

INSPECTION REPORT

WELLFIELD SCHOOL

Wingate

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114315

Headteacher: Mrs J F Elliott

Reporting inspector: Terence Parish
15465

Dates of inspection: 10th – 13th February 2003

Inspection number: 249183

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:	North Road East Wingate Co Durham
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	John Higgins
Date of previous inspection:	28 th April 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>How high are standards?</p> <p>The school's results and pupils' achievements</p> <p>How well are pupils taught?</p> <p>What should the school do to improve further?</p> <p>How well is the school led and managed?</p>
19369	C Wild	Lay inspector		<p>How high are standards?</p> <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 parents?</p>
12885	J Hunt	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12499	M Durkin	Team inspector	English	
20729	J Berry	Team inspector	Science	
22906	B Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology (ICT)	
10209	V Gormally	Team inspector	Art and design	
23891	P Slape	Team inspector	Design and technology	
11300	B Smith	Team inspector	<p>Geography</p> <p>Special educational needs</p> <p>Educational inclusion</p>	
31191	D Sylph	Team inspector	<p>History</p> <p>Citizenship</p>	
30911	J Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
18846	P Priest	Team inspector	Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
12985	S Jeffray	Team inspector	Physical education	

23480	M Harding	Team inspector	Religious education	
1984	F Pemberton	Team inspector	Vocational education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school, with 1,155 pupils on roll, is a larger than average 11-16 comprehensive school for boys and girls. Pupils' attainment on entry ranges from above average to very low and is predominantly well below average. The school is the largest in East Durham and 80 per cent of pupils are bussed in, mostly from former mining villages. Socio-economic circumstances are well below average. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and with statements of special educational need are above average and these pupils necessitate a wide range of different support; well over a third have emotional and behavioural disorders. There is also a unit that can take up to ten pupils with physical difficulties. Almost all pupils are of white English descent, and all pupils use English as their first language. The transport of pupils and provision for them at lunchtime are not satisfactory and make the work of the school harder than it should be. Difficulties of attracting teachers to, and retaining teachers in, this large school have knocked back progress made; the school is currently moving forward again.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory standard of education overall. Provision is better in subjects like history and modern foreign languages, where teaching and management have improved, and unsatisfactory where staffing is still not secure, like physical education. Academic standards overall are well below average but hard work by many teachers and good leadership and management are, this year, enabling pupils to achieve satisfactorily, an improvement from last academic year. Pupils respond well to good teaching and their behaviour in lessons is often good. However, a lot of control and monitoring has to take place outside lessons where around 10 per cent of pupils lack self discipline; consequently, behaviour overall is unsatisfactory. Pupils do come to school; attendance is satisfactory and improving. The headteacher has high expectations of all in the school and a clear vision looking towards providing a high standard of education. Staffing difficulties continue to thwart her ambitions though the position, at present, is a little better than it has been. Such difficulties contribute to the judgement that teaching is satisfactory overall despite much good teaching. As each pupil costs more than average to educate and examination standards were not high enough in 2002, value for money is currently unsatisfactory.

What the school does well

- Provision in about half of subjects is now good and pupils are showing good achievement in them.
- Provision for improving literacy is good and helping pupils to make progress in subjects.
- Provision for pupils with statements of educational need is good and, within the unit, very good.
- Academic monitoring and target setting are good and helping to raise standards.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes in lessons are most often satisfactory or better, and support learning.
- Leadership and management, including that of middle managers, are good overall. Managers use good procedures to help the school improve and handle difficulties well.

What could be improved

- Unsatisfactory teaching needs improving, and staffing needs to be better.
- Pupils' achievements in physical education in all years and in science and in religious education in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory; existing or recent staffing problems contribute to this.
- GCSE examination results were not good enough in 2002 and need to rise.
- Pupils' behaviour and attitudes outside lessons are unsatisfactory, particularly around lunchtime.
- There are too few learning support assistants.
- Pupils have too few opportunities for responsibility and initiative.
- Arrangements for transporting pupils to and from school add an unnecessary burden to teachers and managers.

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 April 1997. Teaching and learning are much better now. Standards have improved but 2002 results were a severe setback. A high staff turnover and difficulty in recruiting teachers have hindered progress and were significant factors leading to these low results. Art and design, information and communication technology (ICT), and modern foreign languages have improved and ICT, in particular, is now improving rapidly. Attendance is better. Attitudes and behaviour are similar. Monitoring attainment, using data to set academic targets to help pupils, and self-evaluation of how well the school is doing, are very much better and clearly help the school to tackle issues within subjects and across the school. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 now contains several vocational options though some of these need reviewing. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.

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			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
GCSE examinations	E	E	E	D

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

Overall, in 2002, the school did not do well enough in GCSE examinations or in end of Year 9 national tests. At the end of Year 9, mathematics results were in line with expectations whilst those in English and science were lower. At GCSE the proportion of pupils getting five or more A*-G passes was in line with that in similar schools. Too few pupils got higher grades and too many pupils got no grades. The last can be explained mostly by the number of pupils then following an off-site course which did not lead to GCSEs. Pupils' achievement, between starting in 1997 and leaving in 2002, was barely satisfactory. Many changes in teachers, particularly in the pupils' last two years in school, contributed to this picture of underperformance. Until 2001 the trend in end of Year 9 national test results was one of improvement whilst GCSE results were broadly in line with the national trend.

The school's targets for GCSE performance in 2002 were very challenging and not met. A rigorous evaluation of the situation was made by senior managers and presented to governors, and actions to try and improve things taken. Targets for 2003 are still very challenging but more realistic and about where they should be. Inspection shows that pupils are, overall, doing better this year, and achieving satisfactorily.

Standards of work seen are well below average overall at all levels, but achievement is satisfactory. Standards are well below average in English, mathematics, science, and physical education in all years and in religious education in Years 10 and 11. Standards are below average in all other subjects in all years, except business education in Years 10 and 11 where they are average. Pupils are achieving at least satisfactorily in most subjects in all years, though achievement, overall, is better in Years 7 to 9 than in Years 10 and 11; new teachers and fresh approaches have had more effect on younger pupils than older ones. Pupils' achievement is unsatisfactory in physical education in all years, largely due to the use of non-specialist teachers; in science in Years 10 and 11, mainly because of a poor staffing position last year and insufficient time for a new head of department to recover the situation; and in religious education in Years 10 and 11 because the head of department began a few weeks before the inspection and inherited some confusion. Poor to very low standards of literacy and numeracy when pupils start at the school hinder their progress in most subjects; they remain well below average throughout pupils' time in the school.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Satisfactory. Pupils take advantage of opportunities they are given outside lessons and most respond well to good teaching.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Unsatisfactory overall. In most lessons pupils behave well and get on with their work. When out of the classroom too many need controlling and a significant minority misbehave if they can.
Personal development and relationships	Unsatisfactory. There are too few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility, though the school council is an exception; it is very good. Relationships are generally satisfactory; a few pupils relate poorly to staff and other pupils.
Attendance	Satisfactory and improving. Pupils get to lessons fairly promptly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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.

It is difficult to recruit and retain teachers. Supply teachers, typically employed for between a week and one term, are used frequently and some pupils may get several different teachers for the same subject in a short time. This contributed to underachievement last year. Teaching is currently satisfactory overall but is precarious in several subjects until staffing can be made more secure. Teaching in English and mathematics in all years, and in science in Years 7 to 9, is satisfactory. Teaching in science in Years 10 to 11 and in physical education in all years is unsatisfactory. Teaching is good in all other subjects in all years; in religious education it is very good in Years 7 to 9.

Teachers' planning of work and management of pupils are most often good or better and the effective way they allocate time and resources to keep the rather long lessons going is a feature of much teaching. Many have adopted the 'three-part' lesson, so that pupils know what to expect, do various activities to acquire knowledge, skills and understanding, and then get a review or test at the end to see if they have learnt appropriately. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 are learning more effectively than older pupils mainly because they have more interest and generally better attitudes, though older pupils once settled into examination classes do work at a good pace.

National strategies for teaching literacy have been well embraced and most teachers do a good job, though improvement in standards is a slow process. Numeracy skills are taught satisfactorily, mainly in mathematics; the school is just starting to look at numeracy within all subjects.

Relatively more able pupils are recognised and many lessons provide some opportunities to challenge them, though these opportunities are not always fostered. Setting of classes by ability and extra work available after school helps pupils of a range of abilities make better progress. The needs of pupils with special educational needs are met well as far as provision allows but there are too few learning support assistants to provide frequent enough help; teaching overall would benefit from another adult in the classroom. Pupils in the resource base make very good progress.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. Statutory requirements are met and vocational courses are provided. However, a vocational course provided by the local education authority (LEA) is insufficiently monitored, various religious education and personal and social education courses overlap and duplicate work, and drama has been lost from most years due to staffing problems.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good within the limits of current staffing. There are not enough learning support assistants to meet pupils' needs in all classes.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Satisfactory overall and in each aspect. The positive effect of such provision is better seen in the classroom than in the corridors, playground and street; citizenship is a very good scheme of work but has not yet been in place long enough to make the difference.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Satisfactory overall. Monitoring of academic performance is good and beginning to improve learning. Pastoral care has many strengths but diminishes at lunchtime when too many pupils have little to do and go off site for no real purpose. Links with parents are satisfactory.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The dip in performance last year was not through a lack of hard work or understanding of what is needed to raise standards. Senior managers work very hard and have high expectations. They are now supported by most often good middle managers. Staff changes mean improvement is shaky – at best two steps forward and one step back.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. They are keen to see the school improve, and understand its strengths and weaknesses and have confidence in management.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good, but the effectiveness of actions is compromised by teacher turbulence – too many have left and started in recent years. The current staff have started improvement moving again.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Money is well spent and staff allocated appropriately. Best value is sought in provision and purchases. Many questions are asked if resources are not used well. Accommodation and resources are good. Staffing is unsatisfactory due to vacant posts and 'temporary' patches.

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. • The school expects their child to work hard. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Behaviour. • Homework provision. • Information about their child's progress. • Activities outside lessons.

Few parents replied to the questionnaire or attended the pre-inspection meeting. Behaviour is unsatisfactory overall but satisfactory or better in lessons. Homework provision is satisfactory. Annual reports to parents are satisfactory. The school is more than willing to welcome parents and were seen doing so up to 7pm. Activities outside lessons are satisfactory after school but not at lunchtime, though there is no requirement for teachers to provide either. Having to catch buses reduces pupils' chances of enjoying activities after school and the governing body and parent teacher association are trying to do something about that. Too many older pupils do go into the village at lunchtime and some cause a nuisance. The written permission of parents is required before pupils can leave the site; most parents live in other villages and should consider why they give this permission.

PART B: COMMENTARY

GLOSSARY OF TERMS USED IN THE REPORT

There are many technical terms used in the following sections. Where possible these are explained in brackets after them. The explanation may have been made in an earlier section of the report than that you are reading. Some frequently stated terms include:

Key Stage 3 Strategy – this is a nationwide attempt to improve how well pupils do between leaving primary school and the end of Year 9, as it is perceived that learning ‘slows down’ in Years 7, 8 and 9. It began with English and mathematics and now includes science, modern foreign languages and ICT.

‘three-part lesson’ – a feature of the Key Stage 3 Strategy, effectively the idea that a lesson should have a beginning, a middle and an end. The beginning states learning objectives, often on a whiteboard at the front of the class, the end is a plenary that tests whether pupils know what they should have learnt in the middle.

National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy – two other strategies, begun in primary schools, that are picked up by the Key Stage 3 Strategy, one to raise standards in literacy, the other standards in numeracy. All subjects should contribute to both.

‘value added’ – a measure of whether pupils are doing as well as statistics predict they should or not. It is desirable that results in tests and examinations indicate value has been added – effective learning has gone on in the intervening time between them.

English as an additional language, shortened to EAL – refers to pupils who may use a language other than English at home, which may reduce their capability in English. An EAL co-ordinator has responsibility for ensuring at least those pupils at an early stage of learning English are appropriately supported in lessons and work.

SEN, most often spelt out – special educational needs – refers to pupils with particular learning or behavioural challenges. Can also include gifted and talented pupils – those who exhibit performances better than most of their peers. A **SENCO – special educational needs co-ordinator** – ensures that provision for SEN pupils is secure and meets with significant national requirements. The SENCO may not always be responsible for the gifted and talented.

Educational inclusion – a concept that schools are required to meet or at least show they are making significant progress towards effectively enabling all pupils, from whatever social or ethnic background, and facing whatever challenges to learning they might have, to have the same opportunities as their peers and to receive whatever support is needed to enable them to make the best of those opportunities.

Learning mentor – an adult, who is most often not a teacher, who works with individual pupils to help them do better. Often funded from Excellence in Cities (EiC) money.

Tutor – a term commonly used to represent a teacher in charge of a registration group. Such *form* groups are often the first call for *pastoral* support for a pupil before help is sought from a head of year. Pastoral support is associated with sorting out personal and behaviour problems and offering advice and guidance that is broader than advice about academic work. A tutor may also be used to offer such academic advice.

Excellence in Cities – EiC – a government-funded initiative to help raise standards in, originally, inner city schools. Now extended to many urbanised areas.

Education Action Zone – EAZ – a government-sanctioned and funded local initiative comprising a group of schools within a given area. Funds flow into the area and some are devolved to schools for resources. The zone director enables support and advice to be given to schools to help initiatives to improve education and standards.

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary, as judgements stated there are not necessarily repeated here.
2. Standards are at a low base when pupils start in Year 7; they verge on very low in English and mathematics and are well below average across the board, even in pursuits less academic at that age, like physical education. English, mathematics and science arrange classes according to ability (setting) in Years 10 and 11 and the most able sets are operating at standards that are broadly average; these are the pupils likely to get grades C or D at GCSE and a proportion should do better. Low levels of literacy cause all manner of problems, from reading for research and ideas whether it is from a book or the Internet, to understanding what an examination question means and writing the answer down. If pupils are to make sufficient progress to overcome these early hurdles, teaching needs to be good. Fortunately, much of teaching is at least good and consequently achievement, overall, is satisfactory. This was not the case last year when GCSE results were well below average and below results expected in similar schools; achievement was unsatisfactory. Neither were results as good as predictions based on end of Year 9 tests two years previously. The school did well in 2000 with that Year 9 but did not capitalise on it; GCSE results dipped two years later. Staffing problems and consequent insecure use of assessment and academic targets is the obvious reason. Significant exceptions to this broad picture were English and mathematics; results were at least in line with what might have been expected. Science results were lower because staffing was poor.
3. Standards at the end of Year 9 were improving faster than national improvement in the two years prior to 2002 whilst GCSE standards rose in 1999 and then stayed put for two years before the significant fall of 2002. Current standards of work indicate improvement has begun again, but very significant improvement might take two years, given stable staffing. Examination and test results show little overall difference between girls' and boys' performances, particularly at GCSE. This may mean girls are achieving less well than boys, as nationally girls do significantly better and there is no indication that boys in this school are achieving particularly well. There is no evidence either way in work seen and the poorer performance of either gender in subject examinations is blamed on 'poorer' attitudes. Certainly, girls' very poor results in geography drove down that subject's performance in 2002 whilst girls' results in English and in French were much better than those of boys.
4. In 2002, 39 pupils entered for a range of GNVQs – French, German and manufacturing. The pass rate was better than 80 per cent in all three, 87 per cent overall, and over 90 per cent in German. Given relatively low levels of attainment on entry, these pupils achieved well.

