

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **WHYTRIG COMMUNITY MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Seaton Delaval

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122335

Headteacher: Mrs P Watts

Reporting inspector: Mrs C Gillies  
20597

Dates of inspection: 14<sup>th</sup> - 15<sup>th</sup> January 2003

Inspection number: 249232

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

© Crown copyright 2003

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

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

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 to 13 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Western Avenue  
Seaton Delaval  
Whitley Bay

Postcode: NE25 0EB

Telephone number: 0191 237 1402

Fax number: 0191 237 1830

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Armstrong

Date of previous inspection: June 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		
20597	Clare Gillies	Registered inspector
9921	Pamela Blackshaw	Lay inspector
3943	Don Innes	Team inspector
18676	Roy Meakin	Team inspector

The inspection contractor was:

Bench Marque Ltd  
National Westminster Chambers  
Victoria Street  
Burnham-on-Sea  
Somerset  
TA8 1AN

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

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

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
Information about the school	
How good the school is	
What the school does well	
What could be improved	
How the school has improved since its last inspection	
Standards	
Pupils' attitudes and values	
Teaching and learning	
Other aspects of the school	
How well the school is led and managed	
Parents' and carers' views of the school	
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY</b>	
<b>WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS</b>	<b>19</b>

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

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Whytrig Community is a mixed, smaller than average middle school with over 300 pupils aged 9 to 13. The number of boys and girls is well balanced in each year. The percentage of pupils taking free school meals is above average. About 25 per cent of pupils have special educational needs, which is just below average, as is the percentage of pupils with statements of special educational needs. Over 99 per cent of pupils are white and none speaks English as an additional language. The number of pupils who enter and leave the school after the beginning of Year 5 is high. Standards on entry have varied considerably in recent years. They were average for present Year 5 pupils but well below for present Year 7 pupils. This year group has the smallest number of pupils. The social backgrounds of pupils are average overall.

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

Whytrig Community is a good school which prepares pupils well for high school and helps them to become happy, confident young people. Progress in lessons is good because teaching is good overall, with examples of very good practice in all years. Standards are average overall. Leadership by the headteacher and deputy headteacher is good. They, and the subject co-ordinators, work hard to manage the school effectively and provide pupils with a good education. The school gives good value for money.

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

- Many pupils put teachers top of their list when they describe good things about the school. Teachers respect pupils and have very good relationships with them.
- Progress in lessons is good because teaching is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics. Examples of very good practice are found in all years.
- Pupils are enthusiastic about school life and try hard in lessons. They behave very well, are considerate and well mannered and get on well together.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established and supported an effective, harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in which children learn happily.
- Extra-curricular activities are very good in sport and the school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to go on visits in the UK and abroad. The worthwhile homework club is well attended.

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

- Attendance is below average. The number of fixed-period exclusions is the same as it was at the time of the last inspection.
- Taking the last three years together, Year 6 results have been lower in science than in English and mathematics compared to national results in these subjects. Science teaching is not as exciting as it could be.
- Pupils do not yet use computers enough in subjects other than information and communication technology (ICT).

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

### **HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION (June 1997)**

The school now receives better information about pupils' standards on entry and has effective liaison with its first schools. In addition to receiving most of the pupils' end of Year 2 test results, teachers have introduced tests in Year 5, to be confident about pupils' standards and to make more accurate predictions of what Year 6 test results will be. For pupils who

took the Year 6 tests in 2002, the school's prediction, that the point scores would be lower, was accurate and the results were no surprise. There is now no unsatisfactory teaching, a considerable improvement on the last inspection, when teaching was unsatisfactory in over 12 per cent of lessons. Still, pupils do not use computers enough in subjects and this continues to be an area for development. Performance management for teachers is built in well to the school's yearly programme of monitoring and review. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is still not being met. Improvement since the last inspection, a period during which the school received two achievement awards for good results but has also had low ones, has been satisfactory overall.

## STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 6 based on Key Stage 2 average point scores in national tests in English, mathematics and science.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	2000	2001	2002	2002	
Key Stage 2 tests	A	C	E	D	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

The pupils who took the Year 6 national tests in 2000 entered the school, two years earlier, with above average standards. They were receptive, learned well and attained well above average results. Since then, the test results have dropped in English and science, but only a little in mathematics. Nevertheless, based on their attainment on entry, the pupils who took the tests in 2001 and 2002 made reasonable progress in Years 5 and 6. In both years, pupils did at least as well as expected, especially in mathematics, but the 2002 cohort especially, was not as strong academically as that of 2000. Data shows a strong link between the standards pupils attain and factors such as the percentage taking free school meals, attendance and punctuality. Year 6 in 2002, now Year 7, has the highest percentage of pupils taking free school meals, relatively low attendance, relatively high mobility and more pupils with special educational needs related to behaviour, concentration and listening skills. Present standards in Year 7, especially in writing, and in Year 5, especially in reading, are below average. In Years 6 and 8, standards in all subjects are average. In all years, standards in ICT and religious education are average. Despite the drop in 2001 and 2002, the trend in the school's Year 6 results is broadly in line with the national trend. Pupils make good progress in lessons and their achievement over time is satisfactory.

## PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Pupils have very good attitudes to school life and contribute well in lessons. They are keen to answer questions and mostly concentrate sensibly and listen to each other. They are proud of their school and enjoy wearing the badges they receive for good work and effort.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave very well in lessons and around the school and are well mannered. They welcome visitors and are happy to talk to them.



Aspect	Comment
Personal development and relationships	Pupils have very good relationships with teachers and with each other. They are considerate and kind. Pupils' self-esteem is boosted because teachers treat them with respect and listen to their opinions. Pupils are prepared well for high school and, by the end of Year 8, they become confident young people. They are aware of how unkindness affects others and how it can be dealt with.
Attendance	Below average. Holidays taken during term time are a significant factor. The number of fixed-period exclusions is the same as it was at the time of the last inspection.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Years 5 and 6	Years 7 and 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 is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics. Examples of very good practice are found in all years. Literacy and numeracy are taught well, especially in English and mathematics lessons. ICT is taught well in the discrete lessons. The school has not done enough to provide work for gifted and talented pupils, although English teachers do focus on raising gifted pupils' aspirations. Setting in mathematics means that work is at the right level for pupils but this is not always the case in other subjects. However, most teachers are fully aware of pupils' particular abilities, especially those with special educational needs. Since the last inspection, teachers' qualifications are better matched to the needs of this middle school, which spans two distinct key stages of education. Nevertheless, there are still areas, such as science, where more specialist teaching would help to raise standards. Pupils learn well in class because they put much energy into their lessons, but they do not always remember work in any detail, especially after the long summer holidays.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory. The personal, social and health education programme, which now includes citizenship topics, is well considered. Pupils do not yet use ICT enough in other subjects. They do not sing enough in music lessons and there are no regular, group, music activities outside lesson times. The time spent in lessons for Years 7 and 8 is below that recommended nationally. The statutory requirement for a daily act of collective worship is not met.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. The special educational needs co-ordinator and an effective and well-led team of learning support assistants contribute to these pupils' good progress. Arrangements to manage individual education plans, so they are practical and useful, are improving but still need further development.

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, particularly for pupils' moral and social development. The year meetings and school council encourage pupils to feel responsible for their actions. Pupils are quite aware of the difference between right and wrong. Year 8 pupils support those in Year 5 and organise popular discos. The school could do more to develop pupils' understanding of the cultural diversity in British society today, and cultures further afield, although the Year 7 study of India is a good exercise. Pupils discuss openly and sensibly the fact that the school is predominantly white.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Very good. The size of the school means that teachers know all the pupils well so pupils feel safe and secure. The very rare instances of bullying are dealt with promptly. The school is alert to those pupils and families who need extra help and provides them with good support.

