therefore pupils do not fully realise the importance of some of the experiences that they have. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching, particularly in Years 10 and 11, leading to good achievement throughout the school
- The quality and range of the curriculum, including educational visits
- The contribution the geography staff make to GNVQ Leisure and Tourism, widening opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11
- The match of teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum
- The contribution made to work about citizenship

Areas for improvement

- The quality of reports to parents
- Pupils not always recording their work well enough

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Just below average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Just below average	Average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

112. Boys achieve as well girls by the end of Year 9 because they have positive attitudes towards learning and are well behaved. Tasks set are appropriately designed to capture the interest of both boys and girls; for example, in Year 8, work on migration explores differing motives from conquest to community development
113. In 2002, GCSE results were average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was average overall, with above average attainment at grade A, but below average at grade B. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was just above average. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results are good. Hence pupils' achievement is good. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. The trend in results over the last three years is up. This is because of good teaching, improved procedures for target setting and careful analysis of prior examination performance.
114. By Year 9, pupils can use maps effectively, recognising different symbols, understanding scale and using grid references. They are able to compare two sets of data and recognise the relationship of one to another. For example, they accurately match annual rainfall statistics to altitude and relief. However, they cannot always give convincing answers to explain these differences. Pupils know that climate varies in

different world regions and they are able to collate data on Brazil and offer valid comments upon temperature and rainfall. Standards when pupils started at the school were well below average and therefore pupils achieve well.

115. By Year 11, pupils understand how movements in the earth's crust can lead to volcanoes erupting and earthquakes occurring. They accurately record these movements in carefully labelled diagrams. They recognise these events have social and economic consequences for the local population. Pupils improve their problem-solving and decision-making skills effectively. For example, they study the development of national parks, identify conflicting interests and choose preferred strategies for managing change. However, pupils do not always write up their work in sufficient detail to include all relevant details. This work is part of their GCSE examination preparation and is effectively planned, so that it provides good opportunities for independent research and the development of thinking skills. Most pupils respond positively to these opportunities and they are well supported by teachers' secure knowledge and understanding of work and examination requirements. In other work, such as investigations on local land use, the very effective pupil management in place promotes very good learning from less able pupils.
116. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are effectively supported; appropriate tasks are set and they receive the individual attention of support staff. The most able pupils make good progress because they are often challenged to attempt additional tasks.
117. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Over half the lessons seen were good or better. In Year 9, a good lesson quickly captured pupils' attention because of appropriate resources and the introduction of a problem solving activity. Pupils proposed a hypothesis and proceeded to explore its validity. Learning was consolidated effectively through careful questioning and good opportunities for all to contribute. In contrast, a satisfactory lesson in Year 7 provided some good opportunities for pupils to handle equipment designed to measure the weather; pupils used text books to identify the use of the equipment but were unable to explore where best to locate it for maximum effect. The lesson was well organised, but did not provide sufficient opportunities to explore pupils' understanding of weather conditions. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is mostly good. This is because basic skills are taught effectively, pupils are carefully managed and the good use of resources, including computers, captures pupils' interest.
118. In Year 10, a very good lesson provided many opportunities for pupils to explore leisure activities in the Lake District. Because of the skilful management of behaviour, pupils made rapid progress and were fully involved in an activity that challenged them and provided an element of fun. In contrast, a good lesson in Year 11 provided considerable opportunities for pupils to work collaboratively and make decisions. This lesson supported the development of citizenship extremely well and provided useful opportunities to improve self-confidence and develop speaking and listening skills. Teaching in Years 10 and 11 is consistently good, or better. This is because teachers have a very secure knowledge and understanding of their subject and manage pupils particularly well.
119. Leadership and management are good. The head of department is committed to the needs of all pupils and good curricular planning ensures they are met. He takes great care to analyse prior performance and discuss this with colleagues. As a result, standards are rising in Years 7 to 9. They have been maintained in Years 10 and 11,

despite pupils' below average levels of attainment on entry to the GCSE course. The curriculum is of good quality and is enriched by the substantial range of day and residential educational visits available to all pupils. These make good use of the nearby Lake District. Assessment procedures are good and the use of assessment is satisfactory. There is a very good match of teachers to class groups. For example, in Year 9, the rotation of classes takes advantage of the particular expertise of teachers, and in Years 10 and 11 the match is particularly good. These factors promote good rates of learning, good achievement and good pupil attitudes in all years.