5. A group of pupils in Years 10 and 11, variable in number but around 20 in 2002, are not entered for GCSE at all, or have the two-year course severely disrupted, so that their chances of a reasonable performance are slim. These pupils are taught off site in an LEA arranged scheme provided for many schools. Information about this course is also slim and neither the school nor the inspection team could form a judgement about it. What it means is that the school will always have a relatively high number of pupils not getting an examination result, certainly no GCSEs or equivalents. This may or may not be in the best interests of these pupils as they are identified as in danger of exclusion and their attendance in school, if required, would likely be inconsistent and may just hinder other pupils' work.

Special educational needs

6. The attainment of pupils on the special educational needs list is, overall, well below the national average. In the National Foundation for Educational Research reading age analysis in September 2002, a quarter of the Year 7 pupils tested had a reading age of less than nine years and a similar number had a mathematics age of under nine. One hundred and two pupils have statements of educational need, or receive substantial support through 'School Action Plus'. Nearly half have emotional and/or behavioural difficulties. Of the others, 19 have specific learning difficulties, 22 general learning difficulties, and the remaining pupils a mix of physical and learning difficulties. Those pupils provided for under 'School Action' (lower level support) have general learning difficulties and nearly half are provided for by a reading recovery programme. A measure of the progress these pupils make is the large number, 62, who have achieved sufficiently to be removed from the special educational needs register during their stay in the school. The department continues to monitor the progress of these pupils; this is an example of the good provision made for them.
7. All pupils with a statement of educational needs (statemented) are entered for at least one GCSE. In 2002, in addition to statemented pupils, those following a reduced number of examination courses, to help them achieve something worthwhile, also did ASDAN, a nationally recognised course for disaffected pupils. Results are very encouraging. All but one statemented pupil achieved one or more GCSE passes and those on the 'Reduced Option' course achieved at least a bronze ASDAN award; three gained a Silver award. Six out of nine statemented pupils took between five and eight GCSE exams and did well. There were some particularly good results, such as a dyslexic pupil gaining eight passes at A*-G and a dyslexic/dyspraxic pupil gaining an A*-C grade in all examinations. One pupil with a poor attendance record was able to benefit from extra revision activities provided by the special educational needs department to gain five out of five pass grades.
8. Those pupils who are withdrawn from lessons for small group tuition, whether it is 'Reading Recovery', or in Years 10 and 11 'Reduced Option' courses, make good and sometimes very good progress, as seen in a Year 11 'World of Work' lesson on the ASDAN course, and in a Year 7 'Reading Recovery' lesson in which pupils were learning to decode the different sounds that vowels can make. In lessons, pupils with special educational needs make at least as good progress as other pupils and, overall, their progress is satisfactory. In some areas their progress is better, for example in art and design and in design and technology; pupils respond well to very sensitive support and make good progress.

Literacy

9. Pupils start school with very low literacy levels, particularly in writing. The introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and literacy progress units of work, to improve basic skills, has contributed to raising literacy standards. Pupils speak enthusiastically with each other and with most of their teachers. In English, modern foreign languages and geography pupils often discuss in a relevant and controlled way. Otherwise, their speech is not always appropriate and is undeveloped when speaking to larger groups, as heard in some physical education and art and design lessons. The listening skills of a significant minority of pupils are unsatisfactory, and affect their ability to learn. A good range of fiction and non-fiction is studied in English and high attaining pupils develop their reading well. Most pupils keenly undertake reading aloud when given the opportunity, for example in music lessons; opportunities are limited and therefore many pupils are hesitant and lack fluency. Some examples of lengthy writing is seen in most subjects, as well as writing in different styles. In mathematics, for example, pupils develop investigational writing to improve their work. The presentation of written work by all but more able pupils is generally unsatisfactory. However, ICT is used well across all subjects to help develop presentation, especially that of lower attaining pupils.

Numeracy

10. Standards in numeracy are well below average. Pupils start at school with well below average levels of skills and confidence when tackling problems involving the use of number. This continues to be the case throughout the school although most pupils do improve and make satisfactory progress. Pupils use graphs and formulae well in science; they can estimate areas and use numbers appropriately in work on moments, pressure, and angles of reflection. In English, pupils can incorporate charts, graphs and other aspects of statistical work into text. In business studies, older pupils can calculate cash flow and use spreadsheets, but much of the work has to be closely directed by their teacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Overall, pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory and remain similar to those found at the last inspection. Attitudes to learning are variable; in most lessons, they are at least satisfactory and frequently good. In some subjects, as the result of very good teaching, pupils are interested, persevere and are able to work co-operatively, for example, in an English lesson when reviewing a film. In subjects that pupils enjoy, such as art and design, design and technology and personal, social, citizenship, health, and moral education (PSCHME), pupils' interest and enthusiasm are most often good.
12. Relationships between staff and pupils and between pupils are most often satisfactory. Staff show a commitment to pupils and, in return, most pupils are friendly and respectful. Although pupils have an understanding of the impact of their actions on others, self-discipline to put this into practice is not always evident. In lessons and in assemblies, most pupils listen carefully to teachers and to each other, but a minority disrupt the learning of others by chatting loudly and showing a lack of respect for others' views. The school has a policy to address any racist incidents; very good relations between people of different race were seen during the inspection.
13. Behaviour in the school, as a whole, is unsatisfactory but there is a clear difference between behaviour in lessons and out of lessons. In lessons, the majority of pupils

behave at least satisfactorily, and in some lessons, behaviour is good or very good. Where learning objectives are clear and teaching is good, a brisk pace and stimulating delivery ensure pupils listen carefully and become fully involved, as in a lesson when pupils discussed the significance of the media. Occasionally older pupils display a lack of motivation and display immature behaviour. The corridors in some areas are very narrow; consequently, pupils have to squeeze through and some pupils push others out of the way. Pupils are noisy but generally behave satisfactorily. At lunchtime, staff supervise the vacating and locking of classrooms and during this time pupils are momentarily unsupervised. Pupils run from the classrooms to get down stairs quickly and into or out to lunch. Behaviour in the dining room is supervised and is generally satisfactory. In the quadrangle and the playground, the behaviour of a significant minority is inappropriate and fighting occurs from time to time. A high level of supervision and control by staff is necessary at these times; the headteacher and senior managers principally do this. Pupils report that bullying takes place in the school; Year 7 pupils in particular are vulnerable and they have the sole use of the quadrangle at lunchtime if they prefer to keep apart from older pupils. The younger pupils feel that they are able to report bullying and the school addresses their concerns, but a few older pupils do not agree and think the school is inconsistent in its approach to bullying. However, older pupils do play a positive role in reducing incidents of bullying by mentoring and supporting younger pupils in their homebase (classroom registration area).

14. The incidents of permanent exclusions are reducing, with only one pupil excluded in the academic year before the inspection, and none since September. The 89 fixed term exclusions in the last academic year is a relatively high number for a school of this size. The most common reason for exclusion is the refusal to follow instructions. Occasionally the behaviour of a pupil does not warrant a fixed period exclusion; in these cases internal exclusion is operated – a pupil is withdrawn from lessons for a short period and is supervised in an area away from his or her peers. No incidence of internal exclusion took place during the inspection.
15. When given the opportunity pupils willingly take on responsibility. A very effective school council gives pupils a voice in the school. Topics are discussed freely and pupils are able to understand the difficulties in managing a school, things they can do are established and pupils feel that they are able to create a difference to their environment. Older pupils also support younger pupils to help them improve in reading.
16. Pupils' interest and involvement in activities the school provides is satisfactory. Revision lessons at the end of the day are popular with pupils, and on Saturday mornings extra study periods take place. The physical education department has a range of after-school pursuits that pupils enjoy. At lunchtime, a minority of pupils show interest in the limited scope of opportunities offered, for example music, drama and ICT, but the majority either stand around the school or go off site and wander around the nearby streets. More opportunities at lunchtime would reduce containment and supervision problems and help reduce the number leaving the school at lunchtime. The school recognises the difficulties that pupils have in attending after-school activities due to the distances that they travel to get to school. The Parent Teacher Association is currently trying to raise funds to provide extra transport in the evenings, to increase the numbers of pupils who wish to take advantage of the school's provision.
17. At lunchtime, break-times and around the school, the majority of pupils are polite, helpful and friendly, but a significant number show little respect for their surroundings. Pupils discard paper and empty bottles inside the building, in the grounds and in the

surrounding streets, resulting in an accumulation of litter of unacceptable levels. Lunchtimes are particularly problematic when inadequate provision of school lunches (pupils say they do not like them and they are too expensive) coupled with too few places to contain pupils, means several hundred go into the small village where local shopkeepers cater for their needs – very large amounts of food and drink are sold. Pupils are allowed out with written permission from their parents but most parents live in other villages. There is no particular group of pupils dropping litter: small Year 7 girls happily throw plastic bottles over their shoulder in the street as well as some large Year 11 boys. Both groups assume it is someone's job to pick them up.

18. Overall, attendance at the school is satisfactory and has improved since the last inspection. Attendance in the autumn term was 93 per cent. Apart from a decrease in attendance in January due to heavy snowfalls and a lack of transport to school, attendance is still improving. Unauthorised absence in the school has reduced. At the last inspection it was judged to be particularly high; the strategies the school has put into place to reduce truancing have been successful. A typical urban school of this type would likely have higher levels of absence and truancing, as there would be more for pupils to do outside school and pupils would not live in small villages, miles away. This school has to teach a higher proportion of potential truants.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

19. This section should be read in conjunction with the summary and with subject reports as judgements made in the summary and examples given in the subject reports are not made here.
20. Just over 150 lessons were seen, mostly for an hour. These observations are a significant part of the evidence from which judgements about teaching are made. The work done by pupils is also taken into account as this reflects the quality of teaching they have had over time. Ninety-four per cent of lessons were satisfactory or better; almost two-thirds were good or better and almost a fifth very good. There was one excellent lesson, in religious education. Nine lessons were unsatisfactory, distributed between science, English, physical education and PSCHME. Six of these lessons were in Years 10 and 11. There was some commonality between unsatisfactory lessons; too few activities over too long a time made the pace slow, led to restlessness and occasionally unsatisfactory behaviour, and pupils did not learn enough. In several lessons, management and control of pupils was unsatisfactory though this was linked to weak organisation and/or a lack of command of the topic, particularly in PSCHME. In several science lessons the teacher did not focus well enough on the objectives shared with the class and/or failed to establish well enough how well pupils were doing so intervention could solve problems. The only subject in which teaching is deemed unsatisfactory in all years is physical education; the lack of specialist teachers is significant as it is not easy to recover teaching and learning without them, whereas unsatisfactory teaching elsewhere just needs continued monitoring and development to bring about improvement.
21. Very good lessons are split between Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 to 11; Years 7 to 9 have more. Features they have in common are very good pace, work that challenges pupils and makes them think and resources are made available so they can tackle the work. Teachers in these lessons are positive and have high expectations of work and behaviour and pupils respond well in kind. Pupils interviewed were well aware of the differences between good, adequate and inadequate teaching, and wanted more good teaching.

22. The management decision to stop study leave for Year 11 this year so that they can be effectively taught and supported throughout their examinations is a good one; other schools have followed this course of action and results in them have improved. (Study leave is the generally accepted practice of pupils in Year 11 leaving school just prior to the start of GCSE examinations and only returning to take them). The notional reason for study-leave is that pupils will have time to study and revise; this is unlikely to be a useful use of time for pupils who have demonstrably poor study skills.

Special educational needs

23. Pupils with special educational needs are taught almost entirely in classes in which they are integrated with their peers. Complementary forms of additional provision support their learning. They all receive some in-class support from a well-directed group of learning support assistants and special educational needs teachers. However, support is largely limited to English, mathematics and science and, consequently, is insufficient in some subject areas. All available resources are used efficiently, and learning support assistants (LSAs) and teachers provide valuable assistance, for example in a science lesson where an LSA supported two statemented pupils and gave reassurance and valuable help, after consultation with the form teacher. The school recognises that more LSAs are needed and if the number can be increased it is hoped to attach them to faculties to help build relationships with teachers and subject familiarity.
24. All pupils on the special educational needs list have individual education plans (IEPs) and these are available to all teachers. They are of high quality and, apart from listing and explaining needs, targets and strategies, they highlight pupils' strengths and require heads of departments to provide subject-specific targets. These are recorded by the special educational needs department and progress towards these targets forms part of a regular review. Some subject-specific targets are a little bland and, in a school with a large number of new teachers, there is sometimes a lack of understanding of how best to use IEPs. The manager of the special educational needs department is well aware of these problems and they are being addressed by a programme of teacher training and an increase in liaison between departments. The value of quality IEPs can be seen in the good subject-specific targets noted in the modern foreign languages department.
25. The third strand of planned provision comes in appropriate modification of tasks and materials by subject departments to meet particular learning difficulties. This is varied, but is generally good in providing extension work for the more able, seen in business studies and in physical education. In English there is a good range of work to better meet the needs of higher and lower attainers.

Literacy

26. Low literacy levels adversely affect pupils' learning and the appointment of a literacy co-ordinator has been made to address this. As a result of planned teaching of basic skills, whole-school training and commitment by teachers, standards of literacy are gradually beginning to rise. Pupils are encouraged to respect each other's opinions in many lessons such as English, design and technology, and history. They are also aware of, and discuss, issues such as bullying and human rights and this was seen clearly in most PSCHME lessons. Key subject words are displayed in most classrooms and used to good effect to improve vocabulary; examples of good marking for technical spelling accuracy in most lessons reinforce the school's priority in this area. Teaching in the Year 7 literacy progress units is good; pupils respond

positively to these 'catch up' lessons and learn well. Teachers provide a range of activities set in an atmosphere of high expectations and this energises pupils.

Numeracy

27. Teaching of numeracy is satisfactory overall. There is good teaching of numeracy in English, science, geography, modern foreign languages and business studies. Most mathematics lessons, particularly in Years 7 to 9, commence with the pupils undertaking 'mental starter' activities as advocated by national strategies to help children learn number skills; these are effective.
28. Numeracy has formed the focus of a training and development day for all teachers in the school and the influence of this is just beginning to be seen. A working party consisting of representatives from each of the faculties has been formed and a handbook to support the further development of the use of numeracy in subjects is currently in the process of development.

ICT

29. 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, a variety of software and access to the school intranet (a school-based Internet produced by the school to help teachers and pupils). The recent installation of interactive whiteboards and data projectors enhances this provision (smart technology that makes teaching better or more interesting if used well). In modern foreign languages teachers make good use of interactive whiteboards to demonstrate different possibilities for presenting information. In mathematics, teachers' good planning enables pupils to make good use of spreadsheets to calculate totals and create graphs; consequently pupils are beginning to understand how spreadsheets can be used to predict results as data is altered. Teachers know how to use LOGO (widely used software) with pupils so that they can learn about rotational symmetry (rotate shapes to see what happens as mathematical rules are applied to them). In English, teachers encourage pupils to use ICT to complete their record of achievement booklets and set themselves academic targets. Pupils are also encouraged to make extensive use of the Internet to acquire information for work in many subjects, for example history. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make considerable use of word processing and computer presentation skills as they complete projects and need to display them to others. Teachers in business studies and in GCSE and GNVQ ICT particularly foster this work.

