

INSPECTION REPORT

ATKINSON HOUSE SCHOOL

Seghill, Northumberland

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 132771

Head teacher: Mr R McGlasham

Reporting inspector: Mr D Smith
17323

Dates of inspection: 17th – 19th March 2003

Inspection number: 249455

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community Special
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Male
School address:	North Terrace Seghill Cramlington Northumberland
Postcode:	NE23 7EB
Telephone number:	0191 2980838
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E Harvey
Date of previous inspection:	No previous inspection

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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17323	Mr D Smith	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
			English as an additional language	The school's results and pupils' achievements?
				How well are the pupils taught?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What the school should do to improve further?
13462	Mrs R Mothersdale	Lay inspector		How well does the school care for its pupils?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
				Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development?
22466	Mrs D Pearson	Team inspector	Mathematics	
			Design and technology	
			Modern Foreign Language	
			Physical education	
10760	Mrs P Clark	Team inspector	Geography	
			History	
			Religious education	
			Personal social and health education	
			Citizenship	
21397	Ms I Bradbury	Team inspector	English	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
			Art	
			Information and communication technology	
			Music	
			Education inclusion	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Atkinson House is a day community special school for boys aged between 11 and 16. There are currently 39 pupils on roll and the school has the capacity for 40 pupils. The school opened in September 2000 and the majority of the pupils transferred from another special school that closed. All of the pupils have statements of special educational need as a result of their emotional and behavioural difficulties. Pupils' attainment on entry is low because their behavioural and learning difficulties have impeded their progress and it is therefore inappropriate to compare their attainment with national averages. Twenty four of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, over 60 per cent, which is a high percentage. The school also has a significant number of pupils who are Looked After. All of the pupils live in the County of Northumberland and some have a considerable distance to travel to school. On leaving school many pupils attend a college in their home area, others gain employment or further training. There are no pupils from ethnic minorities or for whom English is an additional language.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Atkinson House is an improving school with satisfactory leadership and management but is not yet fully effective. In establishing the school there has been unsatisfactory pupil attendance, particularly amongst those pupils who transferred from the other school. However, this is now improving and is good for the younger pupils. Initially there were a large number of fixed term exclusions but exclusions are now decreasing. The head teacher and staff understand the importance of continual improvements in these essential areas. The school has focussed initially on the introduction of good behaviour management systems. They understand the need and are taking appropriate action, to develop an effective senior management team and long term planning to guide the future direction of the school. The quality of teaching and learning is satisfactory overall and good for the pupils up to the age of 14. Pupils make good progress in English across the school. There is insufficient challenge in the level of external accreditation for the more able older pupils. The quality and range of the curriculum, for pupils in the last two years of full time education, is satisfactory, providing a good work related curriculum. It is unsatisfactory for pupils up to the age of 14 because some aspects of the National Curriculum are not included. The school's comprehensive assessment policy is not used consistently. There is unsatisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities and the lunch break is too short for the pupils to take a meaningful part in clubs or activities. The school has a good partnership with the parents. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

What the school does well

- The quality of teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14 is good and they make good progress in their learning.
- The provision of English in the school is very good making effective use of the National Literacy Strategy and the pupils make good progress in their English.
- The work related curriculum is good and the older pupils in school respond well to this provision.
- The policies and procedures for behaviour management and moral development are good and when applied consistently are effective.
- Parent's views of the school are positive and the school has a good partnership with them.
- The special support assistants make a very positive contribution to the education of the pupils, helping to promote the good progress that they make.

What could be improved

- The provision and management of a broad and balanced curriculum.
- The opportunities provided to enrich the pupils' social and cultural development.
- The levels of pupils' attendance across the school, to boost pupils' progress, particularly for the older pupils.
- The overall leadership and management in the school.
- The attainment of the pupils by the time they reach statutory school leaving age.
- The management and use of the school's comprehensive assessment policy across the school.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

This is the first Ofsted Inspection for Atkinson House School as it is a new school that opened in September 2000 and therefore there is no basis to make a long-term judgement on the school's progress.

STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets.

Progress in:	by Year 9	by Year 11	Key	
speaking and listening	B	B	very good	A
reading	B	B	good	B
writing	B	B	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	C	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	C	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	B	C		

** IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

The head teacher has collected the relevant data but as yet whole school targets have not been set. Pupils, in general, make satisfactory progress in lessons and the pupils up to the age of 14 make good progress. Teacher assessments, for many of the pupils at the age of 14, indicate that they have the potential to achieve some good passes in their General Certificates of Secondary Education. This level of ability is also evident in some of their work but not consistently across all of the subjects. The progress made by some of the older pupils has been adversely affected by their poor attendance. Overall, standards of achievement are good in English, reflecting the successful introduction of the

National Literacy Strategy. The school places a high priority on the development of the pupils' reading skills and this is evident in the pupils' confidence and abilities in their reading. Progress in writing is good across the school as the teacher's good planning extends the quality and range of their writing. The pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills especially when the teacher's very good use of questions extends the responses of the pupils. Pupils, up to the age of 14, make good progress in the development of their mathematical skills whilst the older pupils make satisfactory progress. Achievements in science are satisfactory and the pupils respond well to the opportunities to be involved in practical work. The pupils make good progress in information and communication technology particularly when using the well-resourced computer suite. Pupils, on the whole, make satisfactory progress in their personal, social and health education although this is good for the pupils up to the age of 14. The pupils are well aware of their own targets and the younger pupils make good progress towards them, whilst the older pupils make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	The pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory and most take pride in wearing their school uniform. They are generally keen to learn and take part in lessons. When provided with activities, such as playing football, the pupils respond enthusiastically.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils' behaviour is satisfactory and the incidence of pupil exclusion is falling, following an initial period of high exclusions. Behaviour is unsatisfactory when there is inconsistent use of the school's behaviour management systems.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships in the school are satisfactory, overall, although they are particularly good between the support staff and pupils.
Attendance	Attendance is unsatisfactory and well below that of similar schools nationally, although it is improving and good for the younger pupils.

When the teaching is very good the pupils listen and concentrate for long periods of time. The special support assistants are particularly good at helping the pupils to remain calm during the lessons. Most of the pupils respond well to the good range of behavioural incentives in the school. There are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to develop their social skills but when activities are available, for example, the opportunity to play football during a break, the pupils respond well. The breakfast club does provide a good opportunity for the pupils' social development and the pupils sit and chat quietly. With less structure the pupils do find it difficult to relate to each other and although they have a full understanding of the impact of their behaviour they will at times choose to ignore the feelings of others.

The pupils are given insufficient opportunities to develop the use of their personal initiative or accept responsibilities appropriate to their age. Relationships between the staff and pupils are good but opportunities to extend this into extra-curricular activities are lost.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

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

Quality of teaching	Good	Satisfactory
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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.

The quality of teaching is satisfactory, on the whole, with some very good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14 is good. The quality of teaching in English is good following the successful introduction of the literacy strategy. Teaching is good in mathematics for the younger pupils and satisfactory for the older pupils. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, overall, with some good teaching for the younger pupils. When teaching is very good, the lessons are well planned and the teaching is firmly based on a thorough knowledge of the subject. Expectations of the work and the behaviour of the pupils are very high and made clear to them. Teamwork and the contribution of the special support assistants are a strength of the very good lessons. The good teaching clearly builds on pupils' previous learning and is planned to meet the full range of pupils' abilities. The pupils make the best progress when the school's behaviour management systems are consistently applied. At times, expectations, particularly for the more able and older pupils, are too low. The use of homework to support the pupils' work in class is unsatisfactory. Pupils make unsatisfactory progress when their unsatisfactory behaviour impedes their learning and they are taught by a non-specialist teacher.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in the last two years of full time education is satisfactory and there is a good work related curriculum. It is unsatisfactory for pupils up to the age of 14 because some aspects of the National Curriculum are not fully included, for example art and design and music. There is unsatisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities and the lunch break is too short for the pupils to take a meaningful part in clubs or activities.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	The provision for pupils' personal development is satisfactory. It is good for the pupils' moral development and satisfactory for their spiritual development. The provision for the pupils' social and cultural development is unsatisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Procedures for assessing pupils' progress are good, although they are used inconsistently and therefore, the use of assessment to inform planning is only satisfactory. Procedures for monitoring and promoting appropriate behaviour are good. Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school provides good procedures for monitoring and supporting pupils' personal development.

