

INSPECTION REPORT

SOUTH TYNEDALE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Haltwhistle

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122327

Headteacher: Mr MJ Routledge

Reporting inspector: Dr PI Crumpton
2784

Dates of inspection: 19 – 22 May 2003

Inspection number: 249229

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Park Avenue
Haltwhistle

Postcode: NE49 9BA

Telephone number: 01434 320491

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Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs N Burnham

Date of previous inspection: 30 April 2001

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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2784	Philip Crumpton	Registered inspector	Citizenship English as an additional language	What sort of school is it? The school's results and pupils' achievements How well is the school led and managed? What should the school do to improve further?
11072	Shirley Elomari	Lay inspector	Educational inclusion	How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
3472	Kathy MacFarlane	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught? How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
4926	Thelma Aspin	Team inspector	Design and technology Special educational needs	
4335	Suraj Masson	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology	
14641	Robert Phillips	Team inspector	Physical education	
21873	Mary LeBreuilly	Team inspector	Science	
11779	Lynne Upton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (French)	
4877	Stewart Smith	Team inspector	Art and design	
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1523	Trevor James	Team inspector	History Geography Religious education	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is a community middle school situated in the market town of Haltwhistle on the fringe of the Northumberland National Park. With 253 pupils on roll aged nine to thirteen, it is a smaller than average middle school. Numbers have fallen over the last two years.

The community suffers from high rural deprivation. The number of adults in higher education is below, and the number of high social class households is well below, the national averages. These circumstances contribute to low self-esteem and aspirations amongst some pupils. The area has also suffered from the foot and mouth epidemic which has adversely affected pupils' attendance and standards in recent years.

Despite these disadvantageous socio-economic factors, the number of pupils eligible for free school meals (12%) is in line with the national average. There are no pupils with a mother tongue other than English. Pupils' attainment by the time they enter the school is broadly in line with the national average. The number of pupils with special educational needs (23%) is in line with the national average, but the percentage of pupils with formal statements of needs is above average.

In 2002, the school was lifted out of the 'under-achieving' category in which it had been placed in its last inspection. It has very recently been given a DfES achievement award for a significant improvement in National Curriculum test results (2002) compared with similar schools (schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals).

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a good school. Pupils' attainment in National Curriculum tests in 2002 was above average. Pupils of all abilities achieve well and make good progress. They have very positive attitudes to learning and behave well. The quality of teaching is good. Very good leadership and management have created a clear commitment to improvement. It is an effective school which is now providing good value for money.

What the school does well

- Attainment in National Curriculum tests is above average.
- Pupils' behaviour, well promoted by teachers, is very good; bullying occurs rarely and is not tolerated.
- Relationships are excellent throughout the school.
- Teaching and learning are good in Years 5 to 6 and 7 to 8, resulting in good progress for pupils of all abilities.
- Moral, social and cultural education is contributing significantly to pupils' developing maturity.
- A wide range of extracurricular activities is enhancing the curriculum.
- Classroom assistants give effective support to pupils with special educational needs who make good progress.
- There are good links with the community and other institutions.
- Strong leadership and management, particularly by the headteacher, are effectively promoting an ethos of improvement.

What could be improved

- The use of marking to help pupils make progress and improve their standards.
- The use of information and communication technology (ICT) across the curriculum to assist learning and raise standards.
- Reporting more effectively to parents the specific progress of pupils.
- Resources for design and technology [within the scope of the school's budget] to improve the curriculum and raise standards.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

There has been significant improvement in the school's performance since it was last inspected in April 2001, and judged to be an under-achieving school. Attainment in National Curriculum tests has risen. There is a higher quality of teaching in Years 5 and 6. Social and cultural development and the personal, social and health education (PSHE) programme have improved. There has been enhancement in the leadership of the school. Governors are more effective and more involved in carrying out their responsibilities. There have been important management improvements in data analysis, school development planning and the monitoring of teaching.

There has also been considerable progress in addressing the key issues identified in the last report: significant progress in developing literacy across the curriculum, some progress in numeracy, new

management structure and senior management team, and governors more effectively involved in monitoring the work of the school.

More development is needed to ensure that foundation subject co-ordinators effectively monitor teaching and learning, and ICT is still not being used sufficiently in subjects across the curriculum. Progress has been slow in ensuring that teachers' on-going assessment identifies pupils' achievements and what pupils need to do to improve, and informs teachers' subsequent planning.

Overall, with the school only half way through the implementation of its action plans since the last inspection, improvement has been very good.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
End of Key Stage 2 tests	D	D	B	B

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

Standards in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above average. Standards were also above the average for schools with a similar number of pupils eligible for free school meals. There were no significant differences in the results of boys and girls. There has been significant recent improvement in test results.

Standards of work seen during the inspection in Years 5 and 6 were generally consistent with those demonstrated in recent National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. In the other subjects, attainment was higher than that typically expected in art and design, and in ICT lessons. It was broadly in line with expected standards in all other subjects. In Years 7 and 8, attainment was higher than typically expected in English and mathematics. It also exceeded typical expectations in art and design, geography, history and religious education. In all other subjects, standards were broadly in line with what is typically expected.

Generally, in all years, pupils are achieving well and making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are also making good progress. Overall, pupils are achieving appropriately for their abilities, although higher attaining pupils need to be more challenged in science (in Years 7 and 8) and physical education. Inspectors found no significant difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

Standards of literacy are high and standards of numeracy and ICT are average. Pupils are effectively using ICT in several subjects but it is not being sufficiently used across the curriculum as a whole.

In 2002, the school exceeded its target for National Curriculum test results in English, but fell short in mathematics. Its targets for 2003 and 2004 are realistic and challenging.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils' attitudes and values are very good. They enjoy coming to school and are very keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around school is very good. No unsatisfactory behaviour was seen during the inspection.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships are excellent, with outstanding mutual respect. Personal development is very good. Pupils respond well to the many opportunities to discuss issues and take responsibility.
Attendance	Attendance is satisfactory. There is no unauthorised absence. The level of holiday absence remains very high.

The very good response to lessons and pupils' willingness to learn and to take responsibility, play an important part in their achievement and progress. Excellent relationships facilitate learning and personal development. The school's ethos is reflected in the way pupils with special educational needs are fully integrated in the school community.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

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

Teaching was good overall and was very good or excellent in almost one third of lessons seen being. It was good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, French, music and religious education. It was satisfactory in other subjects. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs was good. Teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good in English and mathematics lessons. Literacy is being effectively developed in most curriculum areas but the reinforcement of the teaching of numeracy is currently less effective.

Generally, teachers' preparation and planning are very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and they manage pupils' behaviour very well. Lessons proceed at a good pace. Teachers have very good relationships with pupils. These strengths encourage pupils of all abilities to engage effectively with their learning, and they are contributing significantly to pupils' rising standards.

Teachers' marking is being completed regularly and it is very often positive and encouraging. However, although there are examples of good practice, marking is generally not effectively identifying pupils' specific achievements and what pupils need to do to improve.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is broad and balanced. It is well focused on meeting the needs of all pupils. Opportunities for pupils to participate in activities outside lessons are very good. Lack of resources is resulting in unsatisfactory provision for design and technology.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Overall, provision is good. The specific needs of pupils are being met. Individual education plans are of good quality. Pupils with physical learning difficulties are helped to participate in all subjects.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Overall, this is very good. Moral, social and cultural education is very good and subject lessons make an important contribution to pupils' personal development. Spiritual education is less effective.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Overall, the school provides a very good level of care for pupils in a safe and orderly environment.

Generally, the curriculum is effectively contributing to the pupils' quality of education. It is providing very well for their learning needs and personal development. Pupils are benefiting from opportunities to engage in community projects and from the good links with partner schools. There is an active and successful pupil forum.

Teacher assessment is not fully contributing to pupils' progress and statutory requirements are still not being fully met for collective worship. In some areas, particularly in design and technology, the curriculum is being restricted by shortage of resources.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school is very well led and managed, particularly by the headteacher. There is a strong commitment to raising standards and continued improvement. Middle managers are contributing significantly to the progress of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Governors are very supportive and committed to the progress of the school. They are now participating in setting the direction of the school and monitoring its work.
The school's evaluation of	The school is usefully analysing pupils' performance in tests. It is

its performance	effectively monitoring attendance, behaviour and teaching.
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Aspect	Comment
The strategic use of resources	Resources are used well to support priorities, and spending is carefully monitored to achieve good value for money. Low funding is restricting developments in some areas.

The headteacher has very good knowledge of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is providing a strong lead to continuing improvement. He is well supported by governors, senior management team and other staff. The school is providing a good learning environment. Senior staff need to play a larger role in analysing data and monitoring teaching. Statutory requirements are not being fully met for reporting pupils' progress and collective worship. Facilities for disabled pupils are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations of pupils. • Pupils' progress. • Quality of teaching. • Behaviour of pupils. • Approachability of school. • Pupils' personal development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amount of homework. • Information about pupils' progress. • Working closely with parents. • Range of activities outside lessons.

Findings from the inspection support all the positive views of parents. Inspection evidence endorses the view of those parents dissatisfied with the reporting of pupils' progress. Inspectors found that reports contained satisfactory information about pupils' attainment and attitudes but that their specific progress was not effectively reported.

Inspectors judged that teachers' setting of homework was satisfactory and that the school, for its size and situation, provides a good range of activities outside lessons. Inspectors found that the school is committed to working closely with parents and keeps them well informed about its work.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Years 5 and 6

1. The improvement in the school's performance over the last two years is clearly demonstrated by pupils' results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6. Whereas pupils' attainment had been below average when the school was last inspected in 2001, it was above average in 2002. The percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard (Level 4) in statutory tests was also above the average for similar schools. There was no significant difference in the results of boys and girls with both genders achieving more highly than they were at the time of the last inspection.
2. The improvement in results has been at a rate broadly in line with the trend nationally. However, the improvement in relation to similar schools has been sufficiently marked for it to be recognised by a DfES Achievement Award for high attainment in 2002.
3. In English, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above average for both the percentages of pupils attaining the expected Level 4 and the higher Level 5. These results were a significant improvement from the previous inspection when attainment in tests was below average. The results of boys and girls were better than they were at the time of the last inspection, with no significant difference between the attainment of the two genders. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, attainment was above average, consistent with that demonstrated in tests. Over the last two years, test results have improved at a rate faster than the trend nationally. In 2002, test results were well above the average for similar schools, whereas they had been well below the average at the time of the last inspection.
4. In mathematics, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were above average for the number of pupils achieving the expected Level 4, and broadly in line with the national average for the percentage of pupils reaching Level 5. Results were below average when the school was last inspected. The results of both boys and girls were better than they were at the time of the last inspection, with no significant difference between their attainment. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, their attainment was above average and consistent with their test results. Over the last five years, results have improved at a rate similar to the trend nationally, but since 2001 they have risen at a rate higher than the national trend. In 2002, test results were close to the average for similar schools, whereas they were well below average at the time of the last inspection.
5. In science, National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 6 in 2002, were above average for the number of pupils attaining Level 4 and well above for those reaching Level 5. Results were broadly in line with the national average at the time of the last inspection. Over the last five years there has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and

girls, although boys' results were better than girls' in the 2002 tests. The results of both boys and girls were better than they were when the school was last inspected. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, their attainment was above average and consistent with their test results. Although over recent years results have risen more slowly than the trend nationally, in the last year the extent of improvement was higher than the national trend. In 2002, test results were above the average for similar schools, whereas they had been broadly in line with the average at the time of the last inspection.

6. Attainment in Years 5 and 6 in English, mathematics and science, in lessons seen and work scrutinised during the inspection, was generally consistent with recent test results. Standards were above average in all three subjects, with no significant difference in the performances of boys and girls.
7. From a detailed scrutiny of a representative sample of pupils' work and of the work they do in lessons, inspectors judged that standards in the other (foundation) subjects of the National Curriculum, and in religious education, were close to the average found nationally. Standards seen were above average in art and design and ICT and broadly average in all other subjects.

Years 7 and 8

8. The last inspection report identified a lack of information about pupils' attainment at the end of Year 8. The school is now systematically gathering such information and in 2003 data will be available from National Curriculum optional tests in English and mathematics. Final assessments take place in science but have not been recorded up to now. However, to fully rectify the situation, the school needs to ensure there is clear and secure data on pupils' attainment and progress in all three subjects by the time they leave the school.
9. Inspectors gathered evidence from the scrutiny of work and from observing lessons. This information indicates that attainment in mathematics in Years 7 and 8 is above the standard typically expected of pupils of this age range. Attainment in English and science is broadly in line with expectations. In lessons in the foundation subjects and religious education, attainment overall was broadly in line with what is expected nationally. Standards were higher than typically expected in art and design; geography, history, and religious education. They were generally in line with those expected in all other subjects and religious education. Overall, standards in Years 7 and 8 are higher than they were when the school was last inspected.

Performance in basic skills

10. The school is placing considerable emphasis on literacy and numeracy. Its implementation of the National Literacy Strategy at Key Stage 2 and the National Strategy at Key Stage 3 has been very effective across all year groups. Overall, this is having a significant impact on raising standards.