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

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established and supported an effective, harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in which children learn happily. They, and the subject co-ordinators, work hard and provide all pupils with a good education. The school development plan is clear, well focused and practical. The management of mathematics is a strength which contributes to its relatively strong standards.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Satisfactory. The governors have recently decided to have more than one committee, which is sensible, especially as the school is growing, and they have rightly started to take a more active part in long-term planning. They have benefited from participating in helpful training on this. Several governors support the school by fundraising and organising activities. They have links with subjects, which is good practice, and a few visit regularly. They are fully aware of the school's strength and areas for development.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Satisfactory. With improved assessment since the last inspection and lesson observations built into the yearly programme of monitoring, the headteacher and deputy headteacher are fully aware of where teaching is particularly effective and where it could be strengthened. They now analyse pupils' progress, as well as standards, better, but have not incorporated statistical analysis of other factors, such as attendance, punctuality and behaviour patterns, to explain variations between years and different groups.

Aspect	Comment
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Financial planning is closely linked to the school's priorities, for example to buy more computers. It has also assured that all subjects have enough basic resources. By carefully seeking best value, the school has spent less than anticipated on a building project, releasing funds for other important areas. The budget is well managed and the school gives good value for money.

### PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>Over 90 per cent of parents who responded to the questionnaire stated that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• teaching is good and teachers have high expectations, so that pupils make good progress;</li> <li>• their children enjoy school and behaviour is good;</li> <li>• the school is well led and managed so their children become mature and responsible.</li> </ul>	<p>A very few parents would like to be kept better informed about their children's progress and would like the school to work more closely with them.</p>

Over 40 per cent of parents returned the questionnaire and six attended the pre-inspection parents' evening. The inspection confirmed all their positive views. There was no evidence that parents cannot contact the school easily if they wish to and the annual reports not only tell them about progress but also include advice about how pupils can improve.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL**

**Many pupils put teachers top of their list when they describe good things about the school. Teachers respect pupils and have very good relationships with them.**

1. Year 8 pupils refer confidently to the 'nice teachers, who are kind and helpful and give us just the right amount of work', and other pupils make it clear that they like having different teachers for subjects. Such compliments, expressed in many different ways, were characteristic of discussions with pupils. Top set pupils in mathematics describe it as one of their best subjects because they feel successful and that they are making good progress. Many teachers are skilful at keeping all pupils focused – they spot those who are losing concentration and quickly bring them back on board, without causing them embarrassment and without interrupting the flow of the lesson.
2. Many lessons end on a positive note and teachers are quick to praise good answers, whether for accurate spelling, perceptive or imaginative opinions to issues raised, or quick responses to mental mathematics questions. Generally, teachers are most encouraging and make it clear that learning is a two-way process. They do this by responding to pupils' comments supportively, for example 'Excellent, I didn't think of that one myself' or, 'Fair enough guess', to a sensible, but wrong, answer. A teacher handed over his own laptop to a Year 8 pupil in an ICT lesson, thereby conveying his trust and confidence in the pupil's skills. In all ICT lessons, the teachers' relaxed manner generated a mature learning atmosphere to which pupils responded very well.
3. An example of how well teachers know their pupils was seen in a Year 5 assembly when many pupils volunteered contributions to the theme of teamwork and co-operation. Much as pupils like receiving awards, the school lets them collect them privately, if they wish, rather than in assembly. This is thoughtful practice. All Year 8 pupils are offered responsibilities, for example helping with the tuck shop or running the school office before lessons start. They respond very well. Much effort goes into developing good school council practice, for example coaching pupils how to carry out elections and make speeches. The 'real game' in Year 8 is an effective introduction to the world of work, and pupils enjoy listening to outside speakers talking about how their jobs have changed.
4. The school prospectus states that the school will 'look after pupils in a caring, sensitive and fair manner' and provide a 'fair, well-understood code of discipline'. It achieves both these. The new policy covering assemblies, citizenship, religious education and personal, social and health education (PSHE) provides thoughtful guidance on how teachers should handle confidential, sensitive and controversial issues, which is good. The behaviour policy has clear rules and rewards so pupils know exactly what is expected of them; pupils much appreciate the badges they receive for good behaviour and work. A Year 6 music lesson ended with a song about the school rules, a fun way to remind pupils what they are.
5. Care for pupils with special educational needs has improved since the last inspection and the co-ordinator and learning support assistants contribute much to these pupils' progress and security. The latter check pupils' progress against their individual education plans and record progress at the end of each lesson, which is very good practice. Every full-time teacher organises at least one extra-curricular club, thus making it clear that they care about the pupils and want them to enjoy learning in its widest sense. Morning briefing

sessions for staff were stopped specifically so that teachers could be in their classrooms to greet pupils who arrive early.