The school has a good partnership with parents. Art and design and music are experienced rather than being fully taught to the younger pupils and these unsatisfactory aspects of the curriculum provision are due to problems in recruiting a specialist teacher. The school offers a good range of external accreditation for the older pupils but these are taught at too low a level for the more able pupils. The school has placed a high priority on promoting pupils' moral development and encouraging good behaviour. There are limited opportunities for the enhancement of the pupils' social development or the extension of their interests. The school's assessment policy is comprehensive but is not

consistently used by some of the teachers. When assessment is secure, for example in the teaching of English, it effectively informs planning and the pupils make good progress.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Satisfactory. This is a new school and they have placed a strong and clear emphasis on developing good behaviour management systems and now see the need to place a greater emphasis on the curriculum. There is insufficient delegation by the head teacher and the quality of the management of subjects is variable.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Satisfactory. Despite not having a full complement of governors the governing body has an appropriate range of committees. They maintain their involvement in the school and work hard in the best interests of the pupils. They are fully involved in planning and have a satisfactory understanding of the strengths and areas for development in the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Unsatisfactory. The head teacher has gathered the appropriate information but the school does not yet set or work towards whole school targets. Planning is effective in the short-term but there is no long-term plan to shape the future direction of the school. Monitoring of the quality of teaching is in place and needs to be extended.
The strategic use of resources	Satisfactory. Accommodation is good and the quality and range of the resources are adequate. The challenge of recruiting a specialist teacher is affecting the capacity of the school to teach certain areas of the curriculum. The teachers have not used the New Opportunities Funding for training in the teaching of information and communication technology. The school ensures that it follows the principles of Best Value, for example, comparing prices when purchasing goods and services.

The senior management team does not make an effective contribution to the leadership of the school and there is the need to delegate increased responsibility and accountability from the head teacher. Some subjects, including English, are well managed and provide a good model for the work of the other subject co-ordinators. The governing body are at full stretch, partly due to their inability to recruit members from within the school's staff. However, they get to know the staff and pupils by fulfilling a range of their responsibilities, including oversight of a specific group of pupils. The large carry forward from the last financial year is clearly linked to money allocated as a start up fund for the new school. Although there is sufficient staff to meet the needs of the pupils difficulties in recruiting specialist staff for art and design and music leads to weaknesses in the provision of these subjects. The special support assistants provide a high quality service and are a strength of the school. New members of staff are effectively inducted into the school. The school secretary provides very effective support in the day-to-day management of the school. The school provides satisfactory value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The effective partnership and links between school and home.• Their child likes school.• That the pupils' achievements in school are valued.• That the school is well managed and parents are confident to talk to the staff.• The information provided by the school.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Many parents would like their children to be given more work to be done at home.• Some parents are not sure about the range of activities provided outside of lesson time.

The inspectors agree that there is a good partnership between the parents and the school. The information provided by the school, including weekly reports, is good. The provision of homework is unsatisfactory and opportunities are lost to support the progress that the pupils make in class. The provision of extra-curricular activities is unsatisfactory and this limits the social development of the pupils. Inspectors feel that there are areas for improvement in leadership and management.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1 The pupils have emotional and behavioural difficulties and this, combined with the fact that some pupils have learning difficulties, means that on the whole their attainment is below that expected for their age. However, based on teacher assessments and the pupils' work it is clear that many of the pupils are capable of more challenging levels of external accreditation. The pupils, up to the age of 14 have good attendance and are making good progress in their learning. However, the older pupils on the whole have poor school attendance and this means that some of the pupils' progress is unsatisfactory.