11. Standards of literacy are making a valuable contribution to pupils' attainment and progress in almost all subjects. Generally, pupils are effective speakers and listeners. Evidence from the inspection indicated that pupils were writing fluently and at length in history; they were learning key words to develop their understanding in art and design, and pupils were observed developing their use of technical language in a Year 8 science lesson. Literacy is being insufficiently developed in music.
12. Standards of numeracy are high in mathematics but limited across the other subjects of the curriculum. During the inspection, there were examples of measuring and simple calculations in science.
13. Overall, ICT is not making a sufficient contribution to pupils' attainment and progress. Attainment in ICT lessons is broadly average for this age range and it is improving. However, although there is good use in a number of subjects, there is insufficient use of ICT across the curriculum as a whole.

Progress and achievement by age 13

14. Comparing pupils' prior attainment on entry to the school with their performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002, pupils made satisfactory progress in Years 5 and 6. They made good progress in English and science. The school's analysis of its performance indicates that the majority of pupils made progress appropriate for their ability and lower attaining pupils achieved better than expected. There was insufficient evidence of pupils' achievement at the end of their time at the school to make a secure judgement of their progress in Years 7 and 8.
15. Currently, from evidence gathered from the scrutiny of work and from the observation of lessons, inspectors judged that generally pupils are achieving well and making good progress in Years 5 and 6 and Years 7 and 8. This was evident in almost all subjects. There was little evidence of underachievement by more able pupils, although they were not always sufficiently challenged in science, particularly in Years 7 and 8, and in physical education. Pupils with special educational needs, whatever their learning difficulty, were achieving well compared with their prior attainment and making good progress. Pupils with special educational needs, regardless of their learning difficulty are making good progress in their learning in almost all subjects throughout the school. Where pupils are supported in lessons by classroom assistants or taught by them in small groups learning is very good due to the very good planning and very good expertise of these assistants. This is an improvement on the satisfactory progress identified in the last inspection report. Generally, pupils' learning was good in a high proportion of lessons as a result of their positive attitudes and of good teaching. Effective learning was taking place in all subjects.
16. The school identifies targets for pupils based on a range of assessment data, including National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2 and the use of Performance Information for Middle Schools (PIMS). In 2002, the school exceeded its target for the number of pupils achieving Level 4 or above in English, but fell short of its target for mathematics. The school's targets for 2003 and 2004 in both subjects are appropriately challenging.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

17. Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development are very good and represent a major strength of the school's work. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good in all years. Behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. Pupils understand what is expected of them and almost always respond very positively. The quality of relationships throughout the school is excellent. Attendance in 2001 to 2002 was below the national average but there was no unauthorised absence.
18. Pupils are very keen to come to school. Most parents state that their child likes school. Almost all pupils come to school prepared to learn. They listen very well in class, both to the teacher and to one another. They express their own ideas very clearly and enjoy the opportunities they have to discuss issues. Pupils work willingly, rising to the challenge of their teachers' high expectations. They settle very quickly to work and are keen to answer questions and contribute ideas. They concentrate very well, working hard to complete the work they are given. The programme of extracurricular activities is very well supported. Throughout the school, pupils' positive attitudes to learning have a significant effect on the progress they make.
19. Behaviour in lessons is very good overall. Pupils respond positively to the very high expectations of staff. During the inspection, no unsatisfactory behaviour was seen. During the inspection, 64 lessons were observed. Behaviour was judged to be good in 26 of these, very good in 19 and exemplary in 10. This is a very high proportion of very good and excellent behaviour and is achieved in part through the very strong classroom management skills of teachers. This ensures that all pupils, including those with emotional and behavioural difficulties, are able to give of their best. Pupils are almost always enthusiastic and enjoy learning. They take pride in their work.
20. Lessons have a brisk pace because teachers very rarely have to spend time dealing with unacceptable behaviour. This in turn helps pupils to concentrate on what they are learning. Pupils' develop increasing levels of respect for the feelings of others as they move through the school due to the many opportunities they are given for discussion. They express their opinions and feelings confidently and are almost always tolerant towards those who hold different views. Pupils take very good care of the books, equipment and the school environment. No vandalism or graffiti are evident. The level of exclusion is low: there were two fixed term exclusions in the last academic year.
21. Behaviour at break and lunchtime is very good. Pupils relate very well together in the playground. Movement around the school is quiet and orderly, well supervised by Year 7 and 8 pupils. Lunchtime is a pleasant social occasion, when pupils sit with their friends and chat quietly. Pupils take responsibility for their own behaviour so that incidents of unacceptable behaviour in the playground are rare and usually minor.
22. Pupils with special educational needs take a full and active part in school life. They are valued members of the school community. They thoroughly enjoy their lessons in small

groups and consistently concentrate well. They respect the learning support assistants who teach them and as a result work hard. Activities provided help pupils to gain confidence and to understand the importance of listening to others in the group. Those with behavioural difficulties learn to manage their problems and understand the impact of their behaviour on others. Pupils recognise the needs of those with physical difficulties and accommodate their needs automatically.

23. The school provides a wide range of opportunities for pupils' personal development. In all classes, pupils are expected to share in tidying up and other tasks. A significant number of pupils volunteer to help teachers in a variety of ways, often giving up their own time in order to do so. The well-established school forum gives pupils a voice for change in the school. The forum has real responsibility and members know that they make a difference to school life, for example by choosing playground activities and revising the Code of Conduct. Forum members and others are involved in organising events, such as the 'Stars in Your Eyes' contest planned for the end of half term disco. In lessons, pupils respond very well to the opportunities they are given to work together in pairs or small groups. They enjoy the opportunities they are given to take responsibility for their own learning.
24. Relationships throughout the school are excellent. The good relationships reported in the previous inspection report continue to improve. The mutual respect between staff and pupils is exceptional. Teachers and other staff support pupils' personal development very well. Pupils respond positively to the praise they receive and are well motivated by the rewards they receive. Pupils co-operate increasingly well together as they move through the school. Bullying occurs rarely and is not tolerated by staff or pupils. Pupils know that they should tell an adult about any incidents of bullying behaviour and trust teachers to deal with it quickly. The excellence of the relationships makes a significant contribution to the very high standards of behaviour.
25. Attendance in 2001-02 was below the national average. This represents a deterioration since the previous inspection. There is no unauthorised absence. However, the very high numbers of requests for holidays to be taken during term time, around ninety a year, leads to high levels of authorised absence. Attendance is monitored well and the registers are kept correctly. Almost all pupils arrive on time in the morning and lessons throughout the day begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

26. Teaching is good overall with almost one third of lessons seen being very good or excellent. It is good in both key stages but more very high quality teaching and learning was seen in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement since the last inspection. A lack of teachers' specialist knowledge in some aspects of the work done in Years 7 and 8 accounts for these differences. Teachers work hard and are totally committed to high standards of teaching. At the time of the last inspection teaching was also judged to be good but there has been an improvement in the number of very good and excellent lessons. In only two lessons out of the 64 seen, did teaching not ensure that pupils made adequate progress. The good teaching has contributed to the progress pupils make and the rising standards. The quality of teaching

and learning has been a priority for the school. A programme of lesson observation, in addition to training and support for teachers, has continued since the last inspection. This work, along with the implementation of the national strategies, has helped teachers to focus on an appropriate lesson structure. As a result pupils' learning has improved as has the level of challenge presented to them all.

27. During the inspection, teaching and learning were particularly effective, and often very good. It was finally judged to be good in English, mathematics, science, art and design, history, music, French and religious education. In geography, physical education and ICT it was satisfactory. Teaching was not judged to be unsatisfactory in any subjects.
28. In the most successful lessons teachers have good subject knowledge. They are interested in, and enthusiastic about, what they are teaching. Teachers are coping well with the demands of teaching subjects outside their specialist areas. However, limitations in subject knowledge are affecting the quality of teaching in science, geography and physical education. Planning and preparation are very good and well matched to the schemes of work. Teachers share with pupils the purposes of lessons along with the expected outcomes. These are often referred to during the lesson and pupils understand what is expected of them. Teachers use a variety of teaching methods that ensure good learning and lessons proceed at a good pace. In the best lessons, teachers successfully use starters and plenaries to recap, reinforce learning and assess what pupils understand and can do. A significant strength of teaching is the successful management of pupils' behaviour. Teachers have established routines that support learning and lead to positive behaviour. Relationships with pupils are excellent. In the majority of lessons they have high expectations of the pupils who respond well to the challenge presented to them. Teachers provide materials and tasks constructed to meet the needs of all pupils. Relationships are excellent and pupils feel confident and secure with their teachers and learning support assistants. Learning support assistants are well deployed and contribute well to the learning of pupils of all abilities. They help pupils understand their work and generally keep them on task.
29. Within the context of this good provision, there are areas that require further improvement. Although in the majority of subjects marking was completed regularly, it rarely guided pupils about their future learning. Good practice was seen in English, art and design, French and some mathematics lessons when constructive comments made it clear to pupils how to improve. The most successful marking was used by teachers to plan future lessons as well as to assess pupils' learning.
30. Parents expressed some concern about the amount of homework set. This was also an issue at the time of the last inspection. Inspectors now judge the setting of homework to be satisfactory overall. There are inconsistencies between subjects, particularly in relation to the use of homework to develop pupils' skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils appreciated the opportunity to do their homework at homework club, where a teacher was always on hand to help.
31. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. Teachers are well aware of the different special educational needs of pupils in their class and in almost all lessons they

provide suitable activities for them. However, teachers do not consistently link pupils' individual educational plans into their own lesson planning or adapt them to make them subject specific. This was also mentioned in the previous inspection report. Teachers plan well for the use of their learning support assistants who are used very effectively and make a very positive contribution to learning. This is due to their very good subject expertise, very good relationships with pupils and very clear understanding of the objectives of lessons. They prepare well and make good use of practical materials to develop pupils' understanding. They assess pupils' needs during lessons and give oral feedback to teachers. However, there are insufficient ongoing records of pupils' learning related to their special targets linked to different subjects that can be used to inform planning. Pupils with behavioural difficulties are well managed and cause little disruption in lessons, although occasionally they are not sufficiently encouraged to take a full and active part in question and answer activities.

32. The teaching of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy is good in English and mathematics lessons. In most curriculum areas effective use is made of lists and displays of key words. In a number of subjects opportunities are provided for pupils to write in a variety of forms in order to extend their learning. The school has made good progress in this area since the last inspection. The reinforcement of the teaching of numeracy is less well developed. However, now that the head of mathematics is in post, pupils' learning in this area is being enhanced by teaching in other subjects.
33. The teaching of ICT in ICT lessons is good overall. Support for ICT is good in a number of subjects. In history and religious education it is sometimes used well to support the learning in the subject. The good use of ICT to support learning is growing in mathematics, music, special educational needs and PSHE lessons. However, there are still too few opportunities for teachers of other subjects to reinforce these skills currently.

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

34. The quality and range of learning opportunities are good overall. Pupils are taught all subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. The majority of curriculum statutory requirements are met. However, in some subjects the curriculum is limited. Pupils do not get their full entitlement to ICT, citizenship and the daily act of collective worship. In science the requirements for data logging are not being met and in design and technology provision is unsatisfactory because of the lack of resources for electronics, pneumatics and ICT. The curriculum is designed to meet the particular needs of the pupils. Currently the school gives extra curriculum time to literacy and numeracy in order to raise standards in these areas. As a result of this decision the time for history, geography and religious education has been reduced. However, teachers have worked hard to ensure that the curriculum in these areas has been maintained and standards have been unaffected.
35. In Years 5 and 6 pupils are taught mainly by their class teacher. However, in a number of subjects from Year 6 onwards they are taught in broad ability groups. In Years 7 and 8,

teaching is usually by specialists in the majority of subjects. In Years 6, 7 and 8, in some subjects pupils are taught in very broad ability groups.