**Progress in lessons is good because teaching is good overall, particularly in English and mathematics. Examples of very good practice are found in all years.**

6. English teachers have incorporated the National Literacy Strategy well, often ending lessons sharing thoughts about the lesson as they discuss what has been learned. Mathematics teachers are clearly confident with the National Numeracy Strategy, and its impact on standards is evident. The best English and mathematics lessons were characterised by several tasks for which pupils were given a short amount of time so they had to concentrate. Such a brisk pace generates enthusiasm. It is clear that very careful planning underpins these effective lessons. A humanities lesson in Year 5 and several ICT lessons were also successful because pupils were given realistic time limits to complete tasks.
7. In English, seating boys and girls alternately works well, as does grouping pupils by ability. In mathematics, setted groups (four in Years 5 and 6) make good progress and pupils learn well. Learning support assistants contribute much to lessons, for example asking pertinent questions when working with small groups in English, or helping pupils who find multiplication tables difficult in mathematics. In a very good Year 8 English lesson, pupils appreciated how to highlight and annotate text, an important skill to master. Quick spelling tests remind pupils what they have studied in previous lessons.
8. A characteristic of many very good lessons was the teachers' infectious enthusiasm which generated interest and concentration. This was particularly the case in a Year 8 mathematics lesson where top set pupils showed their grasp of co-ordinates and quadrants by describing lines in equation form. In a Year 5 mathematics lesson, the teacher's vitality and thorough preparation meant that pupils' confidence and competence in multiplying double-digit numbers were very good. A careful balance between repetition of previous work and new knowledge was achieved. The teacher used skilful questions to identify reasons for misunderstanding by discussing incorrect answers.
9. In a Year 6 lower set lesson, a lack of fluency with multiplication tables slowed down progress but the teacher picked up common weaknesses working with individuals and used them as a focus for all – an effective technique. The lively and infectious humour of a teacher in design and technology, combined with thorough preparation, meant that the impetus of the lesson stayed high throughout and learning was very good. In a Year 7 physical education lesson, meticulous planning, combined with the teacher's clear enjoyment of the activity on orienteering, directly stimulated very good learning.
10. In an exciting art and design lesson on mask designs, the teacher quietly maintained attention and interest by checking each pupil's progress and prompting ideas where needed. Pupils were encouraged to evaluate their own and others' work, which they did well. In music, pupils have very helpful lists to guide their compositions, for example on rap in Year 7. In a Year 8 design and technology lesson on production styles, pupils soon appreciated the difference between handmade and mass production by working independently and in groups and comparing the finished signs produced. The homework to research Henry Ford interested the pupils. In these lessons, and all the ICT lessons observed, the teachers' subject confidence was a significant factor in their success. French lessons are taken by fluent speakers who use imaginative ways to make learning fun, for example Year 6 pupils planning a fashion show which they will perform, or Year 8 pupils using individual whiteboards studying weather forecasts.

**Pupils are enthusiastic about school life and try hard in lessons. They behave very well, are considerate and well mannered and get on well together.**