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

30. The curriculum has sufficient breadth and balance and is satisfactory overall. The range of work is good in mathematics, science, art and design, design and technology and history. In all subjects other than physical education the range is satisfactory; there is insufficient time given for this subject in all years.
31. Curriculum options in Years 10 and 11 are clearly presented, allowing two option subjects for most pupils, three for those who choose single science. Because of staffing problems, there is no drama offered in Year 10, the subject that had the best GCSE results in 2002. This has resulted in some pupils studying a subject they did not initially choose and are not well motivated towards. Some anomalies exist in the

curriculum. Those pupils who choose the full GCSE course in religious education also do the short course; the short course is compulsory for all Year 10 pupils, but unnecessary for anyone taking the full. There is also some duplication of topics between religious education and PSCHME. Currently there are no discrete lessons in ICT for Year 9 pupils, or for 40 pupils in each of Years 10 and 11, but the use of ICT in many subjects is good and many of these pupils attend the GNVQ ICT after-school lessons; arrangements for the Year 9 pupils meet statutory requirements. Only one foreign language, French or German, can currently be taken to GCSE, though there are plans for expansion to include Spanish and two languages may be possible in the future.

32. More vocational courses are offered now compared to at the time of the last inspection, including ICT, health and social care, construction, painting and decorating, and hair and beauty; many of these are offered through a link with a local further education college. Pupils following the ASDAN course, for those who are disaffected with school, spend one afternoon at college. In addition, pupils in danger of being excluded attend the local authority 'Impact' project full-time elsewhere, but remain on the school's roll. Little information is forthcoming from this LEA venture and the school is aware of the need to monitor more closely the quality of all work going on beyond its direct control, including attendance, teaching, assessment and pupils' progress. Pupils following vocational courses away from school obviously miss lessons as a result and are expected to catch up on work in their own time. They can cause some disruption to classes they join, as the teacher needs to ensure they do catch up. This needs review and better arrangements are needed.
33. A very well structured programme of personal, social and health education throughout the school now includes citizenship, taught mainly by pupils' own tutors, who usually know them best. The scheme of work covers all statutory areas, including sex and drugs education. The school is considering using a few teachers, particularly well trained, to cover aspects that many teachers are unfamiliar with. Citizenship is also well represented in history and opportunities for teaching it are identified in all schemes of work.
34. Provision for study support includes regular 'twilight' sessions in a number of GCSE subjects, a cyber café, and occasional special events in holiday periods or at weekends, which are devoted, for example, to literacy or revision. However, not all pupils are able to take advantage of this 'out of hours' provision due to the distance they travel to school and the transport arrangements. A Year 11 study support booklet and the employment of learning mentors also help pupils to achieve.
35. 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, though this can be modified if thought necessary. Links with primary schools are very good; most pupils who have learning or physical disabilities are known to the SENCO when in Year 6 and the school makes additional provision, as appropriate, when they start in Year 7. Special provision includes a 'Bridging' group in Year 7 for those for whom transfers from primary to secondary school is likely to be difficult. There are also reading recovery lessons and English progress units for those with low results in national tests. A good example of the school's inclusion policy can be seen in the way the geography department is reorganising fieldwork to enable access by pupils with physical disabilities.
36. Work has begun to improve the standards of pupils' literacy and provision, overall, is good. Work from the National Literacy Strategy is well used and 'catch up' work in

Year 7 is good. There is a great deal of emphasis placed on literacy in most subjects. The school is also moving forward in the development of pupils' skills and confidence in using numbers, both within mathematics and in all other subjects; numeracy is beginning to be incorporated into all schemes of work and is already significant in several, for example English and modern foreign languages.

37. The school's arrangements for careers education and guidance are good. The school works closely with local organisations and has established good links with the Education Business Partnership. This provides a programme tailored for all ages, beginning with an introduction to the service in Year 7. In Year 10, 'Business Ambassadors' work with pupils on work experience. The school has good relationships with Connexions. This organisation informs pupils of opportunities in local colleges and provides access to an Internet Career Shop, which gives good information on training providers in the geographical area of Durham. Interviews of all Year 11 pupils take place and assist them in choosing the next step in their lives; almost all pupils are sure of their next destination.
38. The school has developed good links with the community. Though many established businesses are already involved with other schools belonging to Education Action Zones, Wellfield, which is not within a zone, has managed to form constructive relationships with a variety of local companies. Age Concern pays for the transport that enables Year 11 pupils to entertain adults from Haswell MENCAP Society. The school band has strong links with the community and provides entertainment at local events, for example the church and the local primary school. Local industries such as 'Black and Decker' sponsor trophies and the school football strip, and a local window replacement company supplies wood to the design and technology department. The coach company that transports pupils to and from school has funded the reward system for good behaviour, attendance and good work. Local businesses have donated goods to assist in the successful creation of a community garden.
39. To prepare pupils for their move to Wellfield, the school has an open evening with an induction programme for new parents. Well-developed partnerships with sixth form providers and universities help pupils consider education post-16. Local post-16 providers visit the school to talk about courses, including Modern Apprenticeships. Subject departments are beginning to take part in 'Inspirational University Visits' to enable pupils to gather information on what later higher education might be like.
40. Extra-curricular provision is satisfactory overall. There is a good range of sport available after school and, more limited, at lunchtime. The school band practises regularly for local events and has played in Paris. ICT is offered after school. Few activities are available at lunchtime and this aggravates problems of managing pupils then.

Spiritual, moral, social, and cultural education

41. Overall the provision for personal development is satisfactory. There have been a number of helpful initiatives for this since the last inspection and it is clear that the school is fully committed to the personal development of all its pupils.
42. Provision for spiritual development is satisfactory overall. Statutory regulations are met; there are regular opportunities for worship or reflection in assemblies and form time, and some tutors develop the 'thought for the day' very helpfully; however, not all do so. The school does encourage pupils to aspire to full development, and to be imaginative and ambitious in their career choices; a recent visit of a former pupil, now a naval officer, who flew her helicopter into school and talked to pupils, was a striking example of this. There are some good opportunities for creativity, and to be inspired by human achievement and natural wonders in a number of subjects. Some teachers encourage pupils to review their learning at the end of lessons in reflective and thoughtful ways. There are good efforts, linked to religious festivals, to put beliefs into practice, for example through the mince pies and Christmas cards for local pensioners distributed through local post offices by the pupils.
43. Moral development is also provided for satisfactorily. There is a clear code of conduct, known by all. The school is working to strengthen the rewards for good behaviour so that there is a clear balance of rewards and sanctions, and to ensure that sanctions are effective and consistently applied. There is clear teaching about right and wrong, and the consequences of actions, in PSCHME, and in religious education. History, geography, science, religious education and English teach topics that have an ethical dimension, and encourage pupils to explore this effectively. Pupils have good opportunities to support charities locally, nationally and globally and to learn about the relevant issues. Each 'homebase' (group of classes) nominates its cause for the year. Year 11 pupils were seen planning their annual hospitality for the residents of a nearby MENCAP home, and a representative from UNICEF will be talking to pupils soon. Many teachers and support staff are good role models, and teachers work hard to establish good behaviour in the classroom.
44. Social development is also satisfactory overall and has many good features. The programme for PSCHME is strong. There are form representatives, year councils and an effective school council. Most tutors work hard for the social development of their pupils and the 'homebase' system is helpful for this. Many lessons give suitable opportunities for pupils to work together productively and successfully, but the poor provision for drama limits social development opportunities. There are not enough opportunities for responsibility. Pupils cannot be trusted in classrooms during breaks without supervision and this encourages an ethos of control rather than one of maturity and partnership. Too few adults are available at lunchtime to provide sufficient useful activities for pupils; consequently very many have to be controlled or let out of school (at lunchtimes). The extent of the litter problem is evidence of a failure to promote community responsibility successfully though it seems clear that litter dropping is a natural function for many pupils; they think nothing of it. Opportunities to work with the local community about this problem are just emerging, with the appointment of local authority street wardens, and should be seized upon.
45. The cultural development of pupils is satisfactory. Many subjects offer good cultural opportunities, for example, history, geography, art and design, modern foreign languages, and English. The school has given some attention to ensuring that the education for cultural diversity is sufficient, and this is encouraged well in religious education, in the range of world artistic traditions studied, and in the range of literature

dealt with in English lessons. There are some good opportunities for fieldwork, local visits and visits abroad. The school is very conscientious at ensuring that these are inclusive, and open to all regardless of finance or disability. There are some music groups such as a wind band, but not many pupils are learning a musical instrument and there are few opportunities to take part in dramatic or musical productions. Staffing problems accentuate this; there are too few teachers of music and currently no drama teacher, though one is expected to take up post soon.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

46. Overall, the school provides satisfactory care of its pupils. The monitoring of pupils' academic performance and personal development is good and results in good support and guidance for most pupils. Child protection procedures are adequate and the school follows local area guidelines. Through the detailed programme for PSCHME the school teaches pupils how to protect themselves by, for example, the community policeman visiting to speak to pupils on personal safety and the school nurse instructing on basic first aid. Learning mentors work with children to help improve their learning, for example by completing coursework and ensuring they arrive to lessons on time.
47. Procedures to ensure pupils' welfare and safety are satisfactory. Members of staff have received training in basic first aid. The school nurse provides very good support and guidance for pupils; a 'drop in' is arranged for pupils, to discuss medical problems or concerns. Risk assessments, to help work in and out of school to be safer, are carried out. The school is not as successful at ensuring pupils' safety at lunchtimes; some bullying and inappropriate behaviour places pupils at risk of harm. Pupils entitled to a free school meal receive insufficient funding to buy an adequate nutritious lunch in the school dining room; neither is the money directed towards a nutritious meal, as the voucher can be spent on anything. School transport is an issue of concern which parents raised. Most pupils travel to and from school on local authority provided buses. These are packed and unsupervised except by the driver. Pupils were seen out of seats whilst buses were in motion. Many double-decker buses are also used; supervision of the upper deck is poorer than that in the lower deck or on coaches. Pupils start and end the day badly; on arrival they are already 'wound up', and teaching and management of them are made harder than they should be.
48. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are good and have improved since the last inspection. Computer technology alerts teachers to follow up absences. The school purchases the services of an outside company to contact parents on the first day of absence. The faxing of daily absences of pupils to the company, who then contact parents, has helped to reduce unauthorised absence. The education welfare officer (EWO) meets regularly with heads of year to discuss the attendance of pupils who cause concern. The police, nurse, EWO and others work very closely with the school and each other. Incentive schemes, for example termly awards for 100 per cent attendance, help to improve attendance as pupils appreciate the trip to Alton Towers or the financial rewards that are available.
49. Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are good. In most lessons, teachers' expectations of good behaviour, and careful control and management, ensure pupils are well behaved. A system of rewards, a credit card with points to accumulate or deduct, is given to pupils as appropriate with an eventual monetary prize. Evening and Saturday morning detention and a report card system act as a deterrent to

unacceptable behaviour. Strategies to improve the misbehaviour of pupils for whom the sanction and rewards system fails include support in class and at lunchtime by the education behaviour support worker, internal detention and, as a last resort, exclusion. Procedures for eliminating oppressive behaviour are not always successful with a few pupils, and bullying is found in the school.

50. Procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress are good. The school has a standardised system that enables teachers to have a clear picture of the achievement of pupils and to set appropriate targets for improvement. A recently appointed senior member of staff is beginning to bring a more consistent approach to the assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress. Most subject areas have responded well to adopting new procedures. Detailed information sheets enable staff to have a full account of pupils' prior attainment. Assessment in science and in modern foreign languages is very good; in mathematics, art and design, design and technology, history and geography, it is good. In English, physical education, and religious education assessment is satisfactory. Pupils are fully involved in their academic target setting and most subjects use pupil self-evaluation sheets so that pupils help to identify good and unsatisfactory learning. Day-to-day assessment and marking are satisfactory overall. Overall, the use of assessment to help plan the curriculum is satisfactory, but there are inconsistencies; most subjects use assessment to modify schemes of work. The effectiveness of special educational needs provision can be seen in the way constant monitoring and assessment reveal pupils who may have been misdiagnosed previously and this was seen in a Year 7 support lesson for two pupils who were causing concern. Testing of pupils withdrawn from mainstream classes takes place each term and the large number reaching the standards required to rejoin mainstream classes full time demonstrates successful teaching and assessment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. The school has consulted parents on the new format of the home/school contract; 83 per cent of parents signed and returned the document. The agreement is specific to the school and is well thought out and easy for parents to read and understand. The recent initiative of the Community Garden, when parents worked with environment agencies, has enabled parents to be successfully involved in an activity that will benefit pupils. Opportunities for parents to come into school have been provided; for example, last year the school held workshops and parents could come into school and work with pupils, but few parents attended. The school is a Learn Direct Centre; a range of courses to help improve parents' knowledge and skills is available. The Parent Teacher Association raises funds and provides social events.
52. The school's arrangements for reporting pupils' progress to parents through written reports and parents' consultation evenings are satisfactory. Written reports give information on what pupils can do, but a clear view of pupils' weaknesses is not included, though targets for improvement are apparent. Good information on topics taught in each subject enable parents to understand what their children have already learned; if this information was received at beginning of the year parents could better assist their children in their work. Full information on the progress of children with special educational needs is provided; parents are welcome in school to discuss individual programmes of study and to the reviews of these programmes, but not all parents take advantage of the opportunities.
53. The school provides termly newsletters with general information and forthcoming events. The prospectus is an attractive document, well set out with useful information

for parents. The details of special educational needs provision needs to be expanded to include information on the new Code of Practice. The governors' annual report to parents is a basic document that does not give a good overview of governors' work. Information about funding is too short for parents to have a good view of how money is spent.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

54. The school is well led and managed and, consequently, setbacks are dealt with effectively. Middle management, provided by heads of department, is good and leading improvement at the classroom level.
55. The context within which the school works is challenging; low standards on entry, socio-economically poor, and with some potentially very difficult pupils. In addition, pupils are bussed in from a large area. The school does not receive much significant funding in addition to that which is standard, though standard funding is higher than average. The decision, made a few years ago, not to become part of an Education Action Zone has not helped it. The LEA recognises the problems facing the school and, following low examination results last year and ongoing difficulties with staffing, has placed the school in a high category of 'watchfulness'; it keeps an eye on the school and helps where it can with advice. The local authority has every confidence in management and the inspection team does so too. Though staffing remains a problem, the school appoints teachers with care and has made good appointments that are helping to improve the school. Keeping teachers and getting more are problems facing the school; other schools across East Durham have similar difficulties. There are improvements that could be made that do not require teachers but would make things better and consequently help retain staff. Currently some pupils arrive in school 'wound up' after their bus journey; lunchtimes give a very bad impression of pupils as large numbers are on the streets buying food and dropping litter. There are also insufficient learning support assistants. The school is not in a position to deal fully with these issues.
56. The headteacher and senior staff have high expectations of teachers, and rigorous monitoring and evaluation of all aspects of their work is in hand. Undoubtedly many teachers flourish and teaching is much better now than at the time of the last inspection. Performance management has helped staff development focus and governors take this aspect of their work seriously; they are well informed of the process relating to the headteacher. High expectations, or even basic ones, also cause some tensions. For example, the headteacher expects pupils to take part in physical education, which requires kit. Older pupils have difficulty coming to terms with carrying a bag and too often do not bring kit. Physical education teachers have difficulties equating the headteacher's expectations with the attitudes of these pupils. The headteacher also has some expectations of teachers running activities at lunchtime. Few do so, and this is one reason why so many pupils go off site. The headteacher and senior managers spend too much of their time managing pupils in between lesson times.
57. The headteacher has a very clear understanding of strengths and weaknesses within the school as is revealed in the self-evaluation document prepared prior to the inspection. Many of the judgements in that, particularly regarding teaching and learning, are similar to those made by inspectors. All managers have a good understanding of the analysis of performance data and, more importantly, what was not good enough in 2002. The school analysis of results last year, and guidance on how to improve them this year, has been taken on board and is largely why things are

looking a little better now. Governors are also fully conversant with what is being done to improve things. Priorities for development focus on raising standards, both academic and behavioural, and resources and evaluation procedures are allocated appropriately. There has been an element of over-confidence seen in GCSE target setting. The target relating to five or more higher grades in 2002 was widely missed and too high. This year's target is more realistic but still challenging and will be a very significant lift if attained. The curriculum is shifting towards vocational routes through school and college-based GNVQs and an LEA initiative for disaffected pupils, but the shift has probably not been radical enough and off-site provision, not managed by the school, is of questionable worth; insufficient information about it is given to the school to form a true picture. Best value principles, applied well to purchases though not always to services, need to be applied to provision; what courses will best serve these pupils and the community they live in? The school needs to take full stock of its curriculum provision and take advantage of any national initiatives now emerging.