36. The provision for the development of literacy and numeracy relies heavily on the English and mathematics teams. In these lessons, good strategies are in place. In most subjects, literacy is supported in terms of vocabulary, speaking and listening and to a lesser extent in writing tasks. The use of numeracy is less well developed. Although pupils are generally able to apply the skills taught in mathematics lessons, there is less evidence of other subjects reinforcing these skills in any systematic way.
37. The school has successfully implemented the national strategies for literacy and numeracy across all years. The national science strategy is currently being implemented. Teachers have found the local education authority consultants' support particularly good in developing the curriculum and the appropriate teaching styles. All lessons are split into starter, main and plenary activities and this structure has had a positive impact on the overall quality of teaching. All staff are being trained in the teaching and learning aspects of the National Key Stage 3 strategy as part of the school's focus on improving teaching.
38. The arrangements for PSHE are satisfactory overall. They have improved since the previous inspection. In Years 7 and 8, the programme is currently being trialed and is being reviewed during this term. It includes all aspects of health education, including sex education and the misuse of drugs. The school values the views of the older pupils and often asks pupils for their comments on the provision of PSHE. Other units of PSHE include aspects of citizenship, the local community and health and fitness. PSHE in Years 5 and 6 is less well developed and it is taught through the subjects of the curriculum. Currently an audit is taking place to establish where certain aspects are being taught. In all years the programmes are supported well by assemblies and activities in form tutor time.
39. There are a number of opportunities for pupils to take part in community projects and this aspect is a strength of the school. In PSHE, pupils in Years 7 and 8 have the opportunity to find out about the community. They have opportunities to participate in activities on visits to the health centre and find out more about the work of the police. There are also good links with a local sound studio where pupils work on sound effects. An enrichment opportunity such as the Pathfinder Project involves many pupils working on visual arts activities with pupils from other schools. This includes drama and dance workshops that lead to a final performance with a multicultural theme.
40. There are good links with partner schools which benefit the pupils. Headteachers work closely together to support each other and ensure the best possible use of funds such as those from the Tynedale School Sports Co-ordinator Partnership. One of the outcomes is a rugby festival for local first schools at South Tynedale Middle School. The event is a good experience for pupils who will be coming to the school in September. There are a number of induction activities for pupils joining Year 5 and those moving to the high school.
41. Throughout the school the curriculum meets the specific needs of pupils with special educational needs. There is a suitable focus on the development of literacy, numeracy and

the development of self-confidence to help pupils with other subjects. Individual education plans are of good quality and set concise learning targets. The requirements of pupils with more severe learning needs (who have a statement of educational need) are met well. A specific computer program has just begun to be used to support those with weaker reading, writing and spelling and this is already beginning to have an impact on learning. There are suitable support activities in place to support those with lower attainment, often, but not necessarily identified as having special educational needs, for example, those to help pupils almost at the expected level for their age in English and mathematics. Pupils currently in the school, with physical learning difficulties are catered for appropriately and helped to participate in all subjects unless it is medically inadvisable.

42. There is a very good range of activities in addition to lessons. There are particularly good sporting activities and in music pupils can choose to learn an instrument and participate in a range of activities including recorders and keyboards. There are also good opportunities for pupils to get extra support at the mathematics, art and homework clubs. Pupils can use the library ICT and reference facilities at lunchtime as well as the main ICT room.
43. The school provides a number of opportunities for pupils to use their initiative and take responsibility. The pupil forum is particularly active and successful. It has been responsible for decisions such as the provision of water dispensers and playground benches. Pupils vote for their forum representatives and house and games captains. They are involved in preparing assemblies and Year 8 pupils are part of the duty teams. The school is a harmonious community where all pupils matter. Staff work hard getting to know the pupils as individuals. Newcomers are welcomed and well supported. The school positively seeks opportunities to support those with difficulties.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44. Pupils' personal development is a very important part of the school's ethos and aims. The school's policy is to clearly include personal development in its curriculum and for all teachers to take responsibility for it. The school is making considerable progress in achieving these intentions. Overall, assemblies, tutor periods, curriculum provision and activities outside lessons are contributing very effectively to pupils' moral, social and cultural development. These aspects have significantly improved since the last inspection.
45. Pupils' moral development is very good. Pupils have a clear understanding of right and wrong and they are very supportive of the school's rewards and sanctions. Moral issues are regularly a part of assemblies and they are explored, when they arise, in a number of subjects. Examples of the latter include: in English, the morality of experimenting on animals; in geography, environmental conservation; and in history, conscientious objectors in World War Two. However, opportunities to discuss important moral issues are being missed in science.
46. The social development of pupils is very good. This is clearly demonstrated by pupils' excellent support for charitable causes, for example, the Save the Children Fund. There are visits to the community and musical performances have taken place in the local church, old

people's home and farmers' market. Pupils' serious and thoughtful involvement with the pupils' forum is resulting in its success and building confidence in its effectiveness. Pupils' excellent relationships with their peers and teachers, and their willingness to co-operate and work with each other are contributing to and are evidence of, the quality of their social development. Pupils' very good behaviour is further evidence of their moral and social awareness.

47. Pupils' cultural development is also very good, with significant contributions in almost all subjects. There were particularly good examples in art and design, with Year 5 pupils responding to North American Indian art and Year 8 pupils looking at art from central Africa. Other examples include: studying lifestyles in Peru in geography, changing social attitudes in history, links with town-twinning in French. A visit to the school by a Bihar religious dance group and the inclusion of a Sri Lankan story and prayer in a Year 5 and 6 assembly were examples of the multicultural aspects of pupils' cultural education.
48. The school is less successful in promoting pupils' spiritual development, although this aspect was judged to be good at the time of the last inspection. There is evidence of contributions to spiritual development in assemblies, and the visit of the dance group mentioned above provided a spiritual, as well as a cultural experience. But, in general, pupils are given too few opportunities to reflect upon their experiences, to think about the meaning and impact for them, personally.
49. The school has a collective worship policy (revised November 2002) which requires each assembly to have a distinct act of worship. Year assemblies during the inspection met this requirement. However, assemblies intended to take place in form tutor periods are not meeting the requirement of the school policy. Although teachers are making good use of time in tutor periods, providing constructive, purposeful activities, with pupils generally responding well, there is rarely a distinct act of worship. As a result, the school is currently not fully meeting statutory requirements for providing collective worship.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

50. Overall the school provides a very good level of care for all its pupils. Some aspects of its work, for example the way good behaviour is promoted and monitored, are exemplary. Teachers and support staff willingly spend time helping pupils. Pupils benefit from pastoral care that is securely based on the very good knowledge teachers have of them as individuals.
51. The arrangements for ensuring the welfare of pupils are good, an improvement on the judgement made in the previous inspection report. The procedures for child protection comply fully with requirements and are known to staff. The school is currently reviewing and updating its policy and procedures for health and safety to ensure that they continue to meet all requirements. There are some issues causing concern, which are being addressed as soon as possible: for example, the drive, which is in poor condition, is due to be resurfaced this term. Teachers and support staff pay very good attention to issues of health and safety both in lessons and around the school so that pupils learn how to take care of their own

safety. There is an appropriate Internet safety policy. Clear procedures are in place for first aid and a good number of staff have received first aid training. Arrangements for medication in school are clear and a record is kept of all medicine administered. The school routinely informs parents if their child is unwell or has received an injury.

52. Pupils with special educational needs are usually identified prior to their entry to the school. Good links are maintained with other schools to ensure that pupils' needs are known and understood by teachers before they start in Year 5 and that teachers are well informed at the beginning of Year 9. Contact is made with parents and previous teachers to establish their specific needs. Basic records of progress are maintained but lack the detail that shows the small continuous steps pupils make towards their particular targets, and so ongoing assessment and tracking of progress in learning is not always sufficiently used in planning work. The provision for pupils with statements of special educational need meets the requirements set out in their statements well. Pupils with special educational needs are fully included in every aspect of the school's life. The school does not yet have a disability access plan in place but does have a draft plan of action to ensure access to all parts of the building for those unable to walk. The needs of current pupils with physical disabilities are fully met.
53. The school effectively promotes the importance of prompt, regular attendance so that parents and pupils understand what is expected of them. Almost all parents routinely inform the school promptly of the reasons for any absence. Absence is monitored very thoroughly, ensuring that any developing patterns of absence are quickly identified. All unexplained absences are followed up but telephone calls are not made to parents on the first day of absence. This gives cause for concern especially as a significant number of pupils travel to school by bus. (The safety aspect is significant; a pupil who goes missing from a bus stop might not be missed until evening.) Lateness is also monitored. The school involves the education welfare officer at an early stage when unexplained absences, developing patterns of absence or persistent lateness occur. Procedures have improved since the previous inspection. However, attendance is adversely affected by local working practices that mean parents cannot choose their holiday time but must take leave when it is allocated. In the school year prior to the inspection, ninety requests for holidays were received and so far this year eighty-seven requests have been made although the school makes plain to parents the implications of taking holiday in term time. It is very likely that this situation is causing some erosion of pupils' standards and progress.
54. Procedures for promoting good behaviour are excellent. The school's Code of Conduct, devised and reviewed by the pupil forum, provides a clear framework for achieving and maintaining very good behaviour. Pupils understand fully what is expected of them and almost all choose to follow the code at all times. Pupils are very well motivated by the high expectations of their teachers. They respond very positively to the rewards and praise they receive and accept the consequences when their behaviour falls below the expected high standard. The Code of Conduct is used very effectively when unacceptable behaviour does occur: by discussing the incident in terms of the code, pupils develop a mature understanding of their actions and the effects on others. Almost all parents who made their views known to the inspection team are confident that the school achieves a high standard of behaviour and

helps their child to become a responsible young person. Teachers and other adults provide outstanding role models for pupils within a caring, respectful environment. Procedures for eliminating bullying, sexism and racism are also outstanding. Pupils know that they should report any incidents and staff are most vigilant, so that any unreported incidents are picked up and dealt with very quickly. Pupils throughout the school are confident that bullying is dealt with promptly and effectively when it does occur. The excellent relationships throughout the school play a very significant part in ensuring that pupils learn to take responsibility for their own behaviour and treat others with respect. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection, when this aspect was judged to be satisfactory.

55. Procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development are very good overall and are securely grounded in the very good knowledge teachers and other staff have of their pupils. They use this knowledge with sensitivity when guiding pupils' behaviour and dealing with their personal problems. The school nurse provides a weekly drop-in service so that pupils can talk over any concerns they may have in a confidential setting. The school is currently revising its policy and scheme of work for PSHE, with citizenship, and has taken into account the views of pupils about aspects of the subject most important to them. The teachers provide very good role models to encourage pupils to treat others with respect and to listen to others' viewpoints carefully. Pupils also learn to treat the environment and property with due respect. They have a very good range of opportunities to take responsibility and to show initiative, for example, by organising charity fund-raising events or participating in the pupil forum. The forum is a real voice for change within the school and pupils take considerable pride in its achievements. Pupils are also encouraged to be responsible for their own learning and have many opportunities to work independently in the classroom.

Assessment

56. Overall, the school's assessment procedures are satisfactory. A range of strategies is used, including optional National Curriculum tests and common tasks. This, along with the use of PIMS, is providing extensive information which is being effectively used to identify pupils' attainment and progress. Assessment information is being more effectively used than it was at the time of the last inspection.
57. The school has an informed and useful policy on presentation and marking which requires teachers to identify pupils' achievements and what pupils need to improve. However, although there is good practice in some subjects, teachers generally are not effectively implementing this aspect of the school's policy. Consequently, their marking is not of sufficient quality to effectively contribute to their subsequent planning, particularly in the short term. This was a deficiency identified in the last inspection report.
58. There has been insufficient progress made on this issue, partly due to some teachers' inexperience. But in addition, assessment is not sufficiently highlighted in staff job descriptions and the school's assessment documentation does not address the quality of teachers' marking. There is a need for the school to follow the recommendation of a recent

external review and to ensure that the good practice evident in some subjects is shared amongst all staff to improve the overall quality of teachers' on-going, day-to-day assessment.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

59. The responses to the parents' questionnaire and comments at the parents' meeting indicate that parents are very supportive of the school. Ninety per cent of parents returned the questionnaire, an exceptionally high figure. Parents state that the school has high expectations for standards of work and behaviour. They believe that their child is making good progress due to good teaching. They are confident that the school helps their child become a mature and responsible individual. Parents would feel comfortable to approach the school with any concerns. Inspection evidence bears out parents' positive views.
60. Some negative views were expressed. About a quarter of parents felt that their child did not receive the right amount of homework; comments at the parents' meeting indicate that parents feel their child to be overburdened. Around a fifth felt that they are not kept well informed about the progress their child is making. Others state that the school does not work closely with parents. A small number are critical of the range of activities outside lessons. Inspection evidence does not fully support these concerns. Homework is usually set regularly, according to a timetable, and is of good quality. Most pupils have a good variety of homework tasks, including research and project work. Overall, the quality of annual reports is satisfactory. However, progress is not reported in sufficient detail, which means that parents may not have a clear picture of their child's progress in each subject. There are two parents' evenings in Year 5 and, in Years 6 to 8, parents have one formal opportunity to discuss their child's progress with teachers. In addition, there are drop-in sessions where parents can visit the school. The school encourages parents to become involved in the life of the school and seeks to work closely with them by involving them at an early stage when concerns arise. The range of extracurricular activities is very good but, as many of these take place at lunchtime, not all parents may be aware of the full range.
61. The school benefits from very good relationships with the majority of parents. There is a good programme of induction when children enter the school from the first schools. The prospectus provides the full range of required information so that parents are well informed about school procedures and expectations from the start. Teachers make telephone contact with home at an early stage should any problems arise.
62. All pupils have a planner that goes home daily, providing a range of useful information. Most pupils use it conscientiously to record their homework. Parents are expected to sign it every week, with some parents and teachers using it as an effective means of communication between home and school. Parents are well informed about the curriculum, especially in English, mathematics and science, through information sent home by the heads of departments. Attendance at parent's consultation meetings is exceptionally high in Year 5, at almost 100%. However, attendance in other years is disappointing and has decreased over recent years. This year, letters were sent out to parents in Years 6 and 8 asking them to attend. This resulted in a significant increase in the numbers attending but in Year 7, where letters were not sent, only 51% of parents attended.