2 The head teacher has collected the relevant information, but as yet the school has not set whole school targets. Achievements in English are good reflecting the positive introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. These achievements have been encouraged by the very good management of the subject, thorough planning, good teaching and the very good work of the special support assistants. The pupils' speaking and listening skills are developing well and the pupils, up to the age of 14 listen carefully to instructions, poems and songs. They are able to listen carefully and answer questions accurately. By the age of 16 the pupils continue to make good progress and are able to talk with confidence in a wide range of situations, including taking part in positive conversations in college and on work placements. The daily reading sessions and high priority placed on reading in the school supports the development of the pupils' reading skills well. By the age of 14 the more able pupils are confident readers, can follow their text accurately and have a good understanding of the information they read. By the age of 16, the pupils continue to make good progress in their reading and can use information effectively, for example from newspapers and relate this to every-day life. High expectations in the teaching of English ensure that the pupils make good progress in their writing throughout the school. The pupils' extended writing develops over time and there is a good level of support that successfully improves the accuracy and quality of the pupils' writing. The pupils have yet to attain at an appropriate level in their external accreditation.

3 In mathematics, the pupils, up to the age of 14, make good progress whilst the older pupils make satisfactory progress. Most of the younger pupils confidently use calculators and are able to work out the area of complex shapes. The pupils' work is carefully planned to meet their needs and this does promote good learning by the pupils. The pupils aged 14 to 16 are challenged to make progress but over-time their poor attendance limits their achievements as some of the pupils are capable of good passes in their General Certificate of Secondary Education..

4 Pupils, on the whole, make satisfactory progress in science, although the pupils, up to the age of 14, make good progress. Previous teacher assessments in science indicate that there has been room for improvement in the progress that pupils make in science but there has been progress in pupils' learning during recent months. Pupils, up to the age of 14, can use accurate scientific names for the major organs of the body. They can also correctly use a range of chemical symbols. The older pupils have investigated the properties of a spring, as the load on it is increased. They have a clear understanding of the acidity and alkalinity of soils and how this affects plant growth. Pupils respond well to the opportunity to be involved in practical work but too few opportunities are provided for the pupils to extend their learning through investigations.

5 In information and communication technology the pupils make good progress, particularly when using the well-equipped computer suite. Information and communication technology is well used

to support pupils' learning in some subjects such as English, mathematics and French. However, the fact that the teachers have not taken advantage of the New Opportunity Funding for training in information and communication technology has contributed to the unsatisfactory use of this aspect in some subjects. From the evidence in the pupils' books and teacher's planning, the pupils up to the age of 14 make satisfactory progress in religious education. The older pupils make unsatisfactory progress in this subject due to their lack of interest. Pupils' achievements in personal, social, health and citizenship education are satisfactory, on the whole, although they are good for pupils up to the age of 14.

6 The pupils are making good progress in their physical education as good teaching is combined with the constructive use of local facilities. The pupils make satisfactory progress in design and technology, history and French. However unsatisfactory progress is made in art and music due to the problems in appointing a teacher. In geography, the standard of the pupils' previous work is unsatisfactory although a new co-ordinator is determined to raise the profile of the subject in the school.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

7 The pupils' attitudes to school are satisfactory, they are keen to learn, and participate in lessons. Relationships in the school are satisfactory, overall, although they are particularly good between the support staff and the pupils. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to develop their initiative and to take responsibility and this is unsatisfactory. Time is used well during daily tutor group time when the members of staff have the opportunity to provide support and guidance to the pupils.

8 Pupils who attend the school are enthusiastic about being in school, although there is a high rate of absence that occurs, particularly in the two final years of school. Where the teaching is very good the pupils concentrate for long periods of time, such as, when watching a video on blood sports in English. They watch quietly, make notes about their opinions and are given time to reflect on these, which they do very well. Support staff are particularly good in helping pupils to remain calm during lessons, or if necessary, giving them time to talk about their problems and return to the classroom ready to learn.