120. The department makes a good contribution to the development of citizenship by promoting opportunities for independent and collaborative work. Provision for pupils' social and spiritual development is good. The department also makes a significant contribution to vocational courses by planning and teaching leisure and tourism. This provides additional opportunities for pupils to study geographical themes through a different course. The quality of annual reports is too often unsatisfactory; some lack sufficient individual information for parents.
121. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory, pupils achieve well and this is a successful department, with a significant number of strengths.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11 with a clear focus on the skills for examination success
- Good systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress
- Good leadership and management of the department with a clear focus on raising standards
- Positive pupil attitudes, good relationships and improved popularity of the subject at examination level

Areas for improvement

- Teaching and learning in Years 7 to 9 are not as good as in Years 10 and 11
- The good system for assessing and monitoring pupils' attainment and progress is not consistently followed all the time
- Marking of work does not tell pupils clearly enough how to improve

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Good
Teaching	Satisfactory	Good
Learning	Satisfactory	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

122. In 2002, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were well below the national average, with boys' attainment lower than that of girls. However, these assessments represent a great improvement on those in the previous year and the standard of work seen during the inspection represents a further improvement. Assessments for 2000

showed much higher attainment but these figures do not appear to have been based on reliable evidence.

123. Overall GCSE results in 2002 were below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was below average but the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was above the national average. In these examinations, boys' attainment was above average and girls' below. These results represent satisfactory achievement in 2002 compared to previous attainment by these pupils. Results were better in 2001: the overall proportion of pupils attaining grades A*-C and grades A*-G were both above average, with boys' attainment well below average and girls well above. There is no consistent pattern over the last three years, largely because of the different prior attainment of each year's cohort of pupils choosing history at examination level. The number of pupils opting for GCSE history over the last three years has increased considerably.
124. Behaviour in history lessons is good overall. Attitudes are positive, indeed very positive in Years 10 and 11, and relationships are good. All of these factors help to raise standards
125. By Year 9 most pupils have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied. Most can select and organise information to produce pieces of structured writing that describe events and explain some of their causes and results. Many pupils of below average ability have weaknesses in basic literacy skills which hinder their attainment. In contrast, pupils of above average ability can use many historical terms correctly and can produce a good standard of writing. These pupils reach standards expected nationally. Most pupils can make effective use of historical sources but they cannot evaluate these sources or identify their limitations. By Year 11, most can use and interpret historical sources effectively; they can identify the perspective of a particular source and comment on why it is useful. However, pupils are generally weaker at evaluation, particularly evaluation for reliability. Most pupils can write effectively in longer form. Pupils of below average ability have a basic knowledge and understanding of their GCSE topics and can explain some causes and consequences of events. Those of above average ability can deploy their knowledge, understanding and command of historical terminology effectively to produce a good standard of writing. The standard of attainment in the current Year 11 is relatively higher than that in Year 10, partly reflecting the different ability profiles of each cohort and partly the good achievement pupils make over the two years of effective teaching, with a clear focus on the skills pupils need for examination success.
126. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall: while the provision of in-class support for these pupils is limited, the department itself makes good provision in materials and methods suited to the need of these pupils. The most able pupils also make good progress because their teachers regularly challenge them.
127. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. There were no unsatisfactory lessons during the inspection. Half of the total lessons were good or very good. Lessons have clear objectives and are well planned, so that pupils understand what they are doing. In most lessons, these objectives are explained at the start and learning is summarised at the end, though this is not always done consistently in Years 7 to 9. Pupils are regularly challenged to think for themselves. For example, in a good Year 8 lesson, pupils worked in pairs to read and categorise the reasons for the growth of the British Empire, developing their understanding of why Britain wanted colonies. Occasionally, teachers need to ask clearer questions and re-emphasise key points so that all pupils understand them.

This was seen, for example, in a satisfactory Year 9 lesson on the bombing of north-east England during the Second World War, where good materials were deployed but some pupils did not understand the key terms and concepts upon which the lesson hinged. Where ICT is used, it is effective in helping pupils to learn. In a good Year 9 lesson, pupils used desktop publishing to present the research they had done through books and the Internet on their chosen topic, either the atomic bomb or the Holocaust.