63. The quality of written information provided for parents is good overall. The school brochure provides a wide range of useful information. The governors' annual report is also informative. Newsletters go out regularly and provide a range of information, reminders and celebration of pupils' achievements.
64. Parents of children with special educational needs are consulted at all stages and kept well informed. Both parents and pupils are involved whenever possible in target setting, which is carried out at suitable intervals. Legal requirements are met to hold an annual review of provision for pupils with a statement of educational need.
65. The quality of annual progress reports is satisfactory overall. The school reports on all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. However, no information is provided for PSHE. Reports in all subjects provide a clear picture of pupils' attainment and attitudes but are less precise about the specific progress made in each subject. Teachers always set targets for improvement. However, the targets do not relate consistently clearly to teachers' comments, so that parents may not understand why a target has been set, or how to help their child achieve it.
66. The school has an active Parents and Friends of School Association (PFSA) that organises a range of fundraising and social events. These are very well supported. The money raised is used to support the school's priorities for development, for example, helping to improve the facilities for ICT.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

67. Overall, the school is currently very well led and managed. These aspects have made a very significant contribution to the considerable improvements in the school's performance since it was last inspected.

Leadership

68. The leadership of the school is very good. It was a strength of the school at the time of the last inspection and the clear leadership provided then by the acting headteacher (currently a deputy headteacher in the school) has been continued by the present headteacher. He has been strongly supported by the experience, energy and enthusiasm of the former acting headteacher and there has been an improvement in the contribution of governors. As a result, further progress has been made in the quality of leadership and it is a very significant strength of the school.
69. The headteacher is providing a very strong lead to the school. He has a clear vision of it as an institution with a strong reputation, and high quality characterising every area of its operations. He has a very incisive grasp of the school's strengths and weaknesses and is very strongly committed to building on the former and eradicating the latter.

70. The headteacher promotes an ethos of improvement by effectively communicating it and in leading by example. There are clear and valid aims incorporating the achievement of high standards, and the personal and social development of pupils in a stimulating and well-ordered learning environment. These aims are published in the school's prospectus and included in the *Handbook of Policies and Procedures*. They are well-supported by the priorities identified in the school's development planning. The headteacher is providing a clear sense of direction for the school.
71. The headteacher is strongly supported in this by governors, by the senior management team, by middle managers and by the staff as a whole. Governors share the headteacher's determination to improve the school and they correctly perceive the headteacher's contribution to leadership as a strength. The senior management team, formed since the school was last inspected, comprises staff who are working together effectively and whose strengths are complementary. Consequently, they are effectively supporting the headteacher and usefully contributing to the quality of leadership.
72. Evidence from the inspection indicates that, generally, heads of school, heads of departments and foundation subject co-ordinators support the school's aims and values. Generally, they are contributing well to the leadership of the school. Inspectors' judgements endorse the headteacher's view that staff are supportive, well-motivated and hard working. The leadership of the school is successfully fostering a climate of improvement and this is having a significant impact on the school's progress.
73. Findings from the inspection are consistent with the judgement of an interim review by the local education authority (January 2003) that there is an ethos of teamwork and mutual support within the school. There is a good community spirit amongst staff, including those working in administration who feel very much part of the school community. The caretaker, a long-serving member of staff and a school governor, is very strongly committed to the school; he works very hard to cement the school's relationship to the community and to raise funds for the school. Pupils are also very supportive. This is evidenced by their positive attitudes and behaviour and their viewpoints shared with inspectors. Several pupils revealed their reluctance to leave at the end of Year 8. Such team spirit and supportive attitudes are clear indications that the headteacher and key staff are successfully managing the changes necessary for the improvement of the school. They have made an important contribution to the significant progress made in the two years since the school was last inspected.

Management

74. The last inspection report did not include a specific judgement on management but identified a number of significant deficiencies: in the management structure, in the identification of responsibilities, in development planning and in monitoring the school's performance. Although the school is only half way through the implementation of its action plans, following that inspection, these weaknesses have been effectively addressed. The improvement in the management of the school has been most marked and management is now very good.

75. A senior management team has now been appointed, with the roles and responsibilities of its members clearly identified. However, the last report indicated that historically, senior managers have not been given a significant role in supporting the headteacher in managing the school. This remains the case to a significant degree. One deputy headteacher is responsible for staff/pupil welfare and the other for community; other responsibilities lie with the headteacher. The latter has a good overview of the school's strengths and weaknesses, but this could be further extended by a re-alignment of responsibilities, with senior managers being more involved in elements such as data analysis and monitoring teaching.
76. Nevertheless, senior managers are providing valuable support. The senior management team meets weekly, with agendas and with minutes taken. In addition, there are termly meetings between the headteacher and senior middle managers. These meetings contribute usefully to the management of the school. Roles and responsibilities for heads of department, foundation subject co-ordinators, and other members of staff have been identified and detailed job descriptions provided. These generally cover necessary aspects, although assessment is not sufficiently highlighted. Overall, the management structure and its effectiveness have improved since the last inspection. The school operates smoothly on a day-to-day routine basis and is well administered.
77. There has been a significant improvement in development planning since the school was last inspected. The school's development plan incorporates the school's priorities as objectives and over the period since the last inspection, partly by following advice from external reviews, the identification of intended outcomes has improved. Almost all of them now identify exactly what improvement is being aimed at rather than just listing activities to be carried out.
78. The school's development plan also identifies actions to be taken, staff responsible, timescales, resources and funding. The plan is prefaced by a useful introduction and a summary of the most recent annual review; each of its separate sections is usefully introduced in relation to review. Monitoring and evaluation by a small monitoring group (including a school governor) is built into the plan, with scheduled dates. Individual development plans for each subject are drawn up in the same format and they identify spending and professional development. Overall, they only partially reflect whole-school objectives and they omit details of monitoring and evaluation.
79. The priorities of the school are clearly and effectively related to those areas identified as requiring improvement, by the last inspection, by HMI visits and by internal and external reviews. This has clearly contributed to the progress of the school. However, in order to fully address the key issues identified in the last inspection, the school's development plan is built around a very large number of objectives and there has been a determined drive to achieve all of them. The effects of this have been to reduce the efficiency of prioritising, particularly in the context of low funding, and to place a heavy burden on staff. Nevertheless, the evidence clearly indicates that the school's development plan is now an effective mechanism for school improvement.

80. The school's monitoring of its performance is good. Being judged as underachieving in the last inspection report and identified by the local education authority as a school causing concern, the school has been subject to HMI visits and the local education authority's external reviews. In addition, it has employed external consultants to evaluate its performance. It has acted effectively on the findings, building them into its development planning and is already reaping improvement from its efforts.
81. Monitoring of teaching, identified as a key issue in the last inspection report, has significantly improved. The headteacher has observed the teaching of all members of staff. Heads of departments are monitoring teaching in their subjects under the school's Performance Management policy and some foundation subject co-ordinators are observing teaching. A formal proforma is used to evaluate the quality of teaching and teachers receive feedbacks on their performance. The proforma is a useful means for classroom observations. However, although marking and assessment, key issues in the last inspection, are included in the criteria in the Performance Management policy, they are not included on the observation proforma.
82. Teachers are generally supportive of classroom observations. There is a perception that monitoring teaching is benefiting individual teachers. However, the monitoring of teachers by middle managers has not yet been forged into a consistent system. Some managers have difficulty finding time to fit it in, and some have not yet had the training the headteacher requires them to have before observing lessons. Overall, the monitoring of teaching is considerably better than it was at the time of the last inspection. There is a need now to draw its elements together into a unified, consistent system so that findings can be most effectively and efficiently used to provide the senior management team with an accurate overview of the quality of teaching across the school.
83. There are annual scrutinies of pupils' work by the headteacher and by heads of department. In addition, pupils' performances in tests are analysed in order to check standards and progress, and the quality of teaching. These are valuable measures and usefully contribute to improvement. However, evidence from the inspection indicates that the school's practices for work scrutiny are not effectively identifying deficiencies in the quality of teachers' marking.
84. Assessment information is being increasingly used as an effective part of the school's monitoring of its performance. Pupils' results in National Curriculum tests, their performance in optional tests and common assessment tasks, and information from PIMS are used to track individual pupils' progress, to predict their future performance and to set realistic but challenging targets. This information is being effectively used to make the school more effective in helping pupils to make progress and achieve the best possible results. However, this effectiveness is largely confined to analysis by the headteacher. Other members of the senior management team are not involved, and the extent and degree of understanding of data analysis amongst heads of department is variable in quality.
85. Assessment information is also used to identify the extent of the school's 'value-added' in Years 5 and 6. There has been insufficient secure data to assess comparable 'value-added' in Years 7 and 8. However, the school is now in a position to track pupils' performance

from their National Curriculum test results at the end of Year 2, their attainment on entry to the school, their performance in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6 and their attainment at the end of Year 8.

86. The school has an effective Performance Management policy in place. It has been effectively implemented and has had some positive impact on the quality of teaching. The current cycle is behind schedule, largely due to the absence of the responsible deputy headteacher and the incidence of external reviews and the Ofsted inspection.
87. The overall provision for pupils with special educational needs is well led and managed. All teachers are kept informed of specific individual needs and concerns. The most recent national guidelines are securely in place, although general information provided for parents in the school brochure and annual reports lack detail. The specific budget allocated for special educational needs is used appropriately to provide the additional support pupils need, in terms of resources and staffing. A governor with a specific interest in special educational needs has recently taken on the role, although it is in the early stages of development. Learning support assistants are well qualified, have considerable expertise and update their training when opportunities or needs arise. Resources are satisfactory and used well to support learning. Accommodation and resources meet the needs of current pupils with physical disabilities, but there is no access, or planned access for pupils or others using the building who are unable to negotiate stairs. Provision for special educational needs overall is good. This has improved since the previous inspection when it was judged satisfactory, although there are still some areas needing improvement that were identified in the previous report, for example the use of individual education plans to inform teaching, and information provided in the prospectus and governors' annual report.
88. The last inspection report identified serious deficiencies in the contribution of governors to the progress of the school. This judgement was subsequently confirmed during a visit by HMI. Evidence from this inspection indicates significant improvement in the contribution of governors.
89. Governors are contributing usefully to setting the direction of the school. They are very supportive of the headteacher's aims and they are aware of the progress that has been made. Governors' involvement in the school's development planning has increased and they have a good awareness of the school's strengths. The governing body is now carrying out its role as 'critical friend', for instance, it mediated the headteacher's letter of complaint to parents over the high rate of authorised absence. Governors are now involved in monitoring the performance of the school. They have sanctioned external reviews of the school and governors carry out termly reviews of subject areas. These reviews are efficiently prepared for by discussions and reading documentation; they include classroom observations, with guidelines provided and result in formal reports to the full governing body. However, the governing body is not ensuring that statutory requirements are fully met for collective worship and for reporting pupils' progress annually to parents.

Staffing, accommodation and resources

90. Low funding restricts the scope of spending decisions, but finances are allocated to the school's priorities and funding is being used for its intended purposes. The governing body carefully scrutinises the budget and there is sound financial control. The school keeps up-to-date records and a recent audit report (December 2002) found a significant improvement in financial administration. The school is satisfactorily applying the principles of Best Value. It compares its results with those of other schools; it effectively tenders for its spending and it consults appropriately about its major decisions. Consultation sometimes includes pupils and the school has procedures for doing this through the Pupils' Forum.
91. Staffing levels remain satisfactory. There has been a large staff turnover since the last inspection, aimed at improving the quality of teaching and reducing costs. Staffing is well-deployed, demonstrated by the achievement of pupils and the overall quality of teaching. Teachers are generally coping well in teaching outside their specialist subjects. They are well supported by continuous professional development, which is effectively integrated into the school's development plan. However, staff availability has resulted in two newly qualified teachers occupying co-ordinator roles for foundation subjects.
92. Resources for learning are low, as they were at the time of the last inspection. They are being effectively used to cover the basic requirements of the National Curriculum. However, limitations in resources are restricting the school's ability to acquire materials targeted at the full range of pupils' abilities, and to beneficially extend and enhance the basic curriculum. This is particularly the case in science, design and technology and physical education.
93. Accommodation was judged to be good in the last inspection report. Since then, it has continued to be well kept. It is a clean and tidy school with a complete absence of litter and graffiti. The school has continued to mount stimulating displays of pupils' work in classrooms and corridors. It is meeting its aim of providing a good learning environment for pupils. The library is small but it has seven computers and its range of books is appropriate for the age range of pupils. It is well organised and its stock is in good condition. Generally, accommodation is suitable for its purposes.
94. The school is an effective one. With above average results in National Curriculum tests, pupils' very good attitudes, good teaching and very good leadership and management, it is now providing good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

95. The school governors, in conjunction with the headteacher and staff, should take the following actions to raise standards by:

1) Improving the contribution of assessment to pupils' attainment and progress by:

- ensuring that all teachers' marking identifies pupils' specific achievements and what they need to do to improve, so that pupils receive effective feedback, and judgements about their progress are based firmly on their prior attainment and needs;
- ensuring that sharply-focused learning objectives are linked to the assessment of pupils' work to enable the quality of learning to be evaluated;
- ensuring that such specific information from assessment is used to inform teachers' subsequent planning and reporting of pupils' progress to parents;
- enabling teachers to develop strategies for organising marking so that it is both effective and manageable;
- regularly monitoring the quality of teachers' marking, and including progress reports on the agendas of leadership meetings in order to secure improvement.