9 The pupils' behaviour is generally satisfactory in class. Where the teachers' behaviour management is very good, they are firm and patient and have high expectations. For example, during a physical education lesson, the teacher does not start an activity until all the pupils are listening, and the approach to the pupils is consistent. There are very clear agreed guidelines on behaviour and the pupils understand them well. When behaviour is unsatisfactory, the members of staff do not insist on high standards of behaviour or apply the well-understood sanctions consistently. There are opportunities for pupils to earn points that are exchangeable for privileges, such as a game of pool at break time. There is a good display showing the head teacher's awards scores for each pupil and these are linked to particularly good work and this does help to motivate the pupils. Each pupil has targets for a range of behavioural objectives, which are written on the sheets marked at the end of each lesson, allowing them to earn points. Twice a year, new targets are set for the pupils' individual behaviour plans and the pupils' records show good progress over time in reaching the objectives set for them and this has a positive impact on their behaviour. The level of exclusions is now satisfactory as the rate of exclusions is falling. The pupils involved in the exclusions, this academic year, are no longer on the school's role and there have been no permanent exclusions this year. This is an improvement since the previous academic year. There were no incidents of bullying or oppressive behaviour observed during the inspection.

10 There is insufficient time during the school day for the pupils to develop their personal and social skills. At break times, the pupils play pool co-operatively or enjoy a game of football, with staff, on the school field. The well-managed informal game of football, seen during the inspection demonstrated that the pupils responded positively to the opportunity to work as a team and to develop their individual skills. The breakfast club provides a good opportunity for social development and the pupils sit and chat quietly with each other. It also provides opportunities for the staff to chat with the pupils in a relaxed, informal manner and is a calm, quiet start to the day. Lunch times are well organised, pupils sit with their friends and are polite to visitors. They queue in an orderly manner for their lunches and clear the table efficiently at the end of the meal before a brief break outside. However, break times, particularly lunchtime, when the pupils have at most 15 minutes outside are too short to extend any activities and this limits the provision for the pupils' personal development. A tuck shop is available for the pupils at break times when they can buy as much as they want. They often have respect for the feelings, values and beliefs of others; for example, when one pupil decided that there was 'good and bad' aspects to fox hunting during an English lesson, the other pupils listened with respect and accepted his point of view well. There are times when the pupils do find it difficult to co-operate with each other and there is a tension in their relationships. They are well aware of the impact of their actions on others and know when they are doing something that is contrary to the school's rules or disrupting other pupils in class.

11 Attendance is unsatisfactory and well below that of similar schools, although it is improving and good for pupils up to the age of 14. Most of the unauthorised absences take place in Years 10 and 11, a large proportion of the pupils already had poor attendance before joining the school. In the last reported year, 2001/2002, on average only two thirds of the pupils were in the school at any one time. The number of exclusions carried out by the school is falling. Pupils are generally punctual to school and nearly all arrive by transport and many of the pupils go straight to the breakfast club when they arrive at school.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

12 The quality of teaching is satisfactory, on the whole, with some very good features and a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching. Teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14 is good. The quality of teaching in English is good following the successful introduction of the National Literacy Strategy. Teaching is good in mathematics for the pupils up to the age of 14 and satisfactory for the older pupils. The quality of teaching in science is satisfactory, overall, with some good teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14.

13 When teaching is very good, the lessons are well planned and the teaching is firmly based on a thorough knowledge of the subject. Expectations of the work and the behaviour of the pupils are very high and made clear to them. Teamwork and the contribution of the special support assistants are a strength of the very good lessons. Pupils respond to praise when developing their badminton skills in a local sport's centre. They are very effectively taught to take their turn and celebrate each other's achievements. In an English lesson very good teaching encourages the pupils to listen well, contribute fully and answer questions as they effectively extend their vocabulary. In this subject they are also very effectively taught to make very good progress in their letter writing skills and ability to work independently. In religious education very good use is made of a visit from the Fire Brigade as a prompt for further work.