11. In English, pupils listen attentively to each other and the teachers. In Year 5, they use dictionaries and, in Year 6, thesauruses, competently. Many Year 5 pupils work sensibly without direct supervision but equally enjoy working in groups, for example identifying significant words in a passage. If someone does not understand something, pupils automatically help each other; this was particularly evident in ICT lessons, where they have to share computers. They are able to evaluate their education, for example making perceptive comments about the humanities: 'Don't like them because we just get into something, and it's interesting, and then we have to move on'. A desire to study in depth is commendable at a young age. A valuable course for Years 7 and 8 called Learning to Learn has been introduced this year, which will further help these pupils when they move on to high school.
12. Pupils are keen to please their teachers. They are very honest doing experiments in science, and write down their original predictions, even if they know they are wrong because they have already done the experiment. They get out equipment safely. In art and design, pupils are trusted to move about looking at each other's work and they collect and organise their resources sensibly. They evaluate each other's music compositions respectfully but are not afraid to say what they think. Pupils put much physical energy into their physical education lessons, for example preparing dances in Year 6. In a Year 7 lesson, they cheerfully applauded those who had given demonstrations.
13. Year 5 pupils confidently state that they like middle school better than first school, because they see 'more teachers, there's less bullying and it's larger'. These pupils enjoyed discussing citizenship and know that they are citizens, and mentioned elderly citizens who need care. Indeed, one of the five key messages about PSHE in a Year 6 classroom is about helping hands and, on numerous occasions, pupils helped each other willingly.
14. The caretaker reports that vandalism or unacceptable behaviour are very rare. Auditions for a future school production generated great excitement, though pupils waited sensibly for their turn to perform. When a tape failed to play properly in a Year 8 meeting, the pupils sat extremely patiently without any fuss. The lunch-time queues are calm, which is most commendable as pupils have to line up outside, even when it is cold.
15. Fundraising is an important part of pupils' development and the school does this enthusiastically, for example running raffles or quizzes at lunch-time. Last year, just under £2000 was raised for a wide range of national and foreign charities, which is a commendable sum considering the size of the school. The most is made of these collections, with photographs and thank you letters pinned up for pupils to see. Above all, pupils are articulate, cheerful and uninhibited when they talk to adults.

**The headteacher and deputy headteacher have established and supported an effective, harmonious and purposeful atmosphere in which children learn happily.**

16. The school is rarely silent during lessons but, in every class, pupils enjoy working and know that they are expected to concentrate. They can sense, and respond well, to the fact that the staff get on well together and respect each other. When the deputy headteacher took an assembly about people working together, based on a reading of the interdependence of parts of the body, there was a cheerful moment when the pupils considered whether the headteacher was a separate part of the school community, or should be considered as a teacher. Pupils are aware of the leadership hierarchy but

equally appreciate how essential all the staff are. In the entrance hall, photographs of all the staff greet visitors. The caretaker, catering and administration staff not only contribute to the good management of the school but also its high expectations of behaviour and politeness.

17. The headteacher has worked hard to improve the physical environment, which is not easy as some of the buildings are not in a good state of repair. Large areas are carpeted and most walls have attractive displays. The exciting marble art paintings in the hall or the pottery and design and technology chair in the entrance hall, are not only of a high standard, but bright and interesting. Although they needed a great deal of prompting, Year 8 pupils described the community features of the school badge with pride and understanding. The headteacher has successfully focused on improving computer facilities and improvements are imminent.
18. The teaching staff has a good gender balance and a useful range of very experienced as well as younger teachers. The headteacher leads the school well and makes very good appointments. She makes sure all staff feel appreciated and valued. Newly qualified teachers feel well supported and encouraged and longer serving teachers value their input. The headteacher has used performance management as an effective tool to support and develop staff. Whether together or separately, staff attend courses which are relevant to learning, for example on behaviour management.
19. In a Year 8 year meeting, a teacher encouraged pupils to share any concerns they had, and offered ways for them to do this privately. He urged them to make the most of everything on offer at the school and rounded off the discussion time with an encouraging 'As usual, we go forth and learn'. This made a good start to the day as well as fostering the community spirit. Reference was made to the school council and the buddy system. Both of these are developing well, and pupils appreciated that the school council is democracy and citizenship in action. In the improving teaching and learning section of the school development plan, the headteacher describes the introduction of questionnaires for pupils about their learning experiences at Whytrig. This is a valuable exercise as it will add another useful dimension to how teachers evaluate their lessons.
20. On one morning a week, the assembly, taken by the headteacher, is followed by a lesson called assembly development. This mainly focuses on religious education, such as Christianity in Year 5, or Divali in Year 7, but also, combined with the PSHE lesson, addresses citizenship and moral issues. Despite the limited time and depth of study, it is good that Year 6 pupils complete an application form for an imaginary company, or that Year 7 pupils consider their rights and responsibilities, and democracy in the local council. Written work showed some thoughtful comments on developing moral ideas and values. Year 8 pupils discuss racism without embarrassment. Many pupils are fully aware of the fact that the predominantly white school population does not mirror the racial composition of many parts of the United Kingdom.
21. The governing body is tightening its organisation and it is clear that several governors are committed, keen and prepared to visit the school regularly and involve themselves in school life. The headteacher and governing body work well together and it is good that the headteacher welcomes their comments and observations on all aspects of school life. The 'friends of Whytrig' are very active, helping to organise a range of events and performances. This sort of external support generates the strong community spirit in the school. The first aim of the school is to 'produce happy, confident and enquiring children, who are interested and enthusiastic about life's challenges'. The headteacher and deputy headteacher have successfully made this aim the reality.