[29, 57, 58, 81, 83, 113, 125, 151, 158, 167, 174, 182, 190, 195]

2) Increasing the contribution of ICT to pupils' learning and progress by:

- developing a coherent approach to the implementation of ICT across the curriculum;
- disseminating good practice in the use of ICT within the school;
- ensuring that all staff receive appropriate professional development in the use of ICT;
- developing procedures to monitor the effectiveness of the use of ICT across the school.

[13, 33, 34, 103, 121, 126, 135, 145, 150, 157, 159, 166, 168, 171, 176, 196]

3) Improving the quality and range of the curriculum in design and technology, and pupils' range of skills by:

- providing sufficient resources for design and technology;
- making more effective use of ICT to support learning in design and technology.

[34, 92, 144, 145, 146]

4) Improving the quality of reports to parents by:

- identifying in annual reports the specific progress made by pupils during the year.
[65,89]

Other suggested improvements

- Ensure that statutory requirements for collective worship are fully met.
[34, 49, 89]
- Develop a specific curriculum plan and assessment procedures for citizenship as a subject of the National Curriculum.
[34, 136, 137, 138, 139]

The numbers in brackets refer to the main paragraph in the full report where these issues are mentioned.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	64
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	39

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	6	13	28	15	1	1	0
Percentage	9	20	44	23	2	2	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching. Care should be taken when interpreting these percentages as each lesson represents more than one percentage point.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	254
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	58

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	11

Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	10
--------------------------------------------------------------------	----

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.8
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.3

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (Year 6)

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	2002	31	25	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	26	24	29
	Girls	22	19	22
	Total	49	44	52
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	86 (80)	77 (61)	91 (93)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	25	24	28
	Girls	19	19	22
	Total	45	44	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	79 (75)	77 (65)	89 (96)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils***Exclusions in the last school year***

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	251	1	-
White – Irish	-	-	-
White – any other White background	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Black African	-	-	-
Mixed – White and Asian	2	-	-
Mixed – any other mixed background	1	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Indian	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	-	-	-
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	-	-	-
Black or Black British – Caribbean	-	-	-
Black or Black British – African	-	-	-
Black or Black British – any other Black background	-	-	-
Chinese	-	-	-
Any other ethnic group	-	-	-
No ethnic group recorded	-	-	-

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

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

Education support staff: Y5 – Y8

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	83

Deployment of teachers: Y5 – Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	80
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Average teaching group size: Y5 – Y8

Key Stage 2	25
Key Stage 3	23

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2002-03
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	£
Total income	594819
Total expenditure	581882
Expenditure per pupil	2116
Balance brought forward from previous year	14768
Balance carried forward to next year	27705

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	6
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	5

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

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	254
Number of questionnaires returned	229

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	24	62	11	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	31	59	7	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	25	65	4	0	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	13	59	18	7	2
The teaching is good.	23	66	5	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	23	53	18	4	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	39	51	6	1	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	48	49	3	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	18	58	16	3	5
The school is well led and managed.	34	54	3	2	8
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	28	62	4	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	34	48	10	1	6

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

ENGLISH

The provision of English is **very good** overall.

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and class management skills.
- Pupils work productively at a good pace.
- Marking of pupils' work is positive and constructive.
- Curriculum enrichment activities are provided.
- Leadership and management of English are very good.

Areas for improvement

- Develop technical accuracy in the writing of average and low attaining pupils.
- Help low attaining pupils to improve planning and organisation of their work.
- Develop the use of ICT in lessons.
- Develop literacy across the curriculum consistently.
- Make the plenary sessions of lessons more effective.

96. Standards of attainment on entry to the school are broadly in line with the national average. At the end of Year 6 in 2002, the proportion of pupils attaining the national benchmark of Level 4 and above was higher than the national average. The proportion of pupils who attained the higher level, Level 5, was also higher than the national average. These results were a significant improvement from the previous inspection when attainment in tests was below average. The results of boys and girls were better than they were at the time of the last inspection, with no significant difference between them. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, attainment was above average, consistent with that demonstrated in tests. Over the last two years, test results have improved at a rate faster than the trend nationally. In 2002, test results were well above the average for similar schools, whereas they had been well below the average at the time of the last inspection.
97. Work seen during the inspection shows that the current attainment of 11 year olds is consistent with recent test results. In Year 6, low attaining pupils are developing ideas. Better planning and organisation of their work are required. They need to avoid repetition of ideas and to write using complex sentences. Attention is also needed to spelling, punctuation and handwriting. The work of average ability pupils is of a better quality. They make good use of verbs for dialogues. Connectives are well used. However, they need to use precise vocabulary wherever appropriate. High attaining pupils' writing is more accurate and more presentable. They produce a wide range of writing, and technical errors are few and far between. Ideas are well developed and vocabulary is appropriate.
98. Attainment in Years 7 and 8 is average. The writing of low attaining pupils is of a reasonable quality. They are developing use of figurative language and formal style. These pupils are

able to organise their writing in paragraphs and connect ideas although at times repetition of ideas occurs. Pupils make some spelling and punctuation errors. Pupils of average ability produce neat and presentable work. Some of their writing requires more details to justify opinions. Conclusions are not well developed. Attention is needed to accuracy of spelling and punctuation and some pupils need to join up their handwriting. High attaining pupils produce a good range of interesting work. Their work is well organised and expression is good. Spelling and punctuation errors are very few.

99. Overall, pupils make good progress in written work. Technical accuracy in the writing of low attaining pupils and the planning and organisation of their work are issues to be addressed. The school is already taking action in this respect.
100. Standards of listening and speaking have improved considerably since the last inspection. Pupils work in pairs and small groups, listen to their teachers and peers attentively and contribute well to discussions in class. A Year 6 class discussing the poem *What is Black* by Mary O'Neil exchanged ideas about the theme of the poem, learnt how poems are constructed and what the function of rhyming words is. A Year 8 class discussed the story *Badger on the Barge* by Janni Howker. Before the lesson, pupils had watched television interviews at home as part of their homework. In the lesson, they applied the techniques and constructed an interview involving two characters. This was a good example of homework being used to extend pupils' learning.
101. Reading standards throughout the school are above average. By the time pupils leave, they have attained good standards in reading with the great majority able to read both fiction and non-fiction books. Pupils read with ease and fluency and show understanding of writers' meanings. In lessons, teachers provide good role models by reading prose and poetry to their classes. Pupils read in lessons and also in the library. They keep records of the books they have read by completing reading journals. The school library has an adequate stock of fiction and non-fiction books. These are supplemented by loans from the Schools' Library Service. The school library is well used by pupils; it is full to its capacity in lunchtime.
102. The quality of teaching is good overall. Teachers prepare their lessons with care and share learning objectives with pupils. They explain key points to their classes, demonstrating good subject knowledge. Teachers have good class management skills and this enables pupils to work without interruption. The calm and purposeful atmosphere created in classrooms is a significant factor in helping pupils learn effectively. Pupils respond well to this, have a good attitude to their work and behave very well. Lessons proceed at a good pace and pupils show interest and involvement. They are eager to do well and be successful. Teachers support pupils with special educational needs and help them concentrate and work well. They assess pupils' work thoroughly and use this knowledge to plan future lessons and to set group and individual targets so that pupils know what they have to do to improve further. Marking of completed work is good. It informs pupils of their strengths and areas for development. This is in contrast to the school generally, where teachers' marking needs improvement.

103. ICT is used to promote the literacy skills of pupils with special educational needs. Other pupils use it to some extent for planning, drafting and editing their work. However, to derive the full benefit of ICT, it needs to be used more widely in lessons.
104. Curriculum enrichment activities contribute significantly to pupils' education. Writers in residence work with pupils. Years 5 and 6 pupils perform a pantomime for first schools, parents and friends.
105. As and when opportunities arise, social and cultural issues are given a good treatment in lessons. This was observed during a discussion of Mary O'Neil's poem *What is Black?*
106. The leadership and management of English are very good. The English team is committed and hardworking and the head of department is extremely knowledgeable. The scheme of work has been updated. There is good communication within the department. Departmental meetings are held regularly and minutes kept and shared with the headteacher. Teachers' work is monitored and feedback given to them. The documentation produced by the department is of good quality. The department has a vision for the future which is outlined in the departmental development plan.
107. The school has a policy for literacy across the curriculum which is being implemented. Good examples of teaching literacy were found in subjects such as English, mathematics, science, art and design, and ICT. In mathematics, pupils were seen writing clear and succinct conclusions to investigations. They were able to use appropriate vocabulary. In all these subjects, key words and phrases are explained to pupils. There are good opportunities for listening and speaking and reading and extended writing. Lesson objectives are shared with classes. However, the plenary sessions of lessons need to be made more effective and the teaching of literacy across the curriculum developed more consistently.
108. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. Standards of attainment have risen considerably, homework is being used to extend learning, issues related to assessment have been addressed, and the role of the head of department has been adjusted. The department has developed a portfolio of assessed work which assists in the process of moderation and standardisation.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Standards achieved in lessons are high and the progress made by pupils is good.
- Teaching is good. It meets the needs of the pupils and motivates them to learn.
- Excellent relationships contribute significantly to teaching and learning.
- The leadership and management of the new head of department are very good and the departmental team works well together.
- The implementation of the numeracy strategy across all years is very effective and has made a significant contribution to the standards achieved by pupils.
- There has been very good improvement since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- Development of a consistent marking system for all mathematics teachers that ensures that pupils know what to do to improve.
- Continued support and training for non-specialist mathematics teachers, particularly with regard to investigative and problem solving activities.

109. In 2002 results in the national tests at the age of 11 years were above the national average and very close to the national figure for pupils gaining the higher grades. Attainment has gradually improved since the time of the last inspection when they were below the national average. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, their attainment was above average and consistent with their test results. Over the last five years, test results have improved at a rate similar to the trend nationally, but since 2001 they have risen at a rate higher than the national trend. In 2002, test results were close to the average for similar schools, whereas they were well below average at the time of the last inspection. Pupils in the current Year 8 are achieving standards above what is expected nationally. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls. These improvements are largely as a result of good teaching and the successful implementation of the numeracy strategy in all years.
110. By the end of Years 6 and 8, standards of work seen in books and lessons are above what is typically expected of pupils of these ages. The majority of pupils are confident and competent in all areas of mathematics although some pupils in Years 5 and 6 do not always have sufficient opportunity to develop their investigative and problem solving skills. Pupils of all abilities are given challenging work, for example, in a Year 6 topic on constructing nets for complex three-dimensional solids. Pupils successfully used geometric equipment to construct a range of solids including hexagonal pyramids. Lower attaining pupils in Year 6 were able to construct a tally chart from the results of a questionnaire and those in Year 5, with support, were able to change fractions to decimals. In addition, with the sensitive help of a learning support assistant, pupils used the computer to produce a graph. High attaining Year 8 pupils are able to understand and solve simultaneous equations involving both a linear and quadratic equation by a graphical method.

111. Pupils of all abilities make good progress in mathematics. Many pupils who have special educational needs make good progress in lessons and gain in confidence. This is a result of high quality, well-planned support and tasks that meet the needs of the pupils. All pupils make clear gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding of the subject. Their progress is enhanced by their obvious enjoyment of the subject, and by their very positive attitudes and high levels of concentration in the majority of classes. Most pupils are keen to participate in their lessons and explain their solutions to their classmates.
112. The teaching of mathematics is good and results in good achievement and progress across all years. Mathematics is seen as fun at South Tynedale Middle School. Teachers inspire confidence and motivate pupils. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen. In the majority of lessons teaching was good or very good and two lessons were judged to be excellent. This is a considerable improvement from the time of the last inspection when teaching was judged to be mainly satisfactory.
113. In all lessons, teachers made lesson objectives very clear to pupils so that they knew exactly what was expected. In some cases, teachers had included what a good piece of work looked like and referred to it during the lesson. All lessons included a good range of activities. Starter and plenary activities were used well to remind pupils of previous work, to practise and reinforce numeracy skills and to apply new knowledge. Teachers have high expectations of all their pupils and they respond by producing good work. Teachers and pupils were seen using interactive whiteboards in many lessons, which helped improve and develop ICT skills. In addition, pupils had opportunities to use spreadsheets and graph-drawing software to support their work on handling data and changing fractions to decimals and percentages. Relevant homework is set regularly to practise mathematics or extend it further. There was some very good marking which enabled pupils to understand what they had done well and what they needed to do to improve. However, this practice is not consistently applied.
114. Teachers and pupils enjoy excellent relationships, as do the pupils between themselves. There is a mutual respect between teachers and pupils in lessons and teachers demonstrate a strong commitment to the provision of equality of opportunity for all pupils whatever their ability, social group or gender. Teachers make a good contribution to pupils' social and moral development. They are good role models and pupils respond well. It is within this supportive environment that pupils are prepared to have a go and are not afraid to make mistakes.
115. The department has made very good progress since the last inspection. Results in national tests improved in 2002 and numeracy skills are no longer restricted. Numeracy skills are practised regularly in class and this year there has been a particular focus on improving mental agility. There has been a considerable improvement in ensuring that work meets the needs of all pupils, particularly those who are high attainers.
116. The mathematics department supports literacy development by ensuring that pupils regularly explain their work to each other and to their teacher. In addition, all staff in the department are constantly drawing pupils' attention to the mathematical vocabulary they are using.