14 The good lessons are clearly based on pupils' previous learning and planned to meet the full range of pupils' abilities. Teaching is confident and there are high expectations of the pupils' ability to make progress. In English good use is made of the time available and the pupils respond well to clear instructions as they make good progress in their correct use of grammar. Again, in English, well-

considered reference to every-day-life helps the pupils to make effective progress in their ability to make decisions. Music is used well to promote the pupils' ability to express their feelings in good quality creative writing. In the teaching of mathematics enthusiastic teaching and the very good use of praise contributes to the good progress made by the pupils in the use of calculators. When homework is requested this is provided for the pupils. They respond well to the calm and purposeful approach in the teaching of French as they make good progress in their use of common words and phrases. This teaching is also based on very good relationships and high expectations of the quantity and quality of the pupils' work. Attractive and relevant displays help to maintain the pupils' interest in their learning of the French language. In the teaching of some science lessons good resources are used well as the pupils make good progress in their ability to recognise and name different parts of a flower. The pupils aged 14 are keen to do well in science and are developing the confidence to suggest ways of improving their work. In the teaching of physical education positive use is made of a local leisure centre as the pupils listen well, participate safely and make good progress in their trampoline skills. A strength of all of the good lessons is the consistent application of the school's behaviour management systems and this effectively promotes a working atmosphere for the pupils to have the stability and confidence to make good progress in their learning.

15 When the quality of teaching is satisfactory, the contribution of the special support assistants continues to be central to the promotion of pupils' learning and appropriate behaviour. The pupils do respond best to investigative and practical work and the lack of these opportunities in some science lessons does contribute to a lack of interest from the pupils. There is at times insufficient focus on the work, for instance, in some food technology teaching there is too much time lost and the pupils are capable of greater achievements. In geography pupils do make satisfactory progress in the identification of upland areas on a map and the use of contour lines but excitable behaviour is not consistently managed. Some of the older pupils show little apparent interest in gaining appropriate qualifications and this is reflected in the quality of their work. In the teaching of religious education reluctant learners are provided with clear boundaries and then make satisfactory progress in their understanding of Christian festivals.

16 When the quality of teaching is unsatisfactory in history, the teacher lacks confidence in the subject. The pupils arrive at the lesson very excitable and the challenging topic of infant mortality is difficult for the pupils to manage. The pupils tend to ignore the teacher's instructions and they display a lack of interest in their work, putting no effort into developing their own ideas.

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

17 The quality and range of the curriculum for pupils in the last two years of full time education is satisfactory and meets the needs of the pupils in preparing them for life after school. It is unsatisfactory for pupils up to the age of 14 because some aspects of the National Curriculum are not included, in particular, art and design and music. Therefore, art and design and music are 'experienced' rather than being taught fully. This limits the pupils' range of learning opportunities. The school is very well aware of these deficits and a music specialist is due to start work at the school after Easter. Art and design is at present taught by a learning support assistant because the specialist teacher has left the school. All the pupils up to the age of 14 have access to the art room at least once a week but insufficient guidance has been given to the special support assistant in planning for what should be taught to enable them to access the breadth of the art and design curriculum. These unsatisfactory elements of the curriculum are the result of the school losing the art and design teacher and not being able to recruit a suitable replacement. The provision for geography is unsatisfactory and the new subject co-ordinator is determined to improve significantly the quality of this subject in the

school's curriculum. The provision for the other subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education are satisfactory.

18 The school offers a good range of accreditation, including full General Certificates of Secondary Education in English, mathematics, science, design and technology and religious education and entry level for French. There is a National Vocational Qualification in information and communication technology. The school has worked hard to implement the National Literacy Strategy and it is effective in teaching literacy skills. There is a good range of opportunities to develop literacy skills, not only in English lessons but in other subjects as well. For example, in French lessons the pupils pay good attention to the presentation of their work, such as writing, spelling and the use of plurals. The pupils apply reading skills in mathematics when reading problems, using the text to interpret the question. The strategies for teaching and learning numeracy skills are good and the teacher plans to extend the use of the National Numeracy Strategy.