58. The special educational needs department is well managed and work is fairly apportioned between a fairly small team of four teachers and four LSAs with a separate SENCO identified for Years 7 to 9 and Years 10 and 11, and a director with overall management responsibilities. All have received appropriate training, including the 'Better Reading Partnership'. Outside support comes from a large number of agencies and, apart from some earlier problem with access to an educational psychologist, this support is well used and effective, seen in therapy sessions within the unit. Documentation is very efficiently organised and legal requirements are met, though appropriate information given on the new Code of Practice to governors needs to be checked. A governor attached to special educational needs has been named, but has not, as yet, met the department. This is a dedicated team, which has very good relationships with pupils and has the capacity to further improve, although current pupil numbers are on the low side and provision will be severely stretched when the physical disability unit has its full complement of pupils. The special educational needs manager ensures the fair and correct allocation of funds and support to all statemented pupils and pupils with special educational needs.
59. Financial planning is good and money is allocated appropriately. Occasional extra money, from community funding for example, is used well and is helping the school to move forward rapidly in the use of ICT. Historical decisions not to have any discrete ICT lessons and not to provide any ICT suites, or networking, in a newly built school, have hindered progress. Too much money is spent on supply teachers and consequently more than three per cent of funds are held over for staffing contingencies; more consistent staffing would be cheaper and more effective. Good use is made of training providers and induction of new staff is good; most of the newly qualified teachers taken on 18 months ago have been retained and some promoted. This is a school where ambitious teachers can quickly gain recognition and reward.
60. New technology is used well by the school; use for teaching and for learning is rapidly improving, use for administration is most often very good. Academic data is well recorded and used, attendance data analysis helps improve attendance, office management systems are used very well by efficient financial administrators and office staff.
61. The match of the numbers of the teachers and support staff to the demands of the curriculum are unsatisfactory. There are severe difficulties with the recruitment and retention of staff; these have had an unfavourable effect upon standards. Indeed the situation last year became so acute that it was the major factor leading to the decline in examination performance. The school has made every effort to minimise the

problems by recruiting new staff, employing long and short-term supply staff and by using internal promotions to fill management gaps. However, many of the recruited teachers are newly qualified and so may take time to become fully effective. Whilst the situation is better this year it is not satisfactory. There are five unfilled posts. The position in both English and mathematics is unsatisfactory because they are short of permanent teachers and the pupils are exposed to many changes. Science, which had major difficulties last year, is now satisfactory; but will take some time to recover. There are problems in music and severe problems in physical education. Other subject areas are satisfactory overall with, currently, good provision in art and design and in religious education. There are some very good LSAs, but there are not enough of them to effectively meet the requirements of all pupils with special educational needs.

62. There are efficient and sufficient administrative, technical and premises staff who provide an effective infrastructure, which supports the education of the pupils well. The school has good arrangements for the induction and support of newly qualified teachers and others new to the school. There is also a good programme of in-service training and performance management.
63. The headteacher, governors and teachers all want the school to improve and have put in place or are following procedures to help it do so with the minimum of bureaucracy. Most pupils, from discussions with individuals and the school council which represents them, want to do as well as they can and older pupils have good ideas for work and future training. There is a significant minority of pupils who care less and cause problems for their peers and staff. Few teachers help manage the school at lunchtime and whilst this can be understood, and is not a requirement, it does not help anyone in the long run. Much could be done to improve the lot of teachers through investing in pupil travel and lunch arrangements and providing non-teaching support in more classes. The probability of taking on and keeping teachers is the most obvious hindrance to success. If they come and each stays for several years then the school should improve significantly.

Accommodation

64. The quality of accommodation is good overall. Built in 1997, the school buildings provide a light, pleasant learning environment that meets the needs of the curriculum well in most subject areas. Many classrooms and the impressive Learning Resources Centre are enhanced by good quality displays. The spaciousness of the teaching and learning areas is offset by narrow corridors, which cause overcrowding at the change of lessons, and subsequent control problems. A landscaped courtyard provides pupils with an attractive social area. There is good access for wheelchairs, and the school is designated as a resource base for pupils with physical difficulties. Well maintained and spotlessly clean, the quality of the accommodation owes much to the hard work and care of the ancillary staff. Poor decisions made when the school was built do make work in the school harder. The dining hall cannot accommodate 1200 pupils in a reasonable lunchtime which encourages hundreds to go off site; no ICT rooms or whole-school computer network were provided and this has delayed ICT developments and caused very high additional costs.

Learning resources

65. The school has invested in learning resources linked directly to the school improvement plan, curriculum development and continuing professional development. Provision is satisfactory in most subject areas. However, provision is unsatisfactory in religious education and music, where a shortage of resources limits learning

opportunities and adversely affects achievement. There has been very good investment in ICT and the quality of the equipment is a particular strength. Good use is made of computers, interactive whiteboards, data projectors and digital cameras to enhance learning across the curriculum. The Learning Resource Centre is an exciting place. Readily accessible to pupils, it is well used for research purposes, and makes a good contribution to developing pupils as independent learners. The supply of books is below that usually seen, but the provision for ICT is very good.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

66. To make the school better the headteacher and governors should:

(1) Improve teaching further by:

- Continuing to monitor and support teachers experiencing problems;
- Ensuring best practice is shared and teachers know what can be done;
- Reviewing all steps taken to retain and recruit staff and taking robust actions to improve the situation.

(Paragraphs: 2, 20, 45, 55, 59, 61, 63, 71, 79-81, 89, 90, 121, 143, 148, 149, 155, 156)

(2) Raise pupils' achievements in science, physical education, and in religious education by:

- Improving teaching in science and in physical education;
- Using external support and advice to improve the curriculum in physical education;
- Providing additional in-house support to the new leadership of religious education.

(Paragraphs: 20, 89, 92, 149, 155, 158).

(3) Improve GCSE examination results by:

- Ensuring staffing is as consistent as possible and providing effective back-up when 'holes' appear;
- Continuing to rigorously monitor pupils' progress and intervene where it slows;
- Considering more ways of how support for learning can be provided, other than by teachers, for example interactive computer support, or using adults other than teachers.

(Paragraphs: 2, 45, 55, 59, 61, 71, 79-81, 89, 90, 121, 138, 143, 148, 149, 156, 158)

(4) Improve pupils' behaviour and attitudes outside lessons by:

- Considering ways of reducing congestion in narrow corridors;
- Identifying ways by which more teachers or other adults can be employed to monitor pupils at breaks and provide activities for them to do at lunchtime;
- Seeking to improve lunch provision so that fewer wish to leave the premises;
- Seeking to increase the size of the dining hall, or improving the ways in which food is provided, so that the space can better cope with the numbers that should be using it;
- Monitoring pupils in the village but close to the school at lunchtime;
- Working better with the community and local shopkeepers so that disturbance and rubbish is minimised.

(Paragraphs: 13, 16, 17, 40, 44, 47, 49, 56, 63, 64)

(5) Provide more learning support assistants by:

- Seeking additional funding for them;
- Reviewing how money is currently allocated to staff costs;
- Taking advantage of any national initiatives to provide classroom support;

- Employing more adults and deploying them appropriately.
(Paragraphs: 23, 55, 61, 91, 110, 124, 140, 163)

(6) Provide more opportunities for pupils to have responsibility and initiative by:

- Using the school council to find out what pupils would like to be able to do;
- Identifying areas in the school which would benefit from pupil support;
- Selecting pupils to take on support roles for peers, teachers, and areas of the curriculum or building;
- Considering more ways in which pupils can be given 'challenges' which require initiative to overcome.

(Paragraphs: 15, 44)

(7) Improve the transport arrangements for pupils to and from school by:

- Working with the LEA to provide safer bus transport;
- Seeking additional funding to pay for the management time and stress needed to cope with moving 800 pupils on and off site.

(Paragraphs: 47, 55, 63).

In addition to the issues above governors should consider including in their action plan the following minor issues:

The vocational curriculum needs reviewing and better monitoring, particularly when taught off site.

(Paragraphs: 5, 32).

There is duplication of work within religious education courses and between them and PSCHME.

(Paragraphs: 31, 167).

SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS PHYSICAL DISABILITIES RESOURCE BASE

67. Pupils who have received multi-professional assessment in line with the Code of Practice and have specific physical needs receive support within the Resource Base. The base is able to cater for up to ten pupils and currently has five pupils attached. The resource is highly regarded by parents and attracts pupils from a wide area, making available the possibility of education in a mainstream school. IEPs and care plans are written for all pupils with physical difficulties and are very detailed, providing very good information for teachers. There are formal annual reviews and twice yearly reviews of IEPs. When possible, pupils attending the Resource Base are identified in Year 6 and Wellfield teachers attend review meetings in order to facilitate a smooth transition to secondary school. On entry a full access audit is carried out to ensure individual pupils, some in wheelchairs, have easy access to all parts of the school. All medical needs, personal hygiene and therapies are timetabled and support is provided by a dedicated team of teachers, learning support assistants and visiting specialists. In addition a 'buddy' system provided by pupils is a valuable source of support for school-wide access. As part of the inclusive nature of the school's provision those pupils with physical disabilities have access to visits and field trips and schemes of work are adjusted to ensure this access.
68. The Resource Base itself is part of the learning support suite and is very well equipped with all necessary specialist equipment. Teachers and LSAs are trained in its use and it is properly maintained.
69. Pupils express their contentment with the Resource Base, which combines a number of roles. It acts as a club, a refuge point and a well-used meeting point where, for instance, a positive and happy group of children enjoy a morning break with friends and staff. In lessons, support from both pupils and teachers is of a high level, noted particularly in football and in design and technology lessons. A word often used of the support is 'sensitive' and one pupil in a wheelchair is reported as saying how he has all the resources and help he needs. Though the support in classes is of a high order, it is often unobtrusive in order to encourage pupils' independence and use of initiative. Progress is variable as a result of individual needs, but nowhere is it less than satisfactory and often it is good.
70. The Resource Base makes very good provision for its pupils, though provision of teachers and LSAs may have to be reviewed when the Resource Base has a full complement of pupils. It fosters good relationships between all pupils and is a strength of the school. It is very well managed by a Resource Base manager, supported by LSAs, and with the Learning Support manager having oversight of the whole.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	154
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	40

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	25	73	46	9	0	0
Percentage	0.7	16.2	47.4	29.9	5.8	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	1155
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	326

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	50
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	237

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	9
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	21

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.1
National comparative data	7.8

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
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)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	130	101	231

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	68	66
	Girls	60	59	48
	Total	116	127	114
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	50 (63)	55 (61)	49 (57)
	National	66 (64)	67 (66)	66 (66)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	15 (30)	25 (32)	16 (24)
	National	32 (31)	45(43)	33(34)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	76	79	66
	Girls	77	61	48
	Total	153	140	114
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (57)	67 (65)	51 (62)
	National	67 (65)	70 (68)	67 (64)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	11 (11)	35 (34)	11 (29)
	National	32 (31)	45 (43)	33 (34)

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	122	96	218

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	30	93	107
	Girls	25	86	90
	Total	55	179	197
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	25 (30)	82 (91)	90 (97)
	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	27.5 (29.9)
	National	39.8 (39.0)

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

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate	
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	39	87
	National		n/a

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	1150	57	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	2	1	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	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	1	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	65
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	14
Total aggregate hours worked per week	466

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	70
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	27.1
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Financial year	2001/2002
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	£
Total income	3272970
Total expenditure	3217156
Expenditure per pupil	2773
Balance brought forward from previous year	159664
Balance carried forward to next year	215478

Key Stage 4	22.5
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	31
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	28

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	5
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	1155
Number of questionnaires returned	83

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	29	54	11	4	2
My child is making good progress in school.	35	54	7	2	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	21	53	15	7	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	19	51	18	12	1
The teaching is good.	22	59	8	5	7
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	35	40	11	12	1
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	41	47	6	6	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	42	51	2	4	1
The school works closely with parents.	29	45	13	10	2
The school is well led and managed.	24	48	8	8	12
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	29	48	12	5	7
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	12	46	16	15	11

Other issues raised by parents

There were relatively few parents at the parents' meeting but shared concerns were the behaviour of pupils at lunchtime, particularly when just off site buying food from local shops, inadequate provision of lunch in the school which encouraged high numbers of pupils to go off site, and the buses provided by the LEA to transport pupils to and from the school. Bus journeys were considered dangerous as pupils are unsupervised. Inspectors agree with parents' concerns. Many boys and girls buy food and drinks at lunchtimes from local shops. They hang around in groups and may be considered intimidating by anyone passing them. Large amounts of litter are dropped. School lunch options are not as diverse as those now found in many schools and certainly have little that could be considered to be a 'healthy option'. The buses were observed moving out full of pupils. Many appeared crowded and pupils were moving about on them whilst they were in motion. None were supervised other than by the driver. Many were double deckers. No seat belts were either present or apparently in use on hired coaches. Common sense says transport provision is potentially unsafe.