When pupils undertake investigational work they are able to practise writing their conclusions, which the majority are able to do successfully.

117. Less progress has been made in the development of numeracy in other subjects since the last inspection. The majority of pupils are both confident and competent as a result of regular opportunities to practise their skills in mathematics. They use their skills in different contexts and are usually able to cope well with the mathematical needs of other subjects. They use graphical skills and calculations in science. They have opportunities to practise their measuring skills in both science and physical education. There has been little follow-up of the training day on numeracy in other subjects but this is part of the school's current development plan.
118. The leadership and management skills of the new head of department are very good. She joined the school in January and has made an enormous impact on the department. Very good new planning documents which include activities, resources and assessment tasks are being used successfully by all staff who feel well supported. The head of department is piloting a simple but effective assessment system which is currently being reviewed. The analysis of data and national tests are well used to plan the curriculum and individual lessons and to ensure that they meet the needs of pupils. The monitoring of teaching is good and outcomes are shared at meetings. However, non-specialist staff are less confident with regard to using investigative and problem solving strategies. A very good series of booklets have been produced for parents to enable them to help their children. The mathematics team work well together and are committed to raising standards and improving practice.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Very good management has moved the department forward considerably this academic year.
- Investigative science, previously a weakness, is now well taught in Years 5 and 6, and Years 7 and 8.
- Lessons are well planned and managed.
- Teachers convey an enthusiasm for science that catches the imagination of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Matching work appropriately to the ability of pupils.
- Opportunities for pupils to use ICT to support their learning in science.
- Monitoring of pupils' progress and the use of individual target setting.
- Marking and assessment do not fully inform teaching and learning.

119. The attainment of pupils in science at the end of Year 6 in 2002 was above the national average and has risen in line with national trends. More able pupils attained particularly well, and the percentage of pupils gaining Level 5 or higher was well above the national average. Results were broadly in line with the national average at the time of the last inspection. Over the last five years there has been no significant difference in the performance of boys and

girls, although boys' results were better than girls' in the 2002 tests. The results of both boys and girls were better than they were when the school was last inspected. When pupils were statutorily assessed by their teachers at the end of Year 6 in 2002, their attainment was above average and consistent with their test results. Although over recent years results have risen more slowly than the trend nationally, in the last year the extent of improvement was higher than the national trend. In 2002, test results were above the average for similar schools, whereas they had been broadly in line with the average at the time of the last inspection.

120. In Years 7 and 8, pupils do not have any statutory assessments, but evidence from the inspection indicates standards in line with the national average. Overall, pupils achieve well in all aspects of science, including investigative science. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school. More able pupils make good progress in Years 5 and 6 and satisfactory progress in Years 7 and 8.
121. Reading and writing standards in science are above average. Pupils carry out a range of writing tasks and have opportunities for extended writing. Spelling of scientific words is an emphasis in marking. Numeracy is supported by the inclusion of an ICT package on graphical skills, measuring in experimental work and, occasionally, simple calculations. There is some use of ICT for research, but generally the department does not provide the entitlement to ICT in science that is required in the National Curriculum. The department does not currently carry out data logging, for example, though it plans to do so in the near future.
122. Pupils' attitudes to science are very good. Pupils show interest and engagement with their work and often ask questions around the topics being taught. They tackle investigations well and are able to provide reasoned predictions, carry out experiments with care and enthusiasm and make positive contributions to discussions. In a Year 8 lesson on magnets, for example, pupils asked a number of questions about the relationship between magnetism and the core of the Earth that demonstrated their engagement with the topic. Relationships between teachers and pupils are warm and positive, pupils work well with each other and co-operate effectively in group work. For example, in a lesson on classification pupils sorted slips containing characteristics of vertebrates in groups, discussing their ideas constructively and with evident enjoyment. These factors all impact positively on pupils' learning.
123. Overall, teaching is good. Teachers are enthusiastic and both girls and boys respond well. Teachers plan lessons in detail and use a range of tasks to engage pupils. Steps have been taken to improve methods for meeting the needs of pupils of differing abilities, for example, through the purchase of differentiated text-books. However, approaches are not always successful and, on occasion, pupils with special educational needs do not fully understand the work they have been given. For example, in a Year 8 lesson on magnetism a number of the least able pupils did not fully grasp the concept of magnetic domains. Equally, more able pupils are not always fully challenged, particularly in Years 7 and 8 where pupils' books show little work at the highest levels. The departmental action plan contains actions to address this.

124. Teachers in the department are all non-specialists in science. This does not hinder their ability to deliver good science lessons but it sometimes means that they are not able to respond quickly to higher level questions asked by pupils, and that the subtleties of scientific language are missed. There has been good support from the local education authority's Key Stage 3 science consultant on this and other matters, for example, in developing schemes of work. Homework is set inconsistently across the department and is sometimes of limited value, for example, finishing off classwork.
125. Assessment has improved since the last inspection. Testing pupils' progress through end-of-module tests is now in place and there is improved use of performance data. Marking is unsatisfactory since it does not currently provide sufficient feedback to pupils on how to improve their science attainment. Monitoring of pupil progress towards targets takes place, but too informally. There is some use of targets for individual pupils, but this is work that has just begun and is underdeveloped. The use of performance data and on-going classroom assessments to support learning is also underdeveloped. Target setting for individual pupils and monitoring of progress towards those targets is a key issue for the department. These aspects have all been accurately identified by the recently appointed head of department in her audit of the department and are included in the development plan.
126. Progress since the previous inspection has been very good, and all key issues, with the exception of the use of ICT, have been addressed. Investigative science, previously cited as a weakness of the department, is now a strength.
127. Management of the science department is very good. The head of department leads by example and has developed an effective and well organised team who work well together. She has supported teachers in raising standards and they have confidence in her ability to take the department forward. Monitoring of teaching is carried out with support from the school's leadership group. Resources are adequate, though barely. There are too few resources to support teachers' efforts to meet the needs of pupils with a wide range of ability. There is no technical support for science within the school and valuable teacher time is spent carrying out tasks such as organising and washing apparatus.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design, which has improved significantly since the last inspection, is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching in art and design is now good overall and there are no significant weaknesses.
- Standards in art and design are above average and higher than previously reported.
- Pupils are now achieving well and making good progress.
- Drawing in all years is now at least good and at times very good.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for pupils to respond to the work of other artists and the art of other cultures in order to share a wider practice and range of ideas.
- Development of the use of ICT.
- Cage and ventilate the electric kiln.

128. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and are now above average for pupils aged 11 and for pupils aged 13. There is no significant difference between boys' and girls' attainment in this subject. In Year 5 pupils can now confidently draw from observation, applying well-rehearsed techniques in a variety of media. They clearly understand the impact of the use of colour to describe shape and form and are able to create detailed and robust drawings. Pupils in Year 6 now exhibit increasing confidence and control when expressing their ideas and observations when drawing from first hand. They are able to produce carefully considered observational drawings using previously learnt skills and techniques to create tonal changes and depth in these studies.
129. Pupils in Year 7 are able to use and apply techniques in a variety of media, such as pen and ink, pencil, paint, and textiles. They express their ideas in response to the work of other artists in their different projects with confidence and a high level of skill and understanding. For example, their work based upon the abstract work of Kandinsky was very well executed with lots of fine detail and thoughtful sketchbook work. These miniature pen studies were then assembled into hanging mobiles. Close observation of the patterns found on bodies of tropical fish led to very colourful and exciting woven patterns and texture. This has resulted in standards that are well above average.
130. In Year 8 standards are above what is typically expected and sometimes they are well above. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, can very confidently record from direct observation to create convincing accurate images in three dimensions. They clearly understand and can apply techniques to record reflective surfaces showing the detail in these reflections. Higher achieving pupils are challenged to extend this knowledge and understanding by using the work of Escher to look at the distorted reflections and the high quality of the tonal work and shading used as a modelling technique. This is used both as a guide to show how other artists create similar images and how they achieve the same qualities with similar media. Similarly, a project on African art enabled pupils to work in ceramics to create their own masks and make links with the artist Picasso. However,

greater access to the work of other artists and the art of other cultures through galleries and museums and artists in residence would provide many more significant opportunities for pupils to share a wider range of practice, ideas and concepts at first hand. Such experiences would enhance pupils' thinking skills, provide many more ways for them to express their ideas and ultimately enable them to make even better progress and attain even higher levels.

131. In all years, drawing is now a strength. Progress in drawing is consistently good and sometimes very good, particularly in Year 7. All pupils use sketchbooks for both working at school and at home. These are well used as visual notebooks for ideas, collections, exploring new techniques and ideas. Pupils' progress in each year is clearly evident in the work found in sketchbooks. Pupils have a clear understanding of the meaning of technical words and phrases and readily use these when talking about their work or the work of others. There are ample opportunities for pupils to engage in descriptive writing, annotate sketchbook work, to speak and to listen. Such opportunities enhance pupils' increasing knowledge and understanding in art. Although much work is completed in sketchbooks some final pieces are carefully executed in other media. The presentation of this work is now good.
132. Pupils behave very well during their time in the art studios. They are enthusiastic about their lessons where they have lots of opportunities to develop their work and to engage in practical activities. They are attentive and eagerly respond to questions about work in hand. Pupils remain interested through out lessons and concentrate very well despite some pupils, notably in Year 5, taking a little time to settle. However, when they do settle these pupils work very well. All pupils readily and willingly explain their work identifying where they have been successful and what they need to do to improve.
133. Teaching is now consistently good in all years. A very good detailed scheme of work effectively takes account of the requirements of the National Curriculum at Key Stage 2 and 3, ensuring continuity and progression between each year. This clearly informs short term planning and the need for pupils to develop skills and techniques and to have opportunities to apply these in a range of contexts. Planning also ensures that pupils acquire knowledge and understanding of the work of other artists. The high level of teachers' specialist subject knowledge ensures that expectations are appropriately high and communicated well to pupils. Similarly, tasks, techniques and pitfalls are clearly explained and demonstrated so that pupils can clearly understand what they are to do and learn. The use of technical terms, key words and phrases to enhance this understanding is good and very well presented. Good, brisk and challenging questioning ensures that pupils, including those with special educational needs, are well practised in speaking to the whole group and confident enough to share their ideas and understanding. There is a good balance between whole group and small group work. Both are well used to ensure that pupils are engaged, share their understanding with each other and to check their learning in plenary sessions. Pupils are managed very well so that they are productive and a good pace is maintained throughout lessons. As a consequence pupils are now achieving well and are making good progress.
134. On-going assessment is positive, encouraging and well used to enable individuals to improve their work. Marking celebrates pupils' success as well as identifies ways for them to

improve. Pupils with special educational needs make similar rates of progress as a result of the on-going help and support from the teacher. Consequently, they concentrate, work well and achieve higher than expected levels of attainment. A detailed and extensive assessment system is now in place. This records individual pupil progress at the end of each project, outcomes of the common assessment tasks that are undertaken and pupil self-assessment. Homework is well used to extend pupils' knowledge and understanding as an extension of studio work

135. The subject is well led. The management and the direction for the subject are now both good. As a consequence, the impact upon standards has been considerable. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. However, although the majority of areas for action have been addressed, the use of ICT remains an issue and has yet to be fully developed. The art studio is well organised and there are very effective displays of pupils' work and artefacts that provide a stimulating and exciting learning environment. In order to meet health and safety requirements, the electric kiln needs to be caged and provided with dedicated ventilation.

CITIZENSHIP

136. The school is behind schedule in developing citizenship as a statutory subject of the National Curriculum for pupils in Years 7 and 8. There is no subject co-ordinator in place (with the headteacher fitting the responsibility into his very heavy schedule); no specific curriculum plan or formal assessment procedures have been developed, and staff training needs have not yet been identified. In these respects, provision for citizenship education is unsatisfactory. Nevertheless, the school is clearly aware of statutory requirements and the need to systematically provide citizenship education as an entitlement for all its pupils.
137. As it was at the time of the last inspection, citizenship is being delivered through the PSHE programme. This has been recently reviewed, including an audit of the existing provision for citizenship. As a result of these developments, the programme comprises ten topics to be delivered across Years 7 and 8, about half of which could be described as distinct citizenship modules, for example, 'Human Rights', 'Democracy', 'Community'. In addition, one hour per week has been allocated to PSHE to facilitate the implementation of citizenship education. There is no evidence of citizenship as a planned element in other subjects of the curriculum.
138. The audit and mapping of provision has only been partially successful. It has not resulted in full coverage of the knowledge and understanding elements of citizenship: cultural diversity, the media, and the world as a global community are not planned into citizenship topics.
139. In terms of the development of enquiry and communication skills, the planned topics provide ample scope for group discussion, but they do not fully provide pupils with opportunities to think about topical and spiritual, moral, social and cultural issues by analysing information, and for them to justify their personal opinions about these issues. Overall, with the exception of the 'Human Rights' topic, the participation element is well covered.