**Extra-curricular activities are very good in sport and the school provides valuable opportunities for pupils to go on visits in the UK and abroad. The worthwhile homework club is well attended.**

22. There is a very good range of sporting and athletic activities, supported by an unusually high proportion of staff. Almost every pupil is involved in at least one extra-curricular activity each week. Basketball, girls' and boys' football, table tennis and netball were on offer during the inspection and, at other times of the year, there is a running club, athletics, cricket, volleyball and rugby. Some training sessions are helped by professional coaches.
23. In addition to theatre visits and leisure activities (such as Wet'n Wild or Metroland), many pupils go to France once, and London twice, during their four years in the school. Year 5 pupils visit Ambleside and Year 6 pupils go to Winnmarleigh in Lancashire for computer/outdoor activities. Helped by parents, Year 8 pupils organise popular discos, both for fun and to raise money for charity. Pupils can join in the ski trip to Voss in Norway organised by the local education authority. Lively displays of photographs celebrate these visits and trips and cheer up the long corridors.
24. Parents speak enthusiastically about the homework club which pupils also find very helpful. Pupils enjoy working on homework together, for example sharing information they have downloaded from the Internet. They also appreciate having extra support for mathematics, which they can get every day if they wish. Other useful clubs include chess, book sharing, keyboards, drums, drama, art, indoor games, ICT and gardening.

## **WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED**

**Attendance is below average. The number of fixed period exclusions is the same as at the time of the last inspection.**

25. Attendance at the school, at just over 90 per cent, is very low and the rate of authorised absence is too high. Attendance has dropped significantly since the last inspection, when it was over 94 per cent. The school has not focused on raising attendance enough and this issue does not feature in the school's overview of its development plan for 2002 to 2005. A number of pupils have had long-term sick leave or long-term absence, but the school has not assured itself that this is the only reason for the poor attendance figures. On the first day of absence, the school does not automatically telephone parents to find out why the child is away. The vital importance of attendance and punctuality for good learning and achievement is not drummed into parents regularly. A significant number of parents take their children on holiday during term time. Pupils are now aware that absence of more than three days is taken seriously.
26. Attendance and punctuality vary considerably between forms in the same year and between years. Notices showing different year and form group attendance are not displayed to celebrate good figures and highlight disappointing ones. In the present Year 5, one form has considerably lower attendance than the other two. Attendance in Year 7 often falls below 90 per cent, and was lower when these pupils were in Year 6. This was one of several factors contributing to the below average standards, particularly for a few individuals who did not turn up regularly.
27. The number of fixed-term exclusions has not changed since the last inspection, but now there are no permanent ones. Apart from one related to a racist incident, practically all the exclusions during the last academic year were for disruptive behaviour in lessons, hence the school's focus on assertive discipline training for staff. When it is necessary, pupils



have two weeks on report, with targets for improvement, followed by a further four weeks, if necessary, before an exclusion takes place. When external support has been available, it has been effective. A number of pupils were excluded more than once, so the headteacher realises the strategy needs to be reviewed.