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 **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching of basic skills is beginning to improve standards.
- Coherent schemes of work are providing more continuity and consistency in lessons.
- Good departmental documentation now clearly identifies what needs to be done.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are not high enough.
- Marking is inconsistent and pupils' targets for improvement are unclear.
- Unstable staffing still affects standards as coursework for GCSE and preparation for Year 9 tests is incomplete.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10 - 11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well below average	Well below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Well below average	Well below average
Test and examination results	Well below average	Well below average
Similar school comparisons	Below average	Below average
Overall achievement	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

71. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were lower than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years is inconsistent, as results in the two previous years were better. Results in 2002 match the standard of work seen now. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 do not agree with test results because teachers over-estimated standards. Test results in 2002 were not as good because a series of temporary teachers led to inconsistency and lack of continuity in work. Two new teachers are about to be appointed to provide more continuity and stability for pupils.
72. In English language GCSE, the proportions of pupils attaining grades between A*-C or A*-G were well below national averages. Compared to similar schools, results were in line with what might have been expected. There is no significant difference between the results of girls and boys because of careful selection of texts and different styles of teaching deliberately targeted to improve boys' standards. Too many pupils achieved low grades because of disruption to learning caused by teaching from a series of temporary staff. Results in 2002 were poorer than in 2001 because of this. The trend in results over the last three years is erratic because of staffing problems last year. Many pupils became disaffected and did not complete coursework because of inadequate monitoring. As many pupils took English literature GCSE as took English language. Results in the literature examination, though below average, were much better.
73. By Year 9, pupils can present written work legibly and carefully, read and understand a wide variety of texts and discuss issues enthusiastically. Listening skills are weaker

as pupils pay insufficient attention to the teacher and other pupils. They discuss well and get involved but lack confidence when speaking to the class. Extended, accurate writing is a problem for most pupils. The effect of the National Literacy Strategy has been good and is gradually improving the very low levels of pupils' literacy when they entered the school. Well-planned units of work are produced, providing a richer diet and encouraging better attitudes and commitment to work. This is emerging as a means of improving pupils' skills in reading and writing for pupils in Years 7 to 9. The 'catch up' programme for pupils joining the school in Year 7 is successful because of good planning and clear goals; progress in Year 7 is good. Standards are now well below average, a slight improvement since the pupils joined the school. Good use of ICT is also beginning to improve presentation, drafting of work, and ICT skills.

74. By Year 11, the standards pupils attain are well below average. Knowledge and understanding are weak; for example most pupils understand the Shakespeare plays and can recount the story but few can evaluate theme and character at a sophisticated level. Teachers' hard work enables pupils to make inferences from text but they are less confident when working independently. They speak enthusiastically about their work in small groups and with their teacher but are nervous and hesitant when speaking to the class. Speaking and listening are more successful when the teacher carefully structures group work, encourages the pupils' views and gets them actively involved. This was seen very clearly in a Year 11 lesson on writing styles; pupils enjoyed learning and made knowledgeable observations to the class and teacher. The presentation of work by some lower attaining pupils is poor; it is rushed and leads to careless work. This is reinforced in pupils' books because it is clear that a series of temporary teachers has caused gaps in coursework, and insufficient preparation for examinations.
75. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because they receive support from their class teacher and support teachers and assistants who work together in planning lessons. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress because their needs are identified and planned for by the school and the department.
76. There were two unsatisfactory lessons and half were good or better. In the unsatisfactory lessons pupils learn little because of a lack of successful classroom management techniques, low expectations and unsuitability of lesson content. By contrast, in the good and very good lessons there is a brisk pace, pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Teachers' higher expectations mean that pupils enjoy their work with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. This was seen clearly when a teacher encouraged a pupil to develop his explanation until it was sensible and well thought out. In a Year 8 lesson on *Frankenstein* the pupils thoroughly enjoyed the fast pace of working and the variety of learning activities which deepened their understanding. Consequently they all produced atmospheric dramatic presentations using descriptive vocabulary such as "I have created a monster that is out of my control." A well-informed discussion on cloning then developed. In a Year 10 speaking and listening lesson pupils worked hard to draft and polish their work and spoke meaningfully about their tasks in groups. Elements of morality and reflection deepen pupils' social awareness and make them more responsible citizens. Sensible and reflective discussions on war and duty, violence and the power of celebrities are a feature of teaching and aid pupils' understanding of texts. Teachers' work to reinforce literacy is beginning to have a positive effect on pupils in Years 10 and 11 because of revised schemes of work and greater emphasis on language. This emulates and seeks to capitalise on the comparative success in English literature.

77. Effective leadership is beginning to drive up standards. Teachers appreciate the detailed documentation, which aids their teaching and pupils' learning because of thorough schemes of work, clear assessment procedures and descriptions of opportunities for teaching ICT and citizenship. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work, and observation of each other's lessons is developing teaching styles, classroom management skills and learning opportunities. The department makes effective use of assessment data to place pupils in classes of similar ability, plan schemes of work and target improvement. However, marking is inconsistent and a minority of pupils receive bland comments and unclear targets for improvement. These pupils' work is not marked regularly and pupils are consequently unclear about their standards or how they might improve. Homework is set consistently and appropriately. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory.
78. Judgements about literacy will be found in the 'standards' section.

DRAMA

79. Drama is a popular subject and had the best GCSE results in 2002. Pupils enjoy their lessons, have very good attitudes and respect each other's performances. Only Year 11 pupils, mainly girls, currently take drama as the teacher left and a new appointment does not begin until April. Accommodation is unsatisfactory because most teaching takes place in a classroom that is not equipped for drama. There is only limited access to the hall, which does, however, allow pupils to use space theatrically and gain a sense of audience.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Achievement is satisfactory for the majority of pupils throughout the school.
- There is some good quality teaching.
- Management is effective and helping to raise achievement.
- Very good quality accommodation supports teaching and learning well.

Areas for improvement

- Standards at the end of Year 9 and the end of Year 11 are well below average.
- Some low attaining pupils achieve unsatisfactorily due to inadequate staffing arrangements.

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

80. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were lower than those in 2001. However, the general trend is of gradual improvement with results in most years being better than those in the previous year. Results in 2002 agree with the standard of work seen during the inspection. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 are generally higher than the test results; in 2002, about 10 per cent more pupils were assessed by teachers to have done as well as might be expected than the test results indicated. Pupils did comparatively better in mathematics at this stage than they did in English and science. Most pupils start in Year 7 with well below average attainment in mathematics; the progress made in lessons and achievement overall are therefore both satisfactory during Years 7 to 9. The achievement of some lower attaining pupils is, however, unsatisfactory because of poor staffing arrangements. Boys' results at this stage are generally lower than girls' results and this mainly results from the poorer attitudes of some boys.
81. In 2002, GCSE results were well below average when compared to those in all schools. However, the trend in results is generally upwards with an increasing proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C over the last three years. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are as good as might be expected. Overall GCSE results in 2002 are also satisfactory when compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 test results in 2000. The achievement of most pupils is therefore satisfactory. The achievement of some lower attaining pupils remains unsatisfactory, again because of inadequate staffing arrangements. There is no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls at this stage.
82. By Year 9, most pupils have improved their skills and confidence when handling problems involving number. However, for some particularly low attaining pupils numerical skills and confidence continue to be well below average. Most pupils can recognise simple shapes, find perimeters and calculate areas. They are able to relate aspects of this work to everyday situations. Pupils are able to handle basic formulae and to plot simple graphs. By Year 11, high attaining pupils in particular are confident when undertaking problems involving surface areas and volumes of various three-dimensional shapes. Some pupils continue to exhibit a lack of confidence and accuracy when undertaking work with number, including questions involving long multiplication and division. Pupils during many classes are encouraged and able to solve questions that have been set for them to undertake on a collaborative basis. Pupils have limited opportunities to further develop their ICT skills.
83. Attitudes and behaviour of pupils in classes are mainly satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally very good. A few pupils, particularly when teaching is less effective than most, show immature behaviour and make little progress. Attitudes and behaviour of pupils in some classes deteriorated towards the end of the 65 minute lessons; these are longer than average.
84. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and almost a half of them were good. A very good Year 9 lesson, for more able pupils, followed starter activities about shapes with work involving pupils in using specialist computer-based software relating to shape, space and measures. Group work after this involved significant questioning of each other to check understanding and consolidate learning. The teacher planned this very good range of learning approaches very well. It led to very good learning and the teacher, using an interactive whiteboard well, supported learning further. In contrast, a satisfactory Year 8 lesson involved pupils in considering sets of given data and whether particular conclusions could be drawn from these. Although the teacher attempted to explain the basic principles, a minority of pupils were not clear of what was expected of them and as a consequence made unsatisfactory progress. A good

Year 11 lesson involved lower attaining pupils undertaking group and individual work on three-dimensional solids. By the end of the lesson pupils were able to identify basic relationships between aspects of the solids. The teacher made good use of models of the solids and this helped pupils' visualisation of the problem and supported their learning well.

85. Teaching and learning, particularly for several lower attaining classes, have both been adversely affected by frequent changes of teachers. A series of short-term supply teachers takes one teacher's timetable. At the time of the inspection several classes had experienced four different mathematics teachers over a six-week period. This is clearly causing problems in terms of the continuity of experiences of the pupils involved. Progress for some of these pupils is unsatisfactory.
86. Leadership and management are now good as improvement has been maintained. Teachers work well as a team; they meet on a regular basis to discuss and resolve issues. There are effective monitoring and evaluation procedures: regular lesson observations, monitoring of the setting and marking of homework, and written reviews of the work of the faculty. Homework is regularly set and marked and returned to pupils. Longer-term progress of pupils is well monitored and recorded; pupils are formally tested every half term, individual academic targets are set and pupils' progress in reaching these is well monitored. Targets, to lift standards, are developed and agreed, though several are ambitious. The curriculum is good. There are a number of extra-curricular activities; pupils are entered for a Mathematics Challenge and there are additional study support activities at lunchtime and after school. ICT is used satisfactorily to help learning.
87. Accommodation is very good; a suite of well-decorated and furnished rooms with good quality display materials support teaching and learning well. Resources are satisfactory. Staffing is unsatisfactory and frequent changes in the past have made management difficult. There has been satisfactory progress since the last inspection; further progress has been impeded by the school's difficulty in recruiting and retaining teachers.
88. Judgements about numeracy will be found in the 'standards' section.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Good assessment and its use to inform targets and to guide learning.
- Good leadership and effective management by the new head of faculty, which are establishing the structures needed for improvement.
- Standards are improving relative to those last year.

Areas for improvement

- Achievement and hence standards, especially in Years 10 and 11.
- There is some unsatisfactory teaching that leads to unsatisfactory learning.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Well below average	Well below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Well below average	Well below average
Test and examination results	Well below average	Well below average

Similar school comparisons	Below average	Below average
Overall achievement	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Satisfactory
Teaching	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Learning	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership and management	Good	Good

89. National test results at the end of Year 9 in 2002 were worse than those in 2001. The trend over the last three years was rising faster than the national trend. However, standards declined sharply in 2002. Results in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen because, although still at a low level, standards are rising again. Test results in 2002 were poorer than they were in similar schools, because teaching quality declined due to severe staffing problems. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 agree with test results.
90. GCSE results for both single and double award science were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was very low for double award and low for single award. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was average. When compared to similar schools, GCSE results are poorer than might be expected. The proportion of pupils attaining A*-C grades was low, whilst the proportion gaining A*-G grades was as 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 are unsatisfactory; hence pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory. There were too many pupils who got very low grades because of the difficulties the department encountered with staffing. Boys' results were stronger compared with girls' results and indeed their standards rose in 2002, because they coped better with the disruptions caused by staffing problems.
91. Pupils enter the school with standards well below average, but by Year 9 pupils can handle apparatus well and with confidence. However, they find tasks that demand good use of reading and writing more difficult and many have problems in understanding scientific terms and coping with calculations. Whilst these areas do improve as courses progress they still hinder many from achieving their full potential by the end of Year 11. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in most lessons, but the level of support offered is low. It is good when provided and makes their learning much more secure. Most able pupils make satisfactory progress, but this is improved when they are challenged frequently to tackle extension work.
92. There were three unsatisfactory lessons; nearly half were good or better. Most lessons start by checking and reinforcing the learning made last time; lesson aims are made clear to pupils, providing a clear direction for their learning. Whilst most teachers set out to check the new knowledge gained at the end of lessons, there is often not enough time left to do so thoroughly. Teachers know their science well and so can teach to high levels. Pupils' work is assessed and marked well so that they know where they are and what they need to do to improve. In the best lessons, pupils are led to discover and not told; there is a good use of skilfully crafted teacher questions to draw out and to develop their ideas. These lessons also exhibit a range of teaching strategies and involve most of the pupils in thinking most of the time. Many of these features were present in a very good Year 7 lesson, about burning; it enthused the pupils and enabled them to discover what was needed for fire to burn and how various kinds of extinguishers worked by performing experiments with small fires; it resulted in very good and enjoyable learning. Again, in a Year 9 lesson about

adaptations to habitat, it was the pupils who had the ideas and who developed them, guided by teacher questions. A Year 11 lesson, about the relationship of atomic substructures to the periodic table, also relied upon pupils having the ideas. Most were involved in thinking most of the time and, with the help of teacher questions, they were able to decide how electron shells related to groups and periods. The new applied science course lesson also exemplified good teaching; pupils were exposed to a very carefully planned and well-delivered lesson in which they were required to think and discuss and then, with teacher guidance, their ideas were structured into a coherent whole.

93. Where lessons are less successful pupils tend to be less involved, they do not design experiments, they are told and learn rather than have to think and learn. Other features of these lessons include poor discipline, resulting in a poor situation for learning, and low expectations from the teacher leading to insufficient learning. There is also a lack of rigorous and regular checks on how well learning has gone. There is often insufficient provision of different work within a class to ensure that all are appropriately challenged; for instance, the more able finish the activity and do nothing whereas the less able frequently do not finish at all. The progress of many pupils is hampered by difficulties with reading, writing and understanding scientific terms. The department makes good provision to improve these skills by using writing frames, emphasising key words and spelling, requiring sentences as answers, and other strategies too. Numeracy is not neglected and pupils make satisfactory use of graphs and calculations in their science. The use of ICT is satisfactory. Teachers are starting to use *PowerPoint* on whiteboards whereas the pupils can use data loggers for experiments, such as those on acceleration, and also spreadsheets to generate graphs. An increasing use is made of the Internet for both independent learning and directed research.
94. A new head of science was appointed in September and has made a good start at improving the department. There are now good methods of assessment, which are very well used to measure attainment and to identify weaknesses. All pupils have individual targets, linked to past performance, and their achievement is carefully monitored. The curriculum and schemes of work have been overhauled and a new course in applied science for GCSE has been successfully launched together with starting a successful 'Eureka' course in Year 7. A fuller implementation of the National Key Stage 3 Strategy for science is ongoing, although it still has some way to go. The work of the department, including teaching, is now being more rigorously monitored: one effect has been the good quality of marking. Many of the staffing problems have been overcome. There is a good programme of staff development. These improvements are already raising standards and should continue to do so if developed alongside a stable and effective staff. The laboratories are very good and are well serviced by a hard-working team of technicians.
95. The department identifies opportunities concerning citizenship and contributes well to the pupils' social, moral and cultural development with activities such as those involving group work, food problems and the work of famous scientists. There has been a satisfactory improvement since the last inspection; whilst standards have not risen due to staffing problems there have been many good changes in the use of assessment for the individual and also in the curriculum, although it still lacks provision for visits to places of scientific interest.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Attainment has improved significantly in recent years.
- Teaching is good.
- There is good leadership and management.

Areas for improvement

- Boys' attainment is not high enough.
- Pupils' awareness of colour and of ways in which it may be employed in art is low.