128. At GCSE level, teaching focuses very clearly on helping pupils develop the skills necessary for examination success. In a very good Year 11 revision lesson, pupils were challenged to assess for themselves some answers to GCSE questions: they made very good progress in understanding what is required and they had a real opportunity to reflect on their own learning. In a satisfactory Year 10 lesson on public health, there was a similar clear focus on helping pupils to develop skills related to using historical sources, but GCSE criteria to assess each other's work were not used. Teachers manage their pupils well and, as a result, behaviour in history lessons is good. Occasionally in the lower school, a minority of pupils are rather passive or there is a loss of concentration towards the end of lessons. Teachers produce their own consistently good materials, which are well matched to the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs. Occasionally within a group, there is a need for greater use of different tasks for pupils of different abilities. Teachers use systematic methods to help pupils develop the writing skills that are crucial to their success in this subject. Homework is used to support learning but not always as effectively as it could be.
129. Leadership and management of the subject are good. The head of department has a heavy burden with responsibility for two subjects but has achieved a lot in the two years in post. There is a clear focus on raising standards and a clear lead on improving the quality of teaching and learning. Planning is good, with appropriate priorities and challenging targets for raising attainment. The head of department monitors standards and the quality of teaching and learning effectively and has a clear understanding of the department's strengths and remaining areas for development. Not all the department's policies are yet consistently applied in every lesson. Work is marked and assessed regularly using National Curriculum and examination criteria so that pupils have a clear understanding of their performance, targets and progress. Pupils at GCSE level clearly benefit from the individual mentoring they receive. However, comments on routine marked work do not consistently indicate how pupils can improve and last year not all the scheduled assessments were carried out. Reports to parents give insufficient information on attainment, progress and how pupils can improve. Resources are well managed and are improving.
130. The history curriculum is broad and balanced. The department makes very good use of local history to illustrate national themes. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 appreciate the breadth and relevance of their GCSE course. Though the study of non-European cultures is limited in Years 7 to 9, it is good at GCSE level. The department makes an important contribution both to citizenship and to pupils' social, moral and cultural education. For example, good use was made of the opportunity in a Year 8 lesson to consider an African perspective on colonialism.
131. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. Standards of attainment and the quality of teaching have been maintained but the subject is now much more popular at GCSE level than it was. Leadership and management have improved: planning, resources including ICT and systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are all better than at the time of the previous inspection. These all suggest that standards are likely to rise in due course.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils make good progress
- Teachers have good relationships with pupils
- Pupils are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons
- There is very good leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- Academic targets for pupils are not based on National Curriculum criteria.
- A significant minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take the GNVQ course and their ICT work in other subjects, though broad, is insufficiently monitored so it is unclear how much they do

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Very good	Very good

132. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 because they have positive attitudes and the work set by teachers is appropriate. Teacher assessments of pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2002 indicate that standards were slightly above average. However, current standards are average.
133. In 2002, GCSE results for boys were well below average compared to those in all schools; the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was low, the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was average. Girls results were above average; more attained A*-C grades. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results are unsatisfactory for boys, but satisfactory for girls. Hence girls achieved satisfactorily but boys did not. Better management and teaching this year, due to staff changes, mean all pupils are achieving well in the examination course.
134. Pupils arrive in school with a mixed background of ICT experience, and make good progress in learning new skills and increasing their knowledge to reach nationally expected levels by Year 9. In Year 9, pupils can produce web pages for different audiences. They make good use of word-processing skills, and import images from the Internet to create attractive pages. They understand the importance of layout and content for both children and adults, using colour and *Clip art* for children and more factual information for adults. Higher attaining pupils, in early GNVQ work, have good knowledge of modelling using spreadsheets, and can make good use of hyperlinks in their web pages.
135. By Year 11, pupils can make use of a wide range of skills as they complete projects for their GNVQ ICT courses. They use spreadsheets with more advanced formulas and show understanding of how to query a database. In web page design they make

extensive use of word processing, desktop publishing and careful selection of appropriate images to create pages. Higher attaining pupils make good use of hypertext mark up language (HTML) in creating their web pages. Lower attaining pupils have weaker evaluation of their work, and also fail to complete work. The majority of pupils show a commitment to the subject, with well-presented project work showing evidence of improvement over time.

136. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because teachers know their capabilities well and set appropriate work, enabling these pupils to have some success. The most able pupils make good progress because the work set is challenging and allows pupils to work independently. Pupils who may not use English as the first language at home make good progress because teachers are aware of difficulties they face and provide additional help.
137. There were no unsatisfactory lessons; most were good or better. In a good Year 8 lesson pupils were reminded about the importance of audience when producing slides for a presentation; in a satisfactory lesson pupils spent too much time collecting data and had insufficient time using computers. Very good planning and preparation of a Year 9 lesson on developing web pages led to very good learning; using criteria from National Curriculum attainment levels helped pupils understand clearly what they needed to do to improve. In other lessons little if any use is made of these criteria and pupils do not necessarily know how to produce better work.
138. In Year 11, in a very good lesson on a slide show presentation, the teacher made very good use of examination criteria to help pupils understand how to gain a pass, merit or distinction. The very good attitudes of these pupils, who started on the Foundation course, have led to them being entered for the Intermediate course. However, a small proportion of other pupils taking the Foundation course, though making good progress in lessons, sometimes fail to produce necessary coursework, and, coupled with absence, their progress over a longer period of time is restricted.
139. Leadership and management of the subject of ICT are very good. New schemes of work have been introduced in Years 7 to 9, to incorporate the Key Stage 3 National Strategy. In Years 10 and 11 a range of GNVQ and GCSE courses have been introduced to meet the needs of the wide range of pupil ability and to help raise standards, particularly those of boys. Assessment practice is very good; the 'traffic light' system to help set academic targets is a powerful tool, which contributes to rising standards in the subject.
140. Since the last inspection improvement in ICT lessons has been very good; discrete lessons in Years 7 to 9 give pupils a wide experience of ICT. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes better. Pupils are well behaved and have a good attitude towards the subject. However, a significant proportion of pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not take GNVQ ICT, although many make use of ICT in many other subjects; it is unclear how far they meet National curriculum requirements.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good achievement in Years 7 to 9, particularly in French
- Good teaching overall, leading to good learning
- Good leadership and management

Areas for improvement

- The progress made by pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Marking, assessment, and some inconsistencies in teaching, in Years 10 and 11
- The use of ICT

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching	Good	Satisfactory
Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

141. Boys achieve less well than girls by the end of Year 9 because boys' attitudes to work are not as positive; however, differences in their performance are in line with national differences. Teacher assessments over the past four years have varied from average to below average.
142. In 2002, GCSE results were below average in French and German compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well below average in French, below average in German. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was average in French, above average in German. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the results are satisfactory. Hence pupils' achievement is satisfactory. Boys' results were low compared with girls' results. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. The trend in results over the last three years is rising.
143. By Year 9, pupils have developed a good vocabulary, which enables them to understand written and spoken texts more easily. They speak with confidence and usually with good pronunciation. When given the opportunity they are able to speak at length at an appropriate level. Many high attaining pupils achieve in line with national expectations in their written work. The best pupils can manipulate language effectively. Many middle and low attainers can write accurately and give basic information about themselves. However there are some inconsistencies which mean that standards overall are below average. In a minority of lessons, pupils are not given the opportunity to produce extended oral work. A small number of high attaining pupils do not have an adequate mastery of the main tenses. Some average and low attaining pupils do not write accurately and often find it difficult to convey meaning effectively. By Year 11, while many pupils achieve well, there are inconsistencies in standards in both French and German which mean that progress overall is satisfactory. In French, standards of speaking are close to expectations for high attaining pupils but average pupils often lack the confidence to respond other than at a basic level. In writing, high attainers demonstrate a secure grasp of the main tenses but there is little evidence of work at the highest level. Standards of writing for average pupils are inconsistent. Some use tenses well and achieve beyond expectations; others write at a basic level. In German, some high attaining pupils demonstrate very high attainment in writing using complex structures and varied vocabulary but low and average attainers sometimes write inaccurately and achieve below expectations. Some high attaining pupils in Year 10 were using tenses accurately in extended oral

work; others were working at below average levels in listening and reading. Attainment in Spanish is below average and pupils make only satisfactory progress because of limited curriculum time.