**Taking the last three years together, Year 6 results have been lower in science than in English and mathematics compared to national results in these subjects. Science teaching is not as exciting as it could be.**

28. Nationally, pupils attain higher point scores in science than mathematics, but the opposite was the case in the school in 2002. Pupils' science results were 2 points below the national average, compared to 1.5 points below in English and 0.3 points below in mathematics. Girls' performance was relatively lower than boys'. In a few lessons observed during the inspection, girls, who tend to sit at the back of the laboratory, did not contribute as much as boys. Boys are enthusiastic about the practical work but do not enjoy writing up their experiments. Middle and lower attainers occasionally leave work incomplete and ignore requests by teachers to finish it.
29. In several lessons during the inspection, too long was spent on the central practical activity, so that a few pupils became restless. Year 5 pupils enjoyed changing the length of a twanged ruler, or elastic over a box, to test how pitch can be altered, but they were not given enough time to summarise and see the links between these activities and the general principles involved. Year 6 pupils spent too long predicting how different electrical circuits affect the brightness of bulbs, so the enthusiasm they showed at the beginning of the lesson was not sustained and the wonder value of the topic was lost.
30. A missing ingredient of several science lessons was an emphasis on the relevance and point of doing a test or experiment. Although they listened to a violin playing high and low notes at the beginning of the lesson on pitch, Year 5 pupils would have learned more about shortening strings if they had seen, as well as heard, the violin, or alternatively one of the school's guitars, having its strings altered and plucked. The potential fun of this topic was not obvious. Examining thermal energy transfers in Year 8, the lesson never focused on why it matters that different metals behave differently, or what the practical uses of aluminium or copper are, for example in the kitchen. Work in books shows that pupils do follow exercises linked to practical applications, for example excellent work in Year 7 relating body parts to types of medical help required; such links need to be constantly reinforced in lessons.
31. Apart from the co-ordinator, science is taught by non-specialists. They clearly prepare their lessons and apply their generic teaching skills well. However, the confidence to deal with pupils' interesting and probing questions is hard without in-depth understanding of the subject and experience of how best to simplify complex topics. A Year 7 teacher could not have been more enthusiastic as she described and acted out the earth's path around the sun, but she acknowledged she did not feel confident about the topic. Diagrams in pupils' books were not accurate enough, with the sun appearing to be overhead at the Arctic Circle.
32. The National Science Strategy is being studied carefully by the co-ordinator. This should help teachers to teach classes where pupils' attainment varies, for example from Level 3 to Level 5 in the same group. The co-ordinator has not directed teachers carefully enough about which misspellings are to be corrected, or ignored. Scientific words are not always corrected, for example misspelling of 'potassium' in Year 8, or 'prediction' in Year 7. The subject's plans for 2002 to 2003 refer to 'inclusion of the literacy strategy into science' and this needs to be addressed soon. The plans also state that 'each bench is to have an

available computer' by September 2002, but there was no evidence of this, although pupils have used digital microscopes successfully.

**Pupils do not yet use computers enough in subjects other than information and communication technology.**

33. The school has rightly highlighted 'encouraging curriculum leaders into the ICT room' and 'pushing ICT forward into subject areas' in its development plan for 2002 to 2003. Subject co-ordinators also highlight this area in their plans. In discussion with pupils in all years, the only subject where they feel they have used ICT helpfully is English – mainly for wordprocessing. They would like to use ICT in other subjects, particularly mathematics, but rarely do. As their general computer competence is developed well in the discrete lessons and the technology carousel lessons, pupils have the potential to apply these skills quickly in other lessons. The very good teaching seen in the discrete ICT lessons has not yet been shared enough with other teachers.
34. Without appreciating the link, an exercise on Excel spreadsheets in an ICT lesson covered some significant citizenship elements. Pupils analysed data about income in rich and poor countries of the world. Thus, subject knowledge can be supported by ICT, but subject-specific software should be used in lessons as well. Several subjects, such as music, have already purchased relevant software (Cubasis and Composer Notes), but with only one computer in the music room it is difficult for many pupils to use it.
35. All teachers use computers confidently and all have completed useful training recently. However, a few need encouragement and support to use ICT with classes, although most subject co-ordinators have selected areas of the curriculum where using computers would be helpful. The pupil to computer ratio is below the national average although plans are in place to upgrade the ICT room computers, to distribute the older computers around the school and to create a second computer room close to the Years 5 and 6 classrooms.

**WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?**

36. In order to raise standards in the school, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

**(1) Persevere with efforts to raise attendance to at least average by:**

- a) following up absences on the first day;
- b) analysing patterns of attendance, for example by day of the week and form group and responding to the information generated;
- c) presenting to parents and pupils the close correlation between high standards and good punctuality and attendance;
- d) reinforcing the message that holidays during term time interrupt pupils' learning and achievement;
- e) persevering with all efforts to get long-term absent pupils to return to school, especially working with outside agencies to support the families;
- f) applying rigorously the criteria for authorised and unauthorised absence.

**(Paragraphs 25-27)**

**(2) Focus on raising standards in science by:**

- a) breaking up lessons into more sections so pupils do not spend too long on tests or experiments;
- b) introducing work by discussing its relevance to everyday life and pupils' experiences;
- c) considering, for the long term, how to have more specialist teaching;
- d) reinforcing concepts and facts regularly;
- e) making sure that girls always contribute as much as boys;
- f) concentrating on how the subject supports literacy and numeracy.

**(Paragraphs 28 to 32)**

**(3) Ensure that pupils use computers in subjects other than information and communication technology by:**

- a) helping teachers to feel confident using their laptops in the classroom;
- b) monitoring where good practice exists and sharing this between teachers;
- c) continuing with the upgrade of the ICT room computers and distribution of older computers to raise the total number of computers in the school.

**(Paragraphs 33 to 35)**

**In addition to the above, the governors, headteacher and deputy headteacher should consider including the following in the action plan (all mentioned in the summary):**

- Planning more work and activities for gifted and talented pupils.
- Increasing the amount of taught time in Years 7 and 8, so it is closer to the national recommendation.
- Broadening pupils' experience of cultural diversity in British society.
- Introducing singing more often in music lessons and working towards having more, regular extra-curricular musical activities.
- Incorporating analysis of factors such as attendance, punctuality and behaviour patterns into evaluation of standards and progress.
- Tightening up management of individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs – how they are devised and delivered and how targets are defined.

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

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

Number of lessons observed	31
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	34

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	1	7	16	7	0	0	0
Percentage	3	22.5	52	22.5	0	0	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 three percentage points.

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	316
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	50

Special educational needs	Y5 – Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	59

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	14
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	16

### Attendance

#### Authorised absence

	%
School data	9.2

#### Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.3

National comparative data	6.1
---------------------------	-----

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	37	68

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	17	23	24
	Girls	28	27	27
	Total	45	50	51
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	66 (83)	74 (75)	75 (87)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	20	20	25
	Girls	27	25	28
	Total	47	45	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	69 (80)	66 (77)	78 (77)
	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***

<b>Categories used in the Annual School Census</b>	<b>No of pupils on roll</b>	<b>Number of fixed period exclusions</b>	<b>Number of permanent exclusions</b>
White – British	315	10	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	1	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background	0	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	0	0	0
Black or Black British – African	0	0	0
Black or Black British – any other Black background	0	0	0
Chinese	0	0	0
Any other ethnic group	0	0	0
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

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

### ***Financial information***

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

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	15.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

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

Total number of education support staff	6
Total aggregate hours worked per week	119

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

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	83
---	----

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

Key Stage 2	25
Key Stage 3	24.5

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

Financial year	2001-2002
----------------	-----------

	£
Total income	681,915
Total expenditure	670,661
Expenditure per pupil	2,329
Balance brought forward from previous year	27,850
Balance carried forward to next year	39,104

### ***Recruitment of teachers***

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	1
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	2
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	1
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*



## Results of the survey of parents and carers

### Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	316
Number of questionnaires returned	127

### Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	57	39	2	2	1
My child is making good progress in school.	51	44	1	3	1
Behaviour in the school is good.	41	51	5	1	2
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34	52	11	2	1
The teaching is good.	51	40	2	3	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	43	44	6	5	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	29	4	3	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	26	2	2	2
The school works closely with parents.	39	47	9	4	2
The school is well led and managed.	44	46	3	3	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	46	2	2	3
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	51	40	2	2	5