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

96. Teacher assessments, at the end of Year 9, are broadly in line with standards seen. These results represent a significant improvement over the last two years and an improvement since the last inspection, particularly by boys whose results, however, still lag behind those of girls. Girls achieve better because they show a more enthusiastic attitude to their work. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average but there has been marked improvement in the last two years.
97. By Year 9, pupils are able to use a variety of sources for ideas in their project work. Aboriginal work, for example, provided inspiration for a Year 7 class who were able to produce directly painted designs, potato prints and computer-generated imagery from their studies. The study of art history also gives rise to creative work by pupils; some very colourful and imaginative three-dimensional work derived from the work of Hundertwasser, for example. Drawing from observation is strong by both boys and girls. Drawing and painting from studies of the local scene are very expressive and, in this specific area of the curriculum, boys produce the best work. Use of colour generally is lacking in knowledge of the ways in which feeling or character may be expressed. Pupils with special educational needs and those with particular talents are able to do well because the work given them to do allows for success at the widest range of levels and they are helped by sensitive support and encouragement from teachers. Basic skills in literacy and numeracy are addressed by discussion of subject terms and by spatial judgement in observed work. Pupils use computers competently in design and in their research.
98. In Years 10 and 11, standards are below average overall but girls still achieve better than boys. The best work shows high standards in drawing from observation. These drawings develop strongly as compositions and absorb the influence of art historical studies, for example Cubism. A continuing weakness in much of the work at this level is the use of colour, which is applied intuitively rather than knowledgeably. There is highly imaginative three-dimensional work based upon the study of shoes and brightly coloured clothes. Pupils continue to use computers effectively in their studies; they are able to access a range of computer programs for design and for information. Pupils with special educational needs and those with particular talent respond well to 'open-ended' projects and make good progress.

99. There were no unsatisfactory lessons and most were good or better. Pupils' overall very good attitudes and behaviour support learning. Teaching shows good pace and planning and these qualities are reflected in good learning. Lessons are well prepared and well managed with appropriate sensitivity to individual pupils' needs and use a range of teaching strategies. Particularly good use was made of a review of pupils' progress at the beginning of lessons and as a conclusion at the end; pupils were set up to get on with their work, and knowledge and skills picked up in the lesson were consolidated. Teacher demonstrations of techniques are effective in helping pupils learn; a good demonstration of lino printing, for example, stimulated interest in a Year 10 lesson. Effective individual tuition was evident in a Year 11 lesson devoted to design and composition from observed objects; good teacher expertise was transferred to the pupil.
100. The department is well led and managed by an experienced teacher. Two more recently qualified subject specialists have backgrounds that meet the department's curriculum needs. Relationships between teachers are very good and a shared sense of purpose is evident. Assessment is good. There are good displays of work in studios and around the school. These enrich the school environment and provide a good learning resource. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Citizenship began as a compulsory subject within the National Curriculum in September 2002. This section is presented differently from other subjects because of this recent start.

Strengths

- A strong school commitment to development of the subject.
- Very good curriculum provision that meets statutory requirements.
- Very good leadership and management.
- A strong school council system which gives good opportunities for pupils to participate in decision making with adults.

Areas for improvement

- Development of systems for assessing pupils' knowledge and understanding.
- Review of the match of staff skills and training needs to the curriculum in Years 10 and 11.
- Further audit of the contribution to citizenship made by other subjects of the curriculum.

101. Standards at the end of the first six months of citizenship as a statutory subject are average. Most pupils have a reasonable understanding of the topics they have studied. Though some pupils are rather inarticulate, most can express and justify opinions on these topics and most show responsible attitudes towards the opinions of others. In general, the skills of discussion and participation are as yet better developed than knowledge and understanding of political, legal and economic systems. Achievement is good.
102. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Lessons are well planned and the materials used are well matched to the needs of pupils. In two good Year 7 and Year 8 lessons, teachers managed pupils well and structured productive discussions where pupils developed their ideas and produced thoughtful responses on stereotypes of people. In a Year 11 lesson good teaching and use of ICT stimulated

interest and helped pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the difficult issue of abortion. There is some skilled handling by teachers of sensitive issues. However, the management of pupils and discussions are less consistent in Years 10 and 11 than in earlier years. There are good systems for monitoring and recognising the completion of work by pupils but assessment of their knowledge and understanding is underdeveloped.

103. Attitudes to the subject are positive. Throughout the school, most pupils behave well in lessons, contribute responsibly to discussions and complete their work conscientiously. Most show interest and take their work seriously. However, in Years 10 and 11 a minority respond less well and require firm management to keep them on task.
104. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The school has a strong commitment to the subject and has taken a leading role in its development. Planning and curriculum provision are very good. National Curriculum requirements are met through a very well structured ASDAN course which integrates citizenship with personal, social, health and moral education. This discrete provision is supplemented with tutorials, assemblies, whole-school events and contributions from the other subjects of the curriculum. Some of these subject contributions, such as those in geography and history, are explicitly identified and delivered; others, though regular, are more incidental. There is some repetition in coverage between citizenship and religious education. There are good systems for staff and pupils themselves to evaluate the course. The school council system is a real strength, providing all pupils with an opportunity to participate in decision making in their own community and there are other opportunities for pupils to contribute to community events.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Overall good behaviour and attitudes of pupils in lessons, lead to good learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge and expertise are good, maintaining lesson pace and developing pupils' skills with different materials.
- The curriculum choice in Years 10 and 11 is broad and gives appropriate choice.
- There is a high proportion of good teaching and learning, leading to improvements in the standards of work seen.

Areas for improvement

- GCSE results are not good enough.
- Teachers' expectations of pupils' design ideas and drawing work are inconsistent.

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

105. Boys achieve as well as girls by the end of Year 9 because all pupils are keen to work and their progress is well monitored. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2002 do not agree with the standard of work seen which has improved since last year; overall it is close to average, hence achievement is good.
106. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was very low and due to weaknesses in answering written questions. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was 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 GCSE results are satisfactory.
107. In 2002, pupils did better overall than they did in their other subjects. Results have been similar over the last three years. Standards varied across different options within the subject. They were highest in graphic products, where they were in line with the national average, and lowest in systems and control where they were well below average, but in line with predicted grades based on their prior attainment. Overall, boys' results were better, compared with girls' results, because their attitudes to work were better.
108. Standards of designing and making when pupils start in Year 7 are well below average. By Year 9, pupils can research well and carry out an analysis of their product area, but they sometimes lack the ability to use the ideas they have to influence their designing. They can make things better than they can design them; in some units of work they can use computer-assisted design (CAD) software to produce their final designs. They can also develop two-dimensional and three-dimensional prototypes, which help to develop their design ideas when asked to do so, but teachers' expectations of design vary across the options. In food technology, pupils can use graphical analysis of product properties to help establish a specification, and can alter recipes to improve a meal. However, they cannot generally use drawing techniques with expertise to communicate or to develop their design ideas, and their designs are sometimes superficial.
109. By Year 11, pupils in some options can utilise sophisticated *Pro-Desktop* CAD software to improve or prototype ideas. They can use flow-charts to plan their making or to plan control sequences in systems and control. They can use product analysis, for instance when they investigate food packaging, to help clarify ideas about their own product design. They understand how to organise their project folio work well in some options, but practice is variable. In manufacturing, they can use jigs to produce consistent products with clients in mind, and make them to cost limits. In systems and control they make good quality products that they can enhance by using CAD and computer-assisted machining (CAM) to produce accurate components. Teachers' specialist subject knowledge helps pupils to develop skills with different materials. However, pupils cannot all develop their designs well on paper, and many fail to make adequate use of standard drawing techniques to communicate their ideas with clarity. Their making remains better than their designing, and their understanding of theory work is below average. Sketching is often poor and pupils do not know how to develop a 'busy page of ideas'. The use of ICT to enhance work in classrooms is limited by lack of provision.
110. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by teachers and LSAs where present. The most able pupils make good progress because they are identified carefully by the department and given particular

attention and encouragement. In work seen, boys and girls make equal progress and their attainment is similar. EE

111. Pupils' behaviour is good and they co-operate well with each other and teachers; consequently good learning and progress in lessons are supported. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Half were good or better. In Year 7, a good lesson used analysis of a range of existing products effectively to help pupils develop design criteria for their own bird feeders. Pupils used the school intranet and other source materials to research birds' feeding needs. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson, expectations were lower; pupils produced simple designs. In a good Year 11 lesson, groups of pupils co-operated to plan a flow-chart and then produced a program sequence to control models such as a bridge or simulated lift. Tasks set were varied and offered challenges to pupils of differing abilities. Key words were identified and literacy further reinforced by the use of correct technical vocabulary throughout. Learning was good because pupils could try out their ideas on realistic models and change their programs if they did not work.
112. Leadership and management are satisfactory. Pupils' progress and attainment are well monitored and recorded. Marking of pupils' work is generally good but needs to be more consistent and regular. All options need to set clearly written targets for improvement for pupils. The development of structured workbooks is improving pupils' achievement, but these need further development to reflect a consistent departmental approach. The curriculum is good and offers a comprehensive choice in Years 10 and 11. Good specialist accommodation generally supports the curriculum offered, but a shared textiles and food room with only four cookers and lack of immediate access to consumable resources for textiles, sometimes limits learning opportunities and hinders pupils' progress. Citizenship education is built into schemes of work, and spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is supported in a variety of ways, for instance when pupils discuss the issues relating to product packaging, or the cultural influences on textiles.
113. Improvement has been good since the last report; boys no longer achieve less well than girls. Standards have risen in the last year. The presentation of work is seldom untidy, but pupils' drawing skills still need developing. Pupils are now generally enthusiastic about their work.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good.
- Assessment and monitoring of pupils' progress are good.
- Literacy standards are improved through schemes of work and teaching.
- The use of ICT and new technology is good.

Areas for improvement

- Examination results are not high enough.
- Fieldwork for all year groups would help learning more.
- Community links need to be better.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below Average	Below Average

Boys' standard of work seen	Below Average	Below Average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

114. Boys previously achieved less well than girls by the end of Year 9, because of their poorer attitudes. This is confirmed by teacher assessments in 2002, when girls' results approached the national average and boys were well below. Assessment of both was over generous, but there was still a considerable difference between boys and girls. This difference is not evident in current work.
115. At GCSE in 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining A*-G grades overall was very low, but the proportion of boys doing so approached the national average and they also got twice as many A*-C grades as in 2001. Results were badly affected by a group of disaffected girls who had college places already secured without the need for geography GCSE.
116. Pupils' achievement was very variable up to 2002, but in work seen in the current Year 9 and in Years 10 and 11, standards are now much higher due to good and very good teaching, better attitudes in lessons and the recruitment to the GCSE course of higher attaining pupils at the end of Year 9. Improved standards are seen in work in books, in lessons in Years 7 to 9 and by externally accredited predictions and encouraging mock examination results in Years 10 and 11. Boys' results in 2002 were a forerunner of the standards currently seen. Achievement is now satisfactory overall, from a very low level of attainment on entry.
117. Attitudes and behaviour are good in classes and this is largely due to good moral leadership provided by teachers. The department's teaching of elements of the citizenship curriculum further enhances attitudes. This was seen in work in which pupils gained an improved knowledge of European affairs through discussion of the Common Agricultural Policy.
118. By Year 9, pupils have a good knowledge of basic geography and mapping skills. They can measure line and angle, construct graphs and use co-ordinates. Pupils learn investigative techniques, seen to advantage in a Year 9 project on the Amazon rain forest. Over Years 7 to 9 pupils develop their literacy skills from a very low level. They make good notes, and extended and imaginative writing is seen in letter writing and project work. Although there is support for improving a technical vocabulary and opportunities to read aloud, pupils do not as yet give extended verbal responses using a full vocabulary. The use of ICT is playing an important part in pupils' interest and understanding, and teachers' use of new technology is adding to the effectiveness of lessons. The careful identification of the learning requirements of pupils with special educational needs enables them to make good progress in lessons and they benefit from individual attention and support. However, the range of materials is not broad enough to cope with all needs in some lessons. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 can recall previously learned skills and are able to hypothesise, gather and analyse data and reach correct conclusions. This was seen in good coursework resulting from fieldwork in Durham. This work also exhibited improving skills in ICT, including word processing and use of spreadsheets. Across Years 7 to 11, pupils' understanding of geographical processes and patterns, both physical and human, grows at a satisfactory rate.

119. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. All were good or better. Lessons are well planned and presented with clarity and humour. Knowledge is constantly reinforced through questioning and repetition. A variety of techniques and activities are used to challenge and interest pupils. These include good use of audiovisual resources. In a very good Year 7 lesson, literacy skills were boosted as pupils were fully involved and required to give a commentary for a silent video clip showing a volcanic eruption. Good starter activities and plenary sessions enable pupils' progress to be checked and were seen to advantage in a Year 11 lesson blending past examination questions and very good use of an interactive whiteboard. In many lessons, pupils improve examination skills and are aware of how well they are doing through explanation of marking schemes.
120. Leadership and management are energetic and clear, and with good support from a committed team the department has the capacity to continue improving. Good procedures for assessment and monitoring pupils' progress are in place and the department is responding well to previous low standards by a complete review and update of schemes of work. Fieldwork still needs to be provided in each year. Community links are still not good enough. The liaison on fieldwork being carried out with local primary schools is a good example of both. Since the last inspection improvement has been good and most has taken place in the last 18 months. In particular, teaching is better and the use of ICT in coursework much increased. New assessment and monitoring procedures are bearing fruit and leading to higher standards that should be reflected in future examination results.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Good teaching, which challenges pupils and results in good learning.
- Good systems for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress.
- Good pupil behaviour and positive relationships in lessons.
- Good leadership and management, with a determined focus on raising standards.
- A shared commitment across staff to improving teaching and learning.

Areas for improvement

- Improved examination results at GCSE.
- More teaching strategies to meet the needs of different abilities in mixed ability classes.
- Further development of pupils' ability to evaluate historical sources.

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

121. The standard of work at the end of Year 9 is broadly in line with the teacher assessments in 2002, which were also below average. These assessments showed girls' attainment much higher than that of boys. The assessments appear to be unreliable; although a minority of mainly boys are careless in completing and

presenting work, boys' achievement as seen during the inspection is broadly in line with that of girls. This is also partly a reflection of the improvement in teaching and learning which has taken place in recent months following the appointment of a new head of department and other changes in staffing.