144. Pupils with special educational needs make the same progress as other pupils. In Years 7 to 9 they make good progress because most teachers know them well and are able to support them effectively. In Years 10 and 11, they make satisfactory progress because, although most teachers know and support them well, expectations about what they can achieve are sometimes inappropriate. The most able pupils make the same progress as other pupils for similar reasons.
145. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. More than half the lessons were good or better. There was some excellent teaching
146. In Year 7, one excellent lesson had clear objectives so that pupils knew exactly what they were expected to achieve. There was a clear focus to the lesson and the teacher used a wide variety of teaching methods with a high level of pupil involvement. As a result, all pupils concentrated and contributed well to the lesson, particularly during the presentation of new vocabulary; pupils were able to consolidate this new vocabulary and practise a variety of skills. The teacher had an excellent relationship with the class so pupils responded with enthusiasm and the teacher's high expectations ensured all pupils achieved very well. In lessons that were satisfactory, teachers planned lessons well and maintained good relationships with pupils. However, these lessons were sometimes too centred on the teacher so pupils did not become involved in the lesson. Often objectives were not clear. In some lessons teachers had low expectations so pupils were not challenged.
147. In one good lesson in Year 11, pupils learned well because the teacher had high expectations. The lesson was conducted at a good pace so pupils had to concentrate hard. Good planning allowed pupils who lacked oral confidence to build their responses so that they were able to achieve at a level appropriate to their ability. Objectives of the lesson were clear and pupils had a good understanding of GCSE criteria so that they knew what they had to do to achieve particular grades. Pupils remained well motivated because relationships in the lesson were good. In lessons that were satisfactory planning was good and teachers had a good relationship with pupils. However, expectations were sometimes not high enough, so a few pupils achieved at a lower level than that of which they were capable. They were not clear about their progress because lesson objectives were not made clear and pupils had a limited understanding of GCSE requirements.
148. Leadership and management are good. Teachers work together well. Documentation is of high quality but schemes of work need further development. Systems for monitoring and evaluating teaching are not yet totally effective. There are good assessment systems in Years 7 to 9 with particularly good pupil involvement, but assessment is less effective in Years 10 and 11. Marking is consistent and encouraging but does not set pupils targets for improvement. Curriculum provision is of high quality and Spanish is offered as an optional second language for the more able. However, standards within Spanish are restricted by the short time provided for it. The class setting system is leading to classes of wide ability in all years; this makes it difficult for teachers to address the needs of all pupils effectively. Good relationships mean that the moral and social development of pupils is good, while the emphasis on understanding French and German civilisation means that cultural development is also good. The development of literacy skills is satisfactory. However, the development of ICT skills is unsatisfactory. In these cross-curricular areas

departmental planning is inadequate; citizenship is the only area where there is a policy statement. The new course book in French is having a significant effect on standards but resources for German in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very good, enabling all pupils to achieve well
- Extra curricular work is enthusiastic, excellently directed and a strong support to learning
- Leadership and management are good with high expectations for improvement

Areas for improvement

- Establish sufficient permanent teachers to ensure improvements are sustained
- Improve assessment, using National Curriculum levels to raise standards
- Develop more rapidly the use of computers with music software in all years

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Very good	Good
Learning	Very good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Very good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

149. There is now little difference between the achievement of boys and girls by the end of Year 9. Teacher assessments in the last three years, all of which are low compared to the national average, do not agree with the standards of work seen because the assessments are unreliable. Achievement and attainment in Years 7-9 have been limited for some pupils during a recent period of staffing problems, currently resolved.
150. GCSE results, with small numbers of candidates, are broadly in line with the average when compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade in 2001 was higher than average. The one candidate in 2002 gained an A grade. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was above average – 100 percent in each of the last three years, none being awarded less than a D. If overall GCSE results in 2001 are compared to the performance indicated by teacher assessment of those six pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2000, which were very low, then the results show very good achievement. For most of the 24 boys and girls currently in Years 10 and 11, composition and performance are strengths, with listening a comparative weakness. Recruitment to the course is particularly good among boys.
151. By Year 9, pupils can use keyboards to play tunes and accompaniments, mostly in pairs but some with two hands together. They can use stave notation, in treble and bass clefs, to follow music and to play, most relying on note names with symbols. They recall knowledge of terms learned, for example those found in Indian music. They can identify features and contexts of music heard, and the effect of such music, including mystery and respect, which supports their spiritual development. Some pupils use computers well to research and present such learning. Younger pupils can

improvise five-note tunes on percussion instruments, most of them in time and a few creating musical phrasing and sensitivity. Pupils generally behave very well, and all, including those with learning problems, are enabled to achieve. Enjoyment and delight is often shown, particularly through singing. By Year 11, most pupils show developed performance skills, supported for most by tuition in school or privately. About half can identify features of five periods of Western music aurally. Others find it difficult to relate to music that is beyond their experience as performers. Some use is made of computer software for composition, though no notated work was seen. Achievement is very good for the majority, including, for example one high attainer and a pupil with a statement of special educational needs. Both have produced compositions based on the instruments they play, very different but each of high standard. All pupils in Years 10 and 11 show very positive attitudes to learning. Most intend to include music in further education, a few aiming for study at university.