140. Although citizenship has not yet been fully developed as a National Curriculum subject, there are rich activities outside the formal curriculum which make a significant contribution to citizenship education. Examples of these are the pupil forum, with pupils electing their representatives and having the opportunity to discuss the particular issues, and the community projects and charitable fund raising activities which are very well supported by pupils.
141. During the inspection, only one PSHE lesson given over to citizenship was observed. Consequently, there was insufficient evidence upon which to base judgements of pupils' standards or the quality of teaching in citizenship education.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Provision for design and technology is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Leadership and management are good.
- The developing scheme of work is supporting learning well.
- Health and safety awareness of staff and pupils is good.
- Work is consistently well finished, particularly in food technology and textiles.
- Accommodation for food technology has improved since the previous inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The range of skills developed and experiences provided.
- The quantity, quality and range of resources.
- The use of ICT.
- Assessment and recording of attainment needs further development.

142. During the inspection it was possible to observe only two lessons, and therefore no overall judgement is made on teaching. Judgements are based on the scrutiny of a very wide range of pupils' written and practical work, on discussions with staff and pupils and on a scrutiny of documentation.
143. Standards are similar to those reported in the previous inspection, but there is clear evidence of recent improvement. Standards achieved by the end of both Years 6 and 8 are broadly in line with the average for pupils of these ages in the areas covered. Throughout the school pupils follow a design brief carefully and standards in design are those typically expected. Work is consistently well finished by boys and girls of all abilities and finished articles are fit for the purpose for which they were designed. Some skills in food technology and textiles and the use of tools are above average for pupils of this age range. For example, in Year 6 the pupils' use of cross and draw filing is good, and in Year 8 they control a sewing machine and fabric well to get straight, even seams. All pupils have a good grasp of health and safety issues, both in relation to food hygiene and to working in a machine shop. Although there is some evidence of good self and peer evaluation skills to help pupils improve their work, this area of learning is underdeveloped. There is particularly good improvement in standards in

design and skills in food technology, textiles and resistant materials as pupils move through Year 5.

144. In both the lessons seen the teacher demonstrated very good expertise, managed the lessons extremely well with limited space and resources and was very conscious of health and safety requirements. High expectations of behaviour and well-established workshop routines meant that efficient use was made of time. In the short and effective introductions, demonstrations involving pupils were used very well to review previous work, and teach new skills. Correct technical terms were stressed. Throughout the lessons all pupils, regardless of prior attainment or gender, were catered for appropriately. In the practical task the teacher constantly checked pupils' work and challenged them to improve the quality of finish. Standards attained and pupils' learning, however, were impeded by the lack of suitable equipment.
145. Literacy and numeracy skills are used and developed well. For example, in many activities product research involves surveys, presentation and analysis of data, and in design, pupils use the appropriate subject specific vocabulary. There is a lack of a full awareness of the use of ICT in design and technology.
146. The subject is well led and managed. Two teachers share the role which enables both to contribute their own, very different knowledge and expertise. A good quality scheme of work is being developed that is helping teachers know what skill, knowledge and understanding should be developed at each stage. There is some observation of teaching and joint assessment of work but these areas are in the early stages of development. Teachers work under extreme pressure due to a limited time allocation for the subject and the lack of resources to cover a wide enough range of skills. Even in the topics that are focused on, food technology, textiles and resistant materials, resources are unsatisfactory. There is no suitable equipment for the development of electronics and pneumatics. This is limiting the overall standards achieved by pupils. These issues were identified in the previous inspection report. The senior management of the school is aware of the resource problems in the subject. They have started the refurbishment of the food and textiles room. This improved accommodation is being used effectively to improve pupils' learning.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- Pupils respond enthusiastically to their lessons.
- Teachers carefully plan their work.
- The subject is effectively led.
- Literacy is used well to communicate learning.

Areas for improvement

- Widening of teachers' subject knowledge.
- Use of marking to help pupils to make progress.
- Use of ICT to facilitate learning.
- Fieldwork opportunities in Years 7 and 8.

147. Standards in geography are generally in line with what is typically expected in Years 5 and 6. The standards of written work in Years 7 and 8 are above the average typically found for pupils of this age range.
148. At age 11, more able pupils are fully able to develop their ideas and potentially low attaining pupils are fully accessing the curriculum and achieving clear progress in their development of geographical enquiry skills. Although no lessons in Years 5 and 6 were observed in this inspection, this judgement is supported by substantial written evidence of pupils' work.
149. At age 13, more able pupils are writing confidently and at length, and cope well with the complexities of physical geography and the human and social contexts of geography. Potentially low attaining pupils demonstrate that they fully understand the intentions of the work undertaken. Standards observed in written work were higher than those observed in lessons because the written work, in fact, has been supported by specialist teaching not observed during the inspection.
150. Pupils are achieving well in geography lessons, with pupils anxious to develop their ideas and enthusiastically tackling geographical enquiries, and their written work reveals good progress over time. This is directly related both to specialist teaching and to constructive marking which emphasises omissions and challenges pupils to further commitment. Pupils' literacy skills are a strength and numeracy is particularly strong in Years 7 and 8. Pupils use ICT appropriately but with insufficient regularity.
151. Teaching observed during the inspection was satisfactory, although pupils' written work indicated that there had been good teaching earlier in the school year. Lessons were carefully prepared and carefully resourced. Teachers' input was conveyed in an encouraging manner but subject knowledge was often weak, thereby leading to some lack of challenge. Teachers' marking is positive and encouraging but it insufficiently identified pupils' strengths and weaknesses and gave them insufficient advice on how to improve. The needs of differing abilities were being met both in lessons observed and in the written work set, including the needs of potentially low attaining pupils.
152. Overall, assessment procedures have developed well, with assessment tasks common to different classes providing information to inform curriculum planning and support for the individual progress of pupils. The opportunity for pupils to select their own targets for improvement is a strength. Folios of exemplar materials are in a developmental stage and represent an area for further research. Spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is being strongly promoted, with the moral understanding of the issues surrounding international trade justice and the recognition of the vulnerability of the environment as examples.
153. Since the last inspection all the issues raised as weaknesses have been addressed successfully and this commitment to improvement is an indication of the effective leadership being exercised in geography. There is a need for the promotion of fieldwork for pupils in Years 7 and 8.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Teaching is very effective and well-informed.
- Literacy is used well in teaching and learning.
- Enthusiastic responses by pupils.
- Good use of assessment data.
- Strong leadership.

Areas for improvement

- Marking.
- Increased use of ICT.
- Promotion of fieldwork opportunities in Years 7 and 8.

154. Standards in history are in line with national averages in Year 5 and 6 and significantly above what is typically expected in Years 7 and 8. The high standards are achieved as a direct result of pupils' enthusiastic responses to very effective teaching.
155. By age 11 most pupils' achieve standards broadly in line with national averages in their written work. This judgement is securely based on a close scrutiny of the written work available. It is clear, however, that pupils are very effective speakers and listeners and that this is not fully reflected in their capabilities in writing. This was illustrated in a Year 5 lesson where pupils discussing and investigating people's experience of air raids and air raid shelters in World War Two demonstrated a level of understanding far exceeding the standards reflected in written work.
156. By age 13, standards in written and oral work of most pupils are significantly above what is typically expected, as a result of teachers' sustained support and encouragement. Pupils' written work fully conveys their strength of understanding of historical concepts, skills and processes, and this is demonstrated in fluent and extended prose.
157. Pupils are achieving well in history learning as a result of their very positive and enthusiastic responses to well-informed, well-planned and positive teaching. The quality of pupils' questioning indicates the strength of the grounding which they have received because they know what questions to ask and do so carefully. They demonstrate good listening skills. Pupils at all levels develop their historical skills at a good rate and this is strongly encouraged by teachers' careful marking which emphasises omissions and encourages pupils to commit themselves further. Pupils develop good literacy skills, and these are especially evident in Years 7 and 8, and when they use ICT they do so effectively. However, ICT and numeracy are not sufficiently emphasised.
158. Teaching is always good and sometimes very good. It is characterised by careful planning, and effective resourcing of lessons. The management of pupils' behaviour is good and lessons have good pace. There is a useful emphasis on literacy. The extent to which

teaching meets the needs of pupils is a strength. The needs of all pupils are met alongside very carefully arranged challenges to very able pupils. There is good support and encouragement for individuals. Teachers' marking is positive and encouraging but does not consistently identify the strengths and weaknesses of pupils and what they need to do to secure further progress.

159. Overall, formal assessment procedures are now a strength. Teachers have responded well to the critique offered by the last inspection. History assessments are supported by a helpful portfolio of exemplar materials. The data collected is being used to monitor and develop individual pupil performance and to affect future curriculum design. Pupils' self-assessment is another very positive feature which has commenced successfully. The promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural values is a strength because the curriculum is linking historical events to present-day values and attitudes, such as the exploration of the moral stance of conscientious objectors during World War Two. However, ICT is insufficiently utilised and more could be done to promote fieldwork as a practical means of developing historical skills.
160. Strong leadership has brought about very significant changes in the provision of history since the last inspection: in formal assessment and the monitoring of pupil progress, in the systematic encouragement of pupils learning historical skills and independence of thought, and in terms of the pace of lessons. There has been improvement in all these aspects. In addition, previous strengths have been sustained and the result has been a markedly improved provision for history which has had a very positive impact on standards.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the provision of information and communication technology as a taught/timetabled subject is **satisfactory** but provision across the whole curriculum is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Attainment in ICT lessons is above average.
- There is good preparation and planning by teachers.
- Most pupils work productively.
- Co-ordinator works with energy and enthusiasm.

Areas for improvement

- Further develop ICT across the curriculum.
- Promote teachers' professional development.
- Develop a system of target setting to support pupils.
- Mark pupils' work and create portfolios of assessed work.

161. On entry to the school, Year 5 pupils have variable and often insufficient knowledge of ICT. However, they soon learn how to use the network and passwords and how to access their work files. Overall, there is good progression from Year 5 to Year 8, and Year 6 and Year 8 pupils achieve above average standards in ICT lessons. There is no significant difference in the attainment of boys and girls.

162. Work seen during the inspection shows that from Year 5 to Year 8 pupils make good progress. They produce a range of work, including leaflets, posters, logos, *PowerPoint* presentations, spreadsheets and carry out projects using ICT. A Year 6 pupil had completed a project on ancient and modern Olympics. The project was very well organised. It involved doing a good deal of research on the Internet and demonstrated ICT being used effectively. Similarly, a Year 8 pupil had produced a good leaflet on asthma explaining its causes and how asthma can be prevented.
163. Pupils interviewed during the inspection said that they were developing skills in ICT. They thought that ICT was important for the world of work. At school, they had acquired skills of word processing, desktop publishing and using the Internet for research. They were happy with the progress made so far.
164. The quality of teaching ICT in timetabled lessons is satisfactory overall, though some of it is good. Teachers plan their work with care and share learning objectives with their classes. They stimulate pupils' interest through questions and explanations. Teachers who use *PowerPoint* presentations are able to capture pupils' attention quickly. Key words such as *input*, *output*, *column*, *row* and *loop* are explained to pupils. Most pupils show interest and motivation and work productively in lessons. They have positive attitudes to learning and want to succeed. Teachers manage their classes skilfully and keep pupils on task. In a Year 6 lesson on control and monitoring, the teacher enabled pupils to explore the working of traffic lights using the programme *Junior Control Insight*.
165. Pupils learnt the function of icons, the sequence in which traffic lights work, and how the sequence of instructions could be changed. A Year 8 lesson focused on producing *PowerPoint* presentations. The teacher effectively explained how to insert text in slides, how to create animation effects, and how to insert hyperlinks. More able pupils added sound effects to their slides. Special educational needs pupils were supported by the teacher and made satisfactory progress. In both these lessons, homework was set that extended pupils' learning.
166. The school realises that pupils need to develop their keyboard skills to derive the full benefit of ICT. With this in view, a pilot scheme is being run to develop the typing skills of Year 5 and Year 6 pupils. It is intended to implement this scheme throughout the school. In the session observed, pupils were attentive and very keen. They used keyboards as fast as they could and were able to check their speed on computer screens. Good use was made of tutors' time.
167. The school has introduced common assessment tasks to measure pupils' progress in ICT. There is a need to assemble portfolios of evidence of assessed work in each year group to ensure that assessment is accurate and consistent. The school has begun this process. Pupils' work needs to be marked and their strengths and weaknesses outlined.
168. Teaching of ICT across the curriculum needs further development. The school is part of the national pilot on Key Stage 3 strategy. A consultant works with the school staff to promote this initiative. The school is already doing a cross-curricular audit of ICT. In history and

religious education, ICT is sometimes being used well to facilitate pupils' learning. In mathematics, ICT is used to convert fractions to percentages and to access information on graphs and charts. Special educational needs teachers use it to promote the literacy skills of pupils. In PSHE, websites such as *Explore Parliament* are used to enhance pupils' knowledge and motivation. However, the use of ICT is not widespread in the curriculum as a whole.