122. GCSE results in 2002 were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was very low and the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was low. Boys' results were similar to those of girls. Results in 2002 were similar to those in 2001 and 2000. Again, the standard of work seen during inspection is higher, reflecting improved teaching and learning in the current school year.
123. By Year 9, most pupils have a reasonable knowledge and understanding of the topics they have studied. Pupils can describe historical changes and explain some of their causes and consequences. Pupils of above average ability can write extended accounts of a good standard but many pupils of average and below average ability have weaknesses in literacy, which hinder their attainment. Most pupils can use historical sources effectively to extract information; they can make some comparisons but evaluation of these sources is weak. Overall standards are below average but pupils' standards of attainment, when starting in Year 7, were well below average, indicating that pupils make good progress by Year 9. By Year 11, most pupils can write longer answers and use much historical terminology correctly. They can use sources, and interpret them. Pupils of below average ability have a weak understanding of historical concepts but can write shorter structured answers to questions. Pupils of above average ability have good knowledge and understanding; they use terminology well and can make some evaluation of sources for utility and reliability. In general, however, pupils' ability to evaluate sources for usefulness and reliability is underdeveloped. The standard of attainment in Year 10 is relatively higher, largely reflecting teachers' systematic focus, from the very beginning of the GCSE course, on helping pupils to develop the skills they need for examination success. Older pupils are currently achieving well but their standards have not yet risen further as new management has not yet had time to overcome past underachievement.
124. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because the methods and materials used by teachers are well matched to their needs, with a particular emphasis on helping them to develop their writing skills. There is insufficient additional support for these pupils from outside the department. The most able pupils also make good progress: they are challenged by their teachers to think for themselves and develop their ideas.
125. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are positive and pupils work well together. The quality of teaching and learning is good. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen during the inspection and two thirds of the lessons were good or better. There are a number of consistent strengths in teaching. Teachers manage pupils well, so behaviour in lessons is good. Lessons are well planned and have clear objectives so that pupils understand what they are doing. Pupils are consistently challenged to think for themselves. For example, in a very good Year 7 lesson, pupils had to consider the short and long-term problems which William the Conqueror faced after winning the battle of Hastings and prioritise what he should do. In an equally good Year 10 lesson, pupils compared sources, which gave contrasting German and British reactions to the Treaty of Versailles, and they then came to their own conclusions about the Treaty. Teachers present their material well in language that pupils can understand and as a result pupils show interest and sustain concentration, though occasionally pupils lose focus towards the end of lessons. Teaching methods and materials meet

the needs of pupils of different abilities, though sometimes further variation within the class would help. In a good Year 8 lesson on the Gunpowder Plot some pupils found the resources difficult to cope with and needed a more simplified version. The pace of lessons is brisk and pupils are productive but, occasionally, as in a satisfactory Year 11 lesson on prohibition in the United States, teachers need to take more time to check that all pupils understand key points before moving on. There are good strategies to help pupils develop the writing skills that are crucial to success in this subject. In Years 10 and 11 examination skills are taught systematically. The department uses ICT well to develop pupils' research skills.

126. Leadership and management are good, with some very good features. Since taking up post in September 2002 the new head of department has given very clear educational direction with a determined focus on raising standards and improving the quality of teaching and learning. Departmental staff share this determination to succeed. Teachers mark and assess pupils' work thoroughly using National Curriculum levels and GCSE criteria. As a result, pupils have a clear understanding of their performance, their targets and how to improve. There are good systems for monitoring pupils' progress and evaluating the subject's performance. Departmental plans set appropriate priorities and ambitious targets but there is a need to be more realistic about the number of priorities tackled at one time and the deadlines for completion.
127. The department makes an important contribution to citizenship, which is systematically identified and delivered within the subject. The contribution to pupils' social, moral and cultural education is clear but as yet unplanned and there is relatively limited time devoted to the study of non-European cultures. There is a good match of specialist staff to the curriculum. Resources are satisfactory. The department produces good materials of its own but further resources to support the new schemes of work would help raise standards.
128. Improvement since the last inspection is good. Both teaching and learning have improved, including the quality of marking and assessment, and the progress made by pupils. These have already had an effect in raising standards and should continue to do so, though this has yet to feed through into better examination results. The department undoubtedly has the capacity to improve further.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, and pupils make good progress in lessons.
- There are good relationships between teachers and pupils.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and behave well in lessons.
- There is good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- A room for ICT developments would act as a focus and resource base.
- A check to ensure all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their full entitlement to ICT is needed.

Aspect	Years 7- 9	Years 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average

Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Below average
Achievement overall	Good	Good
Teaching	Good	Good
Learning	Good	Good
Attitudes and behaviour	Good	Good
Leadership and management	Good	Good

129. Standards of work seen in Year 9 match teacher assessments made in 2002, and indicate that pupils' work is below the level expected for their age. This is most significantly due to how pupils were taught ICT through other subjects and as a result have failed to develop some basic skills and knowledge expected. Discrete ICT lessons are now taught in Years 7 and 8 with plans to extend this to Year 9 in September 2003. Standards in Years 7 and 8 are now rising.
130. There are no GCSE results for ICT as the first courses were started in 2001. Standards of work seen of pupils taking GCSE ICT are below average. However, these pupils have had limited ICT experiences earlier in the school, and are now having to learn new skills to meet the demands of examinations.
131. By Year 9, pupils make use of a variety of software packages, such as word processing, desktop publishing, spreadsheets, and slide presentations. However, they make little use of databases. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 are making good use of word processing and images to create presentations. Higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of effective presentations with careful selection of font and colour. Pupils understand basic spreadsheet design, can enter data accurately and are making use of simple formulae. Higher and average attaining pupils are beginning to use more complex formulae, and show some understanding of the modelling capabilities of spreadsheets. Because pupils in Years 7 and 8 started the same schemes of work in September, standards are similar in both years. Pupils in Year 9 make use of ICT in other subjects. There is extensive use of word processing and image display. Good use is made in modern foreign languages where pupils create menu cards in German, and estate agent displays in French. Pupils learn about computer control in design and technology.
132. By Year 11, pupils make wider use of a range of skills as they complete examination tasks. They use word processing more extensively to produce business letters and cards. They are learning how to use more complex formulae in spreadsheets, although their understanding of databases is below the level expected for pupils taking examination courses. They can create websites with hyperlinks to home pages.
133. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress because they are well supported by teachers who understand their needs. The most able pupils make good progress because teachers plan harder work for them in lessons, and there are opportunities after school for pupils in Years 9, 10 and 11 to take a GNVQ course in ICT.
134. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Two thirds of the lessons were good or better. In a good Year 7 lesson, where pupils were learning to present information effectively, teachers' good planning and preparation, and very good demonstration using a computer screen projector, all helped pupils learn well. However, in a similar lesson, full use was not made of all the computers available and the prepared information sheet, which pupils had to annotate, was too difficult for some; it required higher level literacy skills. Consequently those pupils did not learn effectively enough. In a Year 10 lesson, the preparation of a very good work sheet about validation in databases supported pupils' very good progress in gaining understanding. In this lesson, the

computer presentation, the teachers' focused question and answer session, and the good attitudes of pupils helped them learn well. However, in a Year 11 class where there was equally good preparation and presentation, pupils were not very responsive and their progress was less significant.

135. Leadership and management are good. New schemes of work based on the National Key Stage 3 Strategy were introduced in September 2002 for discrete ICT lessons. GCSE ICT was introduced in 2001 and provides further opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11. However, pupils who do not take these courses, and other courses such as business studies where a range of ICT skills are taught and used, may not receive their full entitlement in ICT. Although a number of teachers from different subject areas teach ICT, they are well prepared and supported with schemes of work, assessment criteria, and information prepared and available on the school intranet, to help with lesson planning. When the school was built, just a few years ago, no dedicated provision for ICT was made. This grand mistake has been difficult to overcome; lessons are taught in a number of different rooms, none of which are dedicated to ICT, there are insufficient computers in these rooms to avoid pupils having to share, and there are no displays of pupils' work done in ICT lessons. Community funds have enabled the school to move on and many teachers are using ICT effectively to support their teaching.
136. Very good progress has been made since the last inspection, albeit recently. Standards are being raised, particularly in Years 7 and 8 and in GCSE ICT. Much of the teaching is good, and pupils are making good progress in most lessons. The curriculum is well planned and an accurate assessment scheme has been developed that tracks pupils' performance well.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Good teaching.
- Very good leadership and management.
- Very well planned development of pupils' writing and ICT skills.
- Very good assessment and monitoring of pupils' work.

Area for improvement

- Teachers do not speak the taught language enough in lessons.

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

137. Boys achieve less well than girls by the end of Year 9 but the difference in performance is broadly in line with national averages. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 do not agree with the standard of work seen. Standards are now higher because the new head of department has put into effect measures to raise

achievement. In particular, new procedures for assessing and monitoring pupils' progress are leading to more realistic assessment of progress against national standards and to more careful targeting of underachieving pupils, particularly boys.

138. GCSE results in French and German were below average compared to those in all schools in 2002. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well below average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was 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 satisfactory. Hence pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Results in 2002 were better than in 2001. Results over the past three years have been inconsistent but the general trend has been one of improvement because staffing has been stable and new schemes of work have led to higher expectations by most teachers.
139. By Year 9, pupils develop good knowledge of vocabulary and develop good writing and reading skills. However, in most lessons, they do not have enough opportunities to develop speaking and listening skills. There are, however, notable exceptions where the development of speaking skills is good. Pupils' general ability on entry into the school is well below average but standards improve to below average in Year 9 so most pupils make good progress. However, in a small amount of the work seen, pupils do not achieve the same standards as the rest because teachers' expectations are lower. In general, standards are relatively higher in Years 7 and 8 than in Year 9 so standards are now improving overall. By Year 11, pupils continue to improve their knowledge of vocabulary and to develop their writing skills. However, in most lessons seen, pupils lack oral confidence and high attainers find it difficult to produce extended oral responses. There are, however, notable exceptions; pupils in one Year 10 German group developed good oral skills in line with expectations. Standards are relatively higher in Year 10 than in Year 11. Standards of writing are higher because very effective schemes of work ensure a structured approach to developing these skills. Pupils, at all levels, learn to manipulate language effectively because great emphasis is placed on mastering the main tenses of verbs so pupils are able to build sentences effectively. They also learn to build more complex sentences by learning to use connecting words. Very effective lesson planning ensures that pupils learn vocabulary thoroughly and that skills are well developed. However, in most lessons, teachers do not use French and German enough and pupils are not encouraged to use the foreign language for basic communication in the classroom. This affects the development of listening and speaking skills. Pupils are clear about their level of achievement and usually know what they have to do to improve the quality of their work because procedures for the assessment and monitoring of pupils' work are very good. Teachers mark pupils' work effectively and always indicate how they can improve its quality. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work and usually contribute with enthusiasm because teachers work hard to establish good relationships and a positive working atmosphere in lessons. Pupils develop very good ICT skills and good literacy and numeracy skills in French and German lessons because the development of these skills, as part of languages lessons, is very well planned and effectively implemented.
140. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in spite of the lack of support in lessons because teachers know pupils well and are able to support them effectively. The most able pupils make good progress overall because effective assessment systems mean that teachers have high expectations. However, progress made by high attainers in Year 11 is only satisfactory.

141. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Three quarters were good or better. Half the lessons seen were very good. The majority of lessons are very well planned. These lessons begin with effective revision of previous learning, often with a high level of active pupil involvement. Objectives are clearly stated and reviewed effectively at the end. Presentation is done in a lively manner with pupils actively involved. Follow-up practice effectively develops skills. Support material produced by teachers is of good quality. Work is challenging and expectations are high. Occasionally there is a lack of clear focus to the lesson.
142. Leadership and management are very good with the potential to be excellent. Departmental documentation is excellent. The department is developing very good systems for monitoring and evaluating its work. The monitoring of teaching is already very effective. Planning is good though the various planning documents need to be integrated. Resources produced by the department are good but course books are out of date and need to be renewed. There are no opportunities for pupils to study two foreign languages. Setting arrangements, particularly in Year 10, need to be reviewed. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection.

MUSIC

Overall the quality of provision in music is **unsatisfactory**.

Strength

- Teaching currently provided is good and enables all pupils to achieve well.

Areas for improvement

- Sufficient specialist teachers need to be employed.
- The deficiency in resources needs to be made good.
- The range of extra-curricular activities and the number of pupils involved in them need to increase.

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

143. Boys achieve less well than girls do by the end of Year 9, as they do nationally. Teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 in 2000 and 2001 do not agree with the standards of work seen because the assessment figures are unreliable. Achievement and attainment in Years 7 to 9 have been limited for those pupils who have not been taught by specialist teachers when there have been staffing problems.
144. In 2002, GCSE results were below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was lower than average. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was above average – 100 per cent in each of the last three years. If the overall GCSE results in 2002 are compared to the performance indicated by teacher assessment of those pupils at the end of Year 9 in 2000, which were very low, then the results are satisfactory and pupils' achievement, overall, is

good. More than half of the 18 candidates gained A*-C grades, with boys doing better than girls. Music results were amongst the best in the school but not as good as those in 2001, when they were in line with results nationally.

145. By Year 9, pupils can use keyboards to create tunes in chosen modes. They can use stave notation to follow music and to play single lines. They demonstrate knowledge and understanding of terms and concepts found in music and can identify some features of music heard. However, development of skills is limited. Very few can use efficient fingering on keyboards. Most continue to use letter names with notation. Pupils with behavioural problems get too excited in activities involving physical movement and singing, limiting the learning of others. By Year 11, many pupils show developed performance skills, most of these being supported by tuition in school or privately. They are familiar with examples of music from a range of periods, styles and cultures. They draw on these skills, and on listening well, to compose short pieces to given briefs. However, harmony tends to use only root position triads; no use of inversions of chords was seen, even in the most able pupils' work. Composition is a strength in the work of boys and girls in Years 10 and 11 because most pupils use computers with sequencing and notation programs to help them with this and because it is well taught.
146. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because teachers use materials and methods that enable them to learn and progress. Many engage well with music. The most able pupils make satisfactory progress because teachers expect them to complete tasks more quickly and have higher expectations of their attainment relative to other pupils in the class.
147. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Nearly all were good. In a good Year 8 lesson, the teacher's fast pace led to a good level of concentration as pupils sang, played, clapped, and wrote in learning compound time. In one Year 9 lesson, pairs of pupils 'discovered' the sounds of parallel intervals on keyboards because the teacher gave them licence to experiment. In a Year 10 lesson the teacher caused pupils to reflect on what they had learned in preparing composition exercises by asking them to write about the process. In a Year 11 lesson, the teacher found time to help three less motivated girls to get started on a task by breaking it down to achievable steps. Teaching should plan more precisely for individual pupils to reach higher levels of attainment in GCSE. Teachers should adapt their methods to encourage more sensitivity to sound and the development of spiritual awareness.
148. Difficulty in finding and retaining suitable experienced staff is the main reason why leadership and management of music are unsatisfactory. There have been repeated gaps in recent years, with cover by non-specialists. An experienced specialist supply teacher was employed during the inspection, but there is again a vacancy. The acting head of music, who works hard and provides a stimulating learning environment, is relatively new to teaching and has had much to do this year to put music on a better footing. He has received insufficient training as a curriculum leader. Especially needed is urgent support to make assessment procedures as effective as they are elsewhere in the school. Accommodation lacks small rooms for group work, and one classroom is too small for the large classes. Resources lack sufficient tuned percussion, instruments of non-European cultures and keyboards with memory. All of these factors limit learning and therefore standards. The wind band makes good links with community groups and gave concerts in Paris recently. However, there are now no choirs, and valuable instrumental teaching, for which most parents pay, is used to little effect in the school. Extra-curricular work needs to be developed to involve more pupils and a wider range of music-making, so providing greater opportunities for

personal development through performing arts than currently exist. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- A good focus on raising standards of attainment uses assessment data effectively.
- Extra-curricular sport provides good opportunities for all pupils, particularly the gifted and talented, to excel.
- New curriculum initiatives, using links with the community and local sports clubs, enhance and extend standards of attainment.

Areas for improvement

- Difficulties in recruiting staff have led to unsatisfactory achievement.
- Not enough time is given to the subject to ensure sufficient progress in Years 7 to 9.
- Pupils' attitudes have a negative effect on attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11.