152. Teaching overall is very good. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Nearly all were good or very good and one was excellent. Teaching fully engages pupils in learning activities throughout most lessons. In a Year 7 lesson, the whole class were directed through a non-stop performance of *Daniel Jazz*, the teacher showing immense enthusiasm and skill, generating an atmosphere of controlled excitement. In an excellent Year 8 lesson, skilful questioning helped pupils show their very good knowledge of renaissance music, based on previous good teaching and learning. Teaching then enabled continuous improvisation over drones, on xylophones, with all pupils participating. The teacher's piano backing made this a complete and memorable musical experience. In a Year 9 lesson, teaching made a smooth transition from reflection on their recent experience of visiting Indian musicians to the haunting music of Ligeti by focusing on the sound and concept of the semitone. Good teaching in Year 10 helped pupils to analyse their playing when practising, to aid progress. In a Year 11 class, individual help enabled a dyslexic pupil to achieve, with an effective plenary session helping all pupils to feel proud of their achievements.
153. Leadership and management of music are good. The head of music provides a stimulating learning environment and generates challenging learning tasks. As the only full-time teacher he works very hard in fostering extra activities and learning opportunities. These include choral and instrumental groups directed excellently, visits and visiting groups. He also directs a twilight 'cluster' music school for primary schools, a local authority initiative designed to impact well on standards and interest in music. Standards have risen since the last inspection but there remain important areas for development. Assessment is not good enough; the criteria for National Curriculum levels for pupils aged 11 to 14 are not included in the process and pupils are insufficiently aware of how to improve. Insufficient use of computers is made in all years and this does not reflect music making in the 21st century. The subject leader has insufficient professional contact with teachers in other arts subjects, for curriculum planning and assessment. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Given the necessary time, permanent staffing and other resources, prospects of further improvement are very good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is **unsatisfactory**.

Strength

- The very good attitudes and motivation of pupils

Areas for improvement

- The quality of teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11
- The curriculum imbalance towards games does not pay enough attention to the creative and aesthetic elements of physical education
- Poor departmental development planning does not support raising standards
- Assessment methods are weak, and do not help in planning the curriculum or supporting teaching, to help meet the needs of pupils

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Very good	Very good.
Leadership and management	Unsatisfactory	Poor

154. When pupils start school in Year 7, their level of attainment is broadly as nationally expected. By Year 9, teacher assessments indicate that the attainment of pupils is still broadly average. Inspection evidence supports this view. By Year 11, attainment remains broadly average within the limited range of work done. Many pupils do not make enough progress, particularly in Year 11. This indicates unsatisfactory achievement overall.
155. Pupils respond well when teachers set challenges. They most often arrive promptly at lessons and have a very positive attitude to the subject. Almost all pay close attention to teacher guidance, and most work co-operatively with energy and enthusiasm. Many pupils are able and willing to offer responses to questions when asked. They are trustworthy and can work effectively when not under direct supervision. They make good use of the few opportunities arising to analyse and evaluate their own and others' performances against set criteria. Relationships and behaviour in lessons are very good. Pupils with special educational needs progress at a similar rate to their peers. There are no variations in the progress made by different groups of pupils.
156. By Year 9, pupils are able to perform competently in a range of games, and they know the rules of several sports. They are beginning to understand the principles of team play. They have a satisfactory understanding of health related fitness, and they know why it is necessary to warm up before exercise and how to do so.
157. By Year 11, most pupils can apply broadly average knowledge, performance skills and understanding of rules and tactics, in both conditioned and full game situations. They are active participants in a range of popular and minority sports but the curriculum they are provided with does not let them do non-games physical activity to any appreciable depth.
158. The behaviour of pupils is very good in the school and reflected in physical education lessons. Not all teachers have expectations that pupils will behave correctly, but they do. Teachers' expectations about pupils' attitudes to learning are low, and very low as pupils get older. They do not demand a high enough quality of work from them. The department makes little overt contribution to raising standards of literacy across the school, less to raising standards of numeracy, and makes no noticeable contribution to raising standards of ICT. Teaching methods are not varied sufficiently to meet the individual needs of all pupils, particularly the more able, but there are some good teacher demonstrations, and mostly clear, though long-winded, exposition. Otherwise

competent teachers do not feel confident to teach in all areas of the modern curriculum. In particular, this restricts areas of aesthetic and creative learning. This has resulted in a significant imbalance in the curriculum.