169. The school has good links with youth and community. Classes are run in text and word processing, desktop publishing and training opportunities are offered with UK online. About six to eight adults attend each class.
170. The ICT co-ordinator works with energy and enthusiasm. Appointed in September 2002, the co-ordinator has taken a number of initiatives. He has put in place an ICT development plan which is forward looking. An Internet safety policy is in place. All pupils have an e-mail account. Senior managers have appropriate procedures in place to check that the school has software licences. The school has the support of a part-time technician and health and safety requirements are met. The documentation produced by the ICT team is of good quality. Team meetings are held regularly and the minutes shared with the headteacher. The headteacher monitors staff performance in the school and the ICT co-ordinator works with teachers and monitors their performance. Feedback is given to teachers.
171. The provision of ICT has improved since the last inspection. Standards of work are improving. The scheme of work has been updated although it is still evolving. At present the computer/pupil ratio is 1:5 which is better than the recommended ratio of 1:6. The level of resources has improved. Data logging equipment has been purchased. A new ICT suite has been established. The issue of staff expertise is being addressed. Although the school has organised some training, for example, in making *PowerPoint* presentations, teachers' professional development remains a priority. Further training is essential.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

French

The quality of provision in French is **good**.

Strengths

- Pupils are highly motivated and engage enthusiastically in a range of clearly planned and well paced learning activities.
- Lesson objectives are clear and used effectively to summarise learning.
- Teachers manage pupils' learning skilfully through the target language.
- Subject leadership has a strong focus on standards and quality of teaching.

Areas for improvement

- Integrating the outcomes of half termly assessments into the target setting process.
- The use of ICT to enhance pupils' skills in adapting and manipulating language.

- Creating activities which challenge pupils to adapt memorised language.

172. All pupils study French in Years 7 and 8. There are no national assessments in modern foreign languages for pupils in these year groups. Based on work observed during the inspection, the majority of pupils are on line to achieve the national expected level by the age of 14. Standards are at least in line with expected levels for pupils with special educational needs and pupils of average ability. Standards for some more able pupils are higher than is typically expected. Boys are achieving as well as girls with the exception of a small group of average and below average ability boys in Year 8, which is not achieving as well.
173. In Year 7 pupils are very well used to lessons managed in French and can participate in conversations with several linked questions and answers. During Year 8 the more able are challenged to justify their opinions, for example, in deciding which word of three is the odd one out. By the end of Year 8, the most able pupils are able to write at length in connected paragraphs, recalling and developing language learned in Year 7.
174. The quality of teaching is good. Clear planning linked to the National Curriculum programmes of study enables teachers to provide a good range of activities suitable for pupils of all abilities. The pace of lessons is brisk and teachers are good at increasing the level of challenge within the planned activities. Teachers explain the objectives of lessons using French which is carefully reinforced so that pupils are clear about the focus of their work. At the end of lessons, pupils are encouraged to recall as much as possible from memory, sometimes with the added motivation of winning housepoints. Teaching could be improved by the use of activities where pupils are required to use language more flexibly and to deal with unpredictable elements, for example, through the use of cue cards with visual prompts. Teachers collect reliable evidence of pupils' progress through half termly assessment tasks. Marking is thorough and gives advice on improving spelling and grammar. Teachers need to consider how to link the outcomes of these assessments with current practice for setting and reviewing pupils' targets. Teachers and pupils could make more use of the information to track progress over time and celebrate achievements against targets set.
175. The quality of pupils' learning is good. Their level of concentration and engagement with lessons is high and they have a positive attitude to learning French. They work well in pairs and are confident using French to present work to the class. Pupils respond positively to teachers' high expectations of behaviour. They are beginning to apply strategies learned from literacy lessons to support their learning of a second language. The progress made within each year and across the two years is at least satisfactory and for many it is good. Pupils with special educational needs also make satisfactory progress.
176. Teachers encourage the use of computers for word processing and language games. However, a wider range of ICT resources is required to enable pupils to manipulate language, and to select and exchange information from a range of sources. Teachers have already identified this as a priority for the coming year.
177. French is ably led and managed with an effective focus on the quality of teaching and standards of achievement. The implementation of priorities is carefully monitored for its

impact on classroom practice. The subject is promoted enthusiastically across the school and supported by visits and pen friend links. There is a stimulating classroom environment and the content and delivery of the curriculum make a good contribution to pupils' cultural and social development.

178. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Teachers' use of the target language is now very skilful in avoiding the overuse of English, but remains sensitive to pupils' needs to check understanding. Standards, particularly with the higher ability pupils in Year 8, are rising and some pupils' attainment is higher than typically expected for their age group.

MUSIC

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

Strengths

- Teachers' high expectations.
- A strong programme of instrumental tuition and extracurricular activities.
- Attractive teaching materials, covering a wide range of cultures and styles.
- Very good relationships and class management.

Areas for improvement

- Development of assessment procedures.
- The use of homework to help pupils extend their learning.
- The role of literacy in enhancing learning in music.

179. Pupils' attainment is broadly in line with the average found for pupils of these age ranges. Pupils reach standards typically expected at the end of Year 6 and in Year 7, although standards in Year 8 work seen were below what is typically expected. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress and achieve in line with their abilities.
180. Teaching and learning are good. Teachers have high expectations, their management of pupils is very good, and effective questioning ensures that all pupils understand the subject matter and are confident in carrying out tasks. Teachers make skilful use of modelling, as when pupils mimed a silent performance of a keyboard piece in time with the teacher's performance, developing a mental grasp of the correct pace and rhythm. Teachers use attractive resources covering a wide range of styles and cultures. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They work hard and maintain a good pace of working. They are able to concentrate and work independently, collaborate well in pairs, and are able to evaluate their own achievements and identify ways to improve. Relationships are very good. Homework is not set in music at present. This limits learning and progress, particularly in developing pupils' understanding through language and literacy.
181. ICT is used imaginatively, for example when older pupils are asked to select music websites that will be interesting and useful to younger children. Pupils are enabled to assess their own and each other's work. An example of this occurred when pupils compared video

recordings of their rhythm compositions with those produced by another class. More formal assessment is still at an early stage of development.

182. In spite of a change of staffing, many of the strengths identified in the previous inspection have been maintained. The level of challenge in performing and appraising has increased. ICT is becoming an increasingly effective part of provision, although composition is now a less prominent aspect of the curriculum. However, assessment, data analysis, and homework remain underdeveloped, so improvement in the short period since the last inspection is unsatisfactory overall.
183. Music makes a significant contribution to pupils' social development. All pupils take part in one public performance every year. They are active in the local community through an annual Carol Service in the local church, and groups have recently performed at the old peoples' home and farmers' market. Opportunities for instrumental tuition are taken up by 14% of the school population, which is well above the national average. Music makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' cultural development. The scheme of work represents a wide range of styles, ranging from Latin American to gamelan. The ceilidh group fosters interest in local and national traditional music. Visiting specialists provide workshops in music of other cultures, as for instance in a current project on African music involving partnership with local schools. However, cultural issues are not fully explored in teaching; for instance, in a project on blues no mention was made of the social and cultural backgrounds of the traditional blues singers.
184. Management of the subject is good; visiting instrumental tutors are well supported, and appropriate development priorities for the subject have been identified. Resources are good.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

The provision for physical education is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching by the physical education specialist was at least good.
- High standards and expectations of behaviour of pupils clearly established.
- The subject is well managed.
- There is a good allocation of curricular time with a well-structured programme.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching by non-specialist teachers.
- Not enough opportunities for pupils' active learning.
- Insufficient time for gymnastics and dance in Years 5 and 6.
- Schemes of work unrelated to the attainment target for the subject.

185. The only activity observed during the inspection was athletics and the focus in the majority of lessons was on throwing using the sling throw. Comments on the quality of teaching and learning and the standards attained are, therefore, based on the observation of a very limited range of activities.

186. In Year 5, standards in throwing using the sling throw are below what is typically expected, with some girls achieving well below the standard. At age 13, most pupils have good knowledge and understanding of the technique of the sling throw and the principles involved. Standards are broadly in line with expectations. Some boys and girls are achieving higher standards. Year 5 pupils have a good knowledge of the importance of pace running. In Year 6, pupils have a good understanding of acceleration in running. High standards are achieved in a variety of sports with pupils achieving representative honours in football, rugby, badminton and gymnastics.
187. The quality of teaching by the specialist teacher was at least good. Lessons were well planned with key teaching points identified. The teacher provided appropriate stimulus and feedback for pupils to make progress. Teaching by the non-specialist classroom teacher, although enthusiastic and supportive, was less effective. The management and organisation of pupils was generally good, although the organisation of some throwing activities involved health and safety risks to pupils. The pace of lessons was good. High standards and expectations for the behaviour of pupils were clearly established. Pupils were highly motivated and excited about physical education, and their attitudes and behaviour were exemplary. Pupils were able to work effectively independently of the teacher. There were good opportunities for non-participants to be involved in lessons either as recorders or scorers.
188. In all lessons seen, teaching was too teacher directed with too much teacher talk and not enough opportunities for pupils to be actively involved in their own learning through exploration, problem solving, observation and evaluation of their own and others' performance. Teaching was not sufficiently directed at the differing abilities of pupils and this resulted in more talented pupils not being challenged and less able pupils not being effectively supported.
189. There is a good allocation of time at each key stage. The programme for Years 5 and 6 is effectively linked with that for Years 7 and 8. However, in Years 5 and 6, there is not an effective balance between the different type of activities, with insufficient time given to gymnastics and dance to cover the nationally required programme. There is an option programme that does not support the development of foundation skills. In Years 7 and 8, there is a very wide range of activities offered and the school should consider the impact of this for raising standards. There are schemes of work in place for the majority of activities taught and these provide good progressive planning, however, they do not relate to the four strands for physical education and do not provide guidance on teaching styles and strategies.
190. The head of department, although inexperienced, provides a dynamic and supportive leadership for class teachers. There is a well-developed philosophy for the subject and procedures within the department handbook for its effective operation. This requires further development to reflect the needs of pupils in Years 5 and 6. There is an excellent focus on health and safety with a comprehensive risk assessment in place. The department development plan is well targeted. Assessment, monitoring and recording processes need refinement to encompass the subject attainment target and the new National Curriculum

requirements. Facilities are generally good although the playing fields are poorly drained and long jump pits and cricket nets require refurbishment. There is a good range of equipment to deliver all aspects of the curriculum. There is, however, a shortage of gymnastics equipment and a range of balls and bats for pupils in Years 5 and 6.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Energetic and effective teaching.
- Enthusiastic responses by pupils.
- Careful and thoughtful leadership.
- Promotion of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education.

Areas for improvement

- Marking to help pupils make progress.
- Use of ICT to facilitate learning.
- Reporting pupils' progress to parents.

191. Standards are broadly in line with the average expectations for this age group in Years 5 and 6 and above those typically expected in Years 7 and 8. These standards are a direct result of a sustained and effective teaching strategy which challenges and enthuses most pupils.
192. By age 11, based on the quality of written work, most pupils' are achieving appropriately for their age. The oral capability of pupils demonstrated in lessons is above typical expectations. In Year 6, for example, very thoughtful work on the sense behind the story of the Prodigal Son was observed and the quality of expression significantly exceeded that achieved in written work.
193. By age 13, most pupils' written and oral work are both above the average for pupils of this age because they convey clearly their feelings about religious and social issues in very organised, sensitive and sophisticated ways. Classroom observation of potentially lower attaining pupils confirmed that their work was in line with this judgement and that the determination to understand and succeed was part of a general pattern.
194. In all years, the achievement of pupils is good. Their written work and classroom observations confirm that pupils are attentive and enthusiastic learners. They ask highly relevant and searching questions. Their written work reveals that they make good progress over time and that they respond to positive encouragement. They also respond positively to comments about incomplete work and the need for more commitment. Within lessons, pupils build up awareness quickly. This capacity is built on an obvious willingness to co-operate but also on the fact that they have been prepared for this style of learning over a period of time. Pupils' responses are sensitive, both in respecting the material and ideas being utilised as well as in terms of respecting the contributions of each other within lessons.

195. Pupils' attitudes to learning attest to the fact that teaching is good and frequently very good. Its key characteristics are secure and extensive subject knowledge, careful planning, inclusive but challenging teaching strategies, and encouraging and exciting approaches. Pupils always know the objectives behind teaching strategies. Homework is used to extend learning in a positive manner. Routine marking is relatively weak because it does not sufficiently emphasise pupils' strengths and weaknesses and ways to improve further. These aspects are also under-emphasised in reports to parents.
196. Overall, assessment procedures have become a strength since the last inspection. Pupils now have regular common assessment tasks which are graded according to a clear internal scheme. The assessment data is used effectively in the monitoring of pupils' performance and potential and to inform curriculum development. This system is accompanied by an effective pupil self-assessment procedure whereby pupils set their own targets for improvement as a result of these tests. The curriculum has relevance in the perceptions of pupils, both in the way direct spiritual messages are related to everyday living and by the exploration of wider social concerns, such as environmental protection. This results in spiritual, moral, social and cultural education being strong. However, ICT and numeracy are insufficiently emphasised.
197. Leadership and management are good. Very effective action has been taken to address the two principal weaknesses defined in the last inspection report in assessment and in the challenge offered to pupils in lessons. These have been resolved by a thoughtful and energetic leadership which has also built on the strengths identified at the time of the last inspection in areas such as the promotion of good reflective writing and the encouragement and support of lower attaining pupils.