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

149. The 2002 teacher assessments and GCSE results accurately reflect satisfactory achievement, but current achievement in the subject is unsatisfactory, because circumstances have changed. Severe staffing difficulties caused by the school's inability to recruit specialist teachers, an incapacitating injury to one teacher, and the lack of specialist supply teachers have now created an unsatisfactory teaching provision.
150. By the end of Year 9 in 2002, boys and girls attained standards that were well below average. These standards represent satisfactory achievement, given pupils' low attainment on entry to the school. Teacher assessments agree with the standard of work seen.
151. The 2002 GCSE results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was well below average, and the proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was below average. These results are an improvement on those achieved in 2001. 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 satisfactory. Hence pupils' achievement was satisfactory. Pupils gained results in physical education that were similar to those in the other subjects they studied.
152. By Year 9, most pupils can perform the basic skills of invasion games, such as keeping possession of the ball in basketball, and they achieve some success in practice. However, their skills often break down under the pressure of competition. Only a few high attaining pupils perform more advanced skills. Standards in football are higher, and pupils of all abilities apply their knowledge, skills and understanding of rules and tactics, effectively, in small-sided games. The performance of high attaining

pupils is well illustrated by the girls' Under 13 football team, which won the district Adidas Cup competition. In gymnastics, boys have a poor understanding of the principles of balance, and they lack control and body tension in gymnastic skills. They are not making the progress that they should in this aspect. Pupils' skills of evaluating and improving their own and others' work are underdeveloped, because they have few opportunities to practise these skills. Literacy and numeracy skills develop satisfactorily in some lessons. A limiting factor in pupils' achievement is that not enough time is given to the subject to ensure sufficient progress. Additionally, the short length of each unit of work, only six lessons, also hinders attainment and progress.

153. By Year 11, most pupils can warm up following their teacher's directions. High attainers can demonstrate stretching exercises accurately, but the majority cannot warm up independently. Pupils show a poor knowledge and understanding of the effects of exercise on the body, and few can name the muscles they are stretching. Sound learning continues in football, and most Year 10 pupils perform to an average standard in five-a-side games. A major factor affecting attainment and achievement in Years 10 and 11 National Curriculum lessons is the behaviour and attitudes of pupils. Poor attendance, high levels of non-participation and a failure to bring kit flourish, as a result of lack of continuity in staffing. Standards are higher in GCSE practical work, as seen in badminton, where pupils worked well, making good improvement in the lesson. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of theoretical aspects are well below average, reflected in their written coursework and assessments. There is little evidence of their use of ICT.
154. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated into the physical education programme and make progress at the same rate as their classmates, which currently depends on which class they are in. The most able pupils make generally good progress, because there are many opportunities for them to excel in extra-curricular sport, in school and beyond. Extra-curricular sport is a strength of the department. The school is justifiably proud of the success of its girls' and boys' football teams. Individual pupils gain representative honours by competing for East Durham in football, athletics and cross-country running.
155. There were two unsatisfactory lessons, two thirds that were satisfactory and two that were good. In a Year 7 orienteering lesson, pupils were well motivated and made good progress, as a result of knowledgeable, well-planned teaching. Clear objectives were shared with pupils, who understood exactly what they had to do to be successful. There were discernible gains in knowledge and understanding both in the theory of map reading and in practice. In contrast, Year 7 pupils made unsatisfactory progress in a lesson where learning objectives were not clear. The pupils' enthusiasm and interest were fully engaged, but the quality of their work did not improve as much as it could have done, because they were not taught the basic principles needed to achieve good quality performance. Most teachers overuse favoured teaching styles at the expense of moving pupils forward at a demanding pace. In the Year 11 GCSE course, some examples of good teaching occurred in both theoretical and practical lessons. In a badminton lesson, notable for a good introduction to the purpose of the lesson, teaching did not follow up this promising beginning with sufficient practical reinforcement of what was to be learned. Overall, teaching lacks the rigour to ensure that pupils of all abilities make appropriate progress in the tasks set.
156. Rapid staff turnover is a major reason for the unsatisfactory teaching and learning in Years 10 and 11. Specialist sports coaches have been employed to provide an interesting, purposeful practical programme, but the management and organisation of

the lessons by non-specialist teachers covering for absence are unsatisfactory because of the behaviour and attitude of the pupils. Inappropriate dress, an inclination to drift from one activity to another distracting others, and wandering off around the building leads to unsatisfactory attainment and achievement. Many pupils do not take their work seriously. The presence of an experienced male specialist teacher is sorely missed.

157. The leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory, despite the current staffing crisis. The head of department has a clear sense of educational direction, and planning focuses on raising standards of attainment. The use of assessment data to produce individual targets, and assess pupils' progress, is good. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory, until this year. Considerable initiative has been used to devise imaginative strategies to overcome the staffing difficulties with the help of the district School Sports Co-ordinator. New curriculum initiatives enhance and extend opportunities for pupils, through liaison with local sports clubs and organisations. The monitoring and evaluation of teaching have begun, but it is too early to observe any improvement. Staff turnover has had a negative effect on this aspect.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Teaching is good, and very good in the first three years, and this is having a good effect on learning.
- All pupils have the opportunity for an examination in Year 11.
- The new subject leader has very good vision for future development and improvements.

Areas for improvement

- Standards of attainment need to be improved.
- Attitudes to the subject need some improvement, particularly the motivation to succeed in examinations.
- The school needs to restore lost data so that targets can be set accurately and the progress of individual pupils can be guided.

Aspect	YEARS 7- 9	YEARS 10-11
Girls' standard of work seen	Below average	Well below average
Boys' standard of work seen	Below average	Well below average
Achievement overall	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Teaching	Very good	Good
Learning	Good	Satisfactory
Attitudes and behaviour	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Leadership and management	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

158. Boys achieve similarly to girls by the end of Year 9 as far as could be judged by the observation of lessons and work. However, teacher assessments at the end of Year 9 were not available so this could not be checked against data. The school system has lost most of the data for this subject; there have been several recent changes of subject leader, and the current leader has not inherited adequate records. Pupils' work shows that when they enter the school, attainment in religious education is well below national and local expectations, and in particular they are held back by poor literacy skills. However, they make satisfactory progress across three years although

they remain below the standards required by the County Durham Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education by the end of Year 9.

159. GCSE full course and short course results were well below average compared to those in all schools. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-C grade was very low in both examinations. The proportion of pupils attaining an A*-G grade was very low in the full course and low in the short course although this aspect of results was much better for the short course in 2002 than in 2001. The overall GCSE results in 2002 cannot be compared to the likely performance indicated by those pupils' end of Year 9 tests, as the necessary data is not available. However, pupils' achievement was unsatisfactory in 2002; in the full GCSE course pupils did significantly worse in this subject than they did in their other subjects.
160. There were too many pupils who were ungraded in both examinations. Boys' results in the short course were significantly worse compared with girls' results. The new subject leader does not have the necessary information for close analysis but poor motivation is the likely cause. Very few boys choose the full course so no significant analysis is possible there. Results have been similar in both examinations for three years; there is no clear trend. However, low standards and high numbers of ungraded candidates, particularly among boys, is a consistent theme.
161. By Year 9 pupils can demonstrate basic knowledge and understanding of some aspects of Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism and Islam. They also have some limited understanding of the diversity of Christian traditions. They have some understanding of how religious beliefs affect moral and lifestyle decisions, and they have some understanding of people's lives that are different from their own. However, they demonstrate their learning better orally than they do in writing. Few can write in any substantial way, and most find it very difficult to write creatively but, generally, they are able to follow teachers' suggestions for how to begin sentences and how to structure work. Poor literacy skills continue to constrain the progress of most pupils across their first three years. Pupils find it difficult to transfer the literacy skills learnt elsewhere into their religious education work. Standards on entry are particularly low for religious education, lower than their scores in the core subjects would indicate, and teachers have much consolidation and compensatory work to do to ensure satisfactory achievement.
162. By Year 11, pupils can discuss and understand religious issues at a much more mature level, although, for most, their knowledge lacks the depth and detail needed for the higher grades in examinations. There are a few higher attaining pupils who can write a well-reasoned and balanced argument informed by appropriate knowledge. However, most do not extend their written answers sufficiently, find it hard to write in a way that presents two sides of a case, and do not back their answers with reference to sacred texts. Most pupils behave well, enjoy their lessons and find the ethical issues they study are relevant to their lives, but few are motivated to succeed academically in this subject and so there is some lack of perseverance. This particularly holds back the performance of boys. There have been some recent changes in teachers, and a period of stability is needed in order to build up positive attitudes and to provide continuity in teaching.
163. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons in the first three years as the teachers ensure that tasks are suitably modified for them. Also, they support the pupils individually as well as they can, given that learning support assistants for pupils with special needs are rarely available in this subject. In the final two years these pupils make satisfactory progress in lessons; teachers support them

in the same way. But there have been changes of teacher, lessons in the core course (compulsory for all pupils) do not receive as much time as in lower years, and also attitudes are not as positive. Similarly, the most able pupils make good progress in the first three years, and satisfactory progress in the final two years. Teachers do provide more difficult work for them. They are working hard to ensure that able GCSE candidates have the best possible chance to do well because additional tuition is being offered, open to all, and new revision guides have been purchased. The able pupils in these years will need to work hard in co-operation with their teachers to ensure good progress.

164. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Nearly all lessons were good or better. In Year 7, an excellent lesson was characterised by pace and energy, by very skilled questioning that included all the class, by great encouragement to think and try by offering 'credits' for good answers, by an imaginative starter activity that engaged pupils' interest well, by a well-structured writing activity, and by an effective review that reinforced very well what pupils had learnt. In addition there was a good balance of the two required attainment targets. Pupils understood Jesus' baptism as a turning point and also reflected on the turning points in their own lives. In contrast a Year 8 lesson on the Hajj, with good features including high quality resources, had a few pupils uninterested and not working, and this was not addressed swiftly enough. As a result some pupils did not learn as effectively as the others.
165. In Year 10, a good lesson for the core course on religion and the media was characterised by an imaginative approach to motivate and engage interest. Most pupils made good progress in evaluating attitudes to religion in the media. In contrast, in a satisfactory lesson in the Year 11 full GCSE course, pupils spent too much time cutting out from magazines rather than moving on to the lessons to be drawn from the task. As a result, learning was a little limited. In all lessons, teachers are successfully extending pupils' range of language by the new words they teach. Literacy skills are low in all years and there is little lengthy writing to be seen in their books. This is being addressed, and similarly some numeracy tasks are done, but these are all recent initiatives. The new leader is developing work in ICT. Some work using research, desktop publishing and word processing skills was seen, but not enough as yet.
166. The subject leader had been in post for only four weeks prior to the inspection and after a period of some turbulence. The vision for what needs to be done is very good, already some crucial decisions have been taken about changing examination courses, and the thorough action plan is clearly a working document. Management at Humanities faculty level has been satisfactory but the new leader is hampered by a loss of assessment records and the inadequacy of resources for the younger years, although the school has made the necessary funds available to redress this. There are not enough specialist rooms and so one teacher is constantly moving. This affects learning as pupils do not see the subject displays of key words and other stimulating material, and it constrains teachers' planning for effective work. Fieldwork, greater use of artefacts and ICT are all needed to enrich the curriculum. The subject's contribution to citizenship is only beginning to be considered, but it is clear that religious education across the school is making a good contribution to pupils' personal development.
167. The recent County Durham Agreed Syllabus is being implemented, and statutory requirements are met in all years, but the schemes of work need development. Teachers have not had enough opportunities for training in religious education relevant to the local syllabus, but recently the county advisor has been consulted and

help given. There are some problems with the curriculum in Years 10 and 11 in that there is repetition of work in the short GCSE course, the full GCSE course and the ASDAN personal, social and health education course. This discourages positive attitudes. However, it is a good feature of the department that all pupils are entered for the short course examination this year and so can be accredited for their compulsory religious education in Year 10 and 11. II

168. Although improvement since the last inspection has not been satisfactory, there are many hopeful signs for future improvement, particularly in the high quality of the teaching generally seen during the inspection. The current team recognise that the raising of standards is the first priority. Effective ways of assuring a consistent quality of teaching and marking are now in place. The half-termly marking of pupils' work against levels of attainment, and giving clear targets for how to improve, are very well done across the department and pupils are beginning to benefit from them.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

Overall, the present quality of provision in business education and in leisure and tourism is **good**.

Strengths	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work schemes and individual lessons are tightly planned, organised and resourced. • Data informs target grades for pupils, which are constantly monitored and acted upon. • Pupils are focused on a variety of teacher-directed tasks and activities. • There is a positive working environment in which pupils are well behaved. 	
Areas for improvement	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment in lessons and of work lacks detailed advice for improvement. • The work provided to pupils does not sufficiently allow for skills of interpretation and evaluation; the possibility of achieving high grades at GCSE is therefore limited. • Pupils, although motivated, are not excited or inspired by lessons. 	

Aspect	Year 9	Year 11
Girls' standard of work seen	N/a	Satisfactory
Boys' standard of work seen	N/a	Satisfactory
Achievement overall	N/a	Satisfactory
Teaching	N/a	Good
Learning	N/a	Good
Attitude and behaviour	N/a	Good
Leadership and management	N/a	Good

169. The proportions of pupils attaining A*-C and A*-G grades in GCSE in 2002 were well below national averages. If pupils' grades are compared to their likely performance indicated by their end of Year 9 test results in 2000, then the grades were unsatisfactory; pupils did not achieve as well as they should. There were too many pupils who achieved grades lower than expected because there was imprecise assessment and targeting of pupils towards GCSE criteria. Poor performance by boys in GCSE significantly affected the overall grades achieved. There has been a slight downward trend in results over the last three years. Senior managers in the school have instigated strategies to raise pupils' achievement. These have been adopted and pupils are now making satisfactory progress.

170. Pupils are able to investigate local businesses and the environment and can organise their work into reports with appropriate illustrations. Business links, however, are limited and this hinders curriculum development. Some pupils also have limited ICT skills, which hinder their progress and they are uncertain about being able to organise their own learning. This situation is likely to improve, as pupils in the current Year 9 are better prepared.
171. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. Work provided for them, however, is not as well prepared as it might be and extra support is not always available. The most able pupils do achieve higher grades at GCSE but skills of interpretation and evaluation are not well enough developed.
172. There were no unsatisfactory lessons. Three quarters were good. In Year 11, in two good lessons about cash-flow, pupils were able to revise their learning and make progress as the result of focused examples and a tightly planned lesson structure. A mixed ability leisure and tourism class made good progress on job applications due to the careful direction and support of the teacher. The learning styles employed, however, did not fire or excite pupils on the topics presented.
173. The department is well managed and led. Teachers work closely together to monitor and evaluate pupils' progress. Day-to-day assessment occurs but needs to be more detailed in order to support the effective academic target setting now taking place. The department was not reported upon in the last inspection but is currently improving from the position in the summer of 2002.
174. Both subjects contribute to citizenship and the precise ways they do so are made explicit to pupils. The department's accommodation and easy access to ICT equipment facilitate the development of ICT skills by pupils in lessons. However, because teaching of these skills in Years 7 to 9 has been limited until recently, pupils' use of ICT is variable.