159. Two very good lessons were seen in Years 7 to 9, and two unsatisfactory lessons in Year 11. When learning is very good, teachers challenge pupils to improve the quality of their work, they actively coach and guide them, and pupils remain on task and work with interest and enthusiasm. When lessons are unsatisfactory, teachers do not engage with their pupils, the pace of work slows dramatically, and pupils are content to drift. Pupils do not make sufficient progress.
160. Leadership and management are poor. Leadership lacks vision, and management does not ensure pupils receive a balance of activities. There is no picture of the standards to which the department aspires. Pupils are assessed at the end of each module of work, but the assessments are not linked to any national criteria; they do not provide information of any accuracy about the progress pupils are making, nor do they identify any skill deficiencies pupils may have. Teachers do not have the appropriate information to ascertain where pupils are succeeding or failing, or what they themselves need to modify, in order to secure improvement. Pupils do not know how well they are progressing, or how they compare with pupils elsewhere. Nor do the teachers. Development planning lacks rigour; it is not directed at improving standards. Inconsistent monitoring of teaching is not focussed on how well pupils learn.
161. The very limited time (three percent of all curriculum time) for gymnastic activities is wholly inadequate, when compared with 64 percent allocated to games in Years 7 to 9, and 81 percent allocated to games in Years 10 and 11. Schools are expected to teach at least four areas of the National Curriculum to Year 9, and two areas to the end of Year 11, with some measure of balance. The small amount of dance (five percent) is offered only to girls, and this is inequality of opportunity. The department acknowledges that the range of extra-curricular activities has reduced in recent years, and now offers a more limited, though satisfactory, range of opportunities for pupils to refine and develop their physical performances. Some pupils compete successfully in teams and as individuals at district and regional level, with a small number reaching county or national standard. The department is part of the Area 1 cluster of the City of Sunderland school sports co-ordinator programme. Accommodation overall is very good. The department is well funded and the quality and amount of equipment for use in lessons is good.
162. Improvement since the last inspection is very poor. The department's response has been too little, too late. Some, but not all, of the strong aspects have been maintained, and only one of the seven areas noted for development in the last inspection has been fully addressed.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teachers have very good class management skills
- Lessons are well structured to give pupils factual information
- Teachers show a good commitment to the subject

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient time for the subject in Years 10 and 11
- Planning needs to be done in more depth
- Assessment needs to be developed further
- Pupils' written work needs to be marked more closely

Aspect	Years 7 to 9	Years 10 and 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Below Average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

163. There are no teacher assessments at the end of Year 9. The locally agreed syllabus does not make this a requirement.
164. In 2002, GCSE (short course) results were above average. The proportions of pupils attaining an A*-C grade or an A*-G grade were high. However, although all pupils in Year 10 followed the GCSE short course, only those perceived to be the top 25 percent of pupils were entered for the examination. If the overall religious education GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 national test results in 2000, then the results are as expected. Hence these pupils achieved satisfactorily.
165. However, 75 percent of pupils have no significant assessment of their work at the end of Year 10. There are only four lessons of religious education provided for pupils in Year 11. Overall, there is inadequate time given to enable pupils to cover the requirements of the agreed syllabus in Years 10 and 11. The factual elements of the syllabus are covered in general outline. However, pupils have very little opportunity to evaluate religious and other views on human experience, there are few opportunities to give an informed and well argued account of their own and others' values and commitments, and there is almost no time to study contemporary moral issues in any depth.
166. By Year 9, pupils have a general knowledge of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. However, they cannot understand the nature of symbolic practices or what they represent. They understand some of the reasons why people believe in God but there is little reflection on the meaning beyond stating 'family' or 'prayers' in their answers. Pupils are not confident when speaking about religious ideas.
167. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they get individual attention from their teachers. However, some of the written work presented is too difficult for those who have poor skills in literacy. There is a need for some simplification in teachers' planning. Pupils who may not use English as a first language at home make satisfactory progress, because they get individual help from their teachers.
168. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. One in five were good. In Year 7 there was a good lesson in promoting thinking skills. Pupils were asked to reach opinions from evidence. They were given good guidance and opportunities to argue logically. In Year 11 pupils were given a good introduction to the profound question of looking for meaning in life. The teacher gave very good examples to help pupils to learn how we

form our understanding from memory and experience. Overall, teachers rely too much on textbooks. In many cases teachers do not expand on the topic beyond what is in them. There is inadequate provision for gifted and talented pupils in some lessons. However, all teachers show a good commitment to teaching the subject in the spirit of national requirements.

169. Leadership and management are satisfactory as work is organised appropriately within the limits of the time and staff available. The head of department is also the head of history. This combined management is very demanding. The subject is taught for the most part by teachers who are history specialists. There is a need for more detailed planning, to ensure that all the requirements of the agreed syllabus are met. Marking and assessment range from very good to satisfactory. There is a need for marking to be done in more detail to support pupils' skills in literacy.
170. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development by considering these aspects in some detail in the work done. The subject makes some contribution to citizenship, particularly with regard to human rights and responsibilities. Pupils also gain an understanding of the diversity of national, regional and religious identities in the United Kingdom. However, citizenship is not explicitly built into schemes of work.
171. Improvement since the previous inspection is unsatisfactory. There is still not enough balance between knowledge and the exploration of religious questions. Pupils do not get enough opportunities to talk about their own thoughts, values and feelings in Years 10 and 11. There is little use of artefacts to enhance learning.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Business education

Overall, the quality of provision in business studies is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils have experience of the subject in Year 9, so they have a better idea of what they are opting for when older than they do in most schools
- The choice of courses in Years 10 and 11 is good
- Marking is good and helps pupils know clearly how to improve

Areas for improvement

- Teachers do not talk enough to pupils about what the work means
- Computers are not used often enough or well enough
- Pupils' relatively low levels of literacy and numeracy inhibit work in business studies

Aspect	Year 9	Years 10 -11
Girls' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Boys' standard of work seen	Average	Average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

172. In Year 9 pupils have an acceptable understanding of book-keeping, and of how business organisations work and differ from each other. Pupils' knowledge is less secure on basic vocabulary and concepts. For example, pupils do not know the meanings of terms like 'receipts', 'accounts' and 'consultant' and most cannot give examples of the different types of business organisation they have to study. Pupils' weak literacy and numeracy skills impede their learning about business. Modern business practice is not always reflected through the appropriate use of computers, consequently opportunities to motivate pupils are sometimes lost. Pupils with special educational needs achieve as well as their peers in all years.
173. Older pupils taking examination courses do not learn well enough overall and consequently too many achieve unsatisfactorily. Most pupils working towards GCSE Accounts become adept with double-entry book-keeping, though few can cope with accounting errors, or handle discounts and part-payments. Pupils become skilful in basic marketing and adept at using computers – especially if they also follow the keyboarding course – though their expertise is sometimes limited and does not extend beyond word processing, presentation and the use of spreadsheets. This is also true of GNVQ pupils, though their ICT standards are higher. In all courses, pupils do not acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding; few can explain the roles of accountants and the Inland Revenue, when to use which kind of computer software, or what owners actually think about when locating a business. Some teaching concentrates too much on basic business skills and too little on developing pupils' knowledge and understanding. The development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills is inconsistent.
174. Teaching is satisfactory overall. However, lessons did not always include a sufficiently wide range of activities. On occasion the pace was too pedestrian to facilitate rapid progress seen in other lessons. Teaching is sometimes too weighted to whole class teaching with too little interaction with pupils. In these lessons there is too little challenge to encourage pupils to think, question, and learn actively. However, teachers mark pupils' work often and carefully and in Years 10 and 11 marking is sometimes excellent, giving clear guidance on how pupils can improve.
175. Teachers work well together as a department. Classrooms are cramped as they are also used as computer rooms and equipment takes up space. Both classrooms have 20 computers but not all are working; the way they are positioned does not make them easy to use and there are not enough for pupils in some classes to have one each. These drawbacks do not encourage the use of ICT. There is a good supply of books and worksheets but the books are rather dated and some of the worksheets are out of date. Progress since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. The Year 9 course is better and the range of courses in Years 10 and 11 is broader. However, there are too few links with local firms and other useful organisations.

Leisure and tourism

176. This subject was not fully inspected but several lessons were seen and work was scrutinised.
177. The provision for leisure and tourism is good. Pupils in Year 10 have the opportunity to choose this two-year course as part of their Intermediate level GNVQ studies. It is effectively taught by staff of the geography department and offers good opportunities for pupils to study a range of topics that give them good insights into the local and regional economy. Work seen during the inspection includes studies of sports

facilities, such as Sunderland FC, local venues for arts and entertainment and opportunities for recreation within country parks.

178. The course promotes a number of skills well. These include the development of ICT skills. Pupils make good use of the Internet to research their topics and then present their ideas in imaginative form, using a range of presentational skills. Pupils made good progress in becoming independent learners; they developed their self-confidence and worked both independently and collaboratively. The style of teaching is to facilitate opportunities for independent study; this is appropriate and works well, being of good quality. Pupils work hard and take responsibility for their learning. All achieve at least satisfactory standards, with a number of pupils producing high quality work. Overall this course enriches the school curriculum and provides further choice for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Health and Social Care

179. Pupils' achievement in GNVQ Health and Social Care is good. Standards, in this intermediate course, are in line with the national average.
180. The standard of work in childcare is variable. More able pupils are achieving standards around the GCSE grade C/B boundary, but the majority are working well below grade C. The course is too demanding for some of these pupils.