19 There is limited provision for extra-curricular activities and this is unsatisfactory. Lunchtimes are too short for any appropriate clubs or activities to take place and all the pupils leave at the end of the school day on transport provided by the local education authority. The school has not established any opportunities for educational residential visits at this time. There are occasional opportunities for the pupils to go fishing but these are limited and in curriculum time. However, the school does use the local area satisfactorily for educational visits to support the pupils' learning across the curriculum, for example, Holy Island to support work in history, St. James's Park for design and technology to look at structures and snake and bird watching to develop the pupils' understanding of the natural world.

20 The school has a good policy to support equal opportunities and all the pupils have access to the whole curriculum the school offers. There is suitable access for disabled people, a lift is available for access to the upper floor.

21 The provision for special educational needs is satisfactory. The head teacher is the special educational needs co-ordinator and a register of special educational needs is in progress. Statements and reviews reflect the additional needs of pupils. Transition reviews and reviews of Statements are comprehensive; school records are meticulous. Professional reports are included and where necessary the head teacher is able to access further support.

22 There is good provision for personal, social, health and citizenship education, for example, there are daily opportunities for informal discussion during tutor group sessions. The curriculum is appropriate for the particular needs of the pupils and covers all areas required in the National Curriculum including drugs and sex education. A new curriculum for citizenship has been successfully developed and implemented.

23 The school's provision for careers and vocational education is good. There are close links to the local college of education and pupils in their final year at school go to college one day a week. The college offers a variety of courses including catering, construction, painting and decorating and motor mechanics. The college tutor visits the school to explain the provision to the pupils aged 15 and in July, the pupils have the opportunity to take part in a 'taster' week. The provision at the college offers a good opportunity for the pupils' personal development and the links between the college and school are strong. They work together to promote attendance, which in the final year for the pupils at the school, is a problem. There are close links between the careers advisor and the school who attends all the annual reviews for the relevant pupils. The careers advisor builds up good relationships with the pupils and advises on college places, which is supportive for the pupils and they gain confidence in making choices. All of the pupils in their final year at school have the opportunity to go on work experience. These placements are organised by an agency but the careers advisor supports the pupils when

necessary. There are opportunities for the pupils to have practice interviews and to learn write application for jobs, which has a positive impact on the pupils' confidence in applying for college or work when they leave school.

24 The schools links with the community are good and make a positive contribution to pupil's development. Good use is made of the immediate area around the school for biking skills, owl watching, reward trips and shopping trips that enhance pupils' social skills. Pupils have made bird boxes for a local nature group and take part in football matches with other schools of a similar type. Work experience placements are organised professionally by an outside agency, and pupils benefit from regular visitors into the school. For example the Fire Brigade took part in a school assembly to warn against making hoax fire calls. Links with partner institutions are satisfactory. There are good links to a college of further education that works closely with the school to promote attendance for the older pupils. No pupils are integrating with any mainstream schools at the present time, and the school often receives very little information from the pupils' previous schools.

25 The overall provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is satisfactory with the good provision for moral development underpinning the whole school ethos.

26 The school promotes pupils' spiritual development in a range of ways. Raising the pupils' self esteem and helping each individual to feel valued is central to the work of the school. This is recognised and appreciated by the parents who report that, "the school makes pupils feel good about themselves". Opportunities are taken, as they arise, to help pupils understand that there are people around the world who are experiencing suffering and hardship although they find this a much harder concept to accept in their immediate environment. The school encourages pupils to turn their awareness of the need of others into practical activities such as the support for a school in Gambia and the efforts of one boy to raise awareness of the problems in Ethiopia. The assemblies have a Christian focus but opportunities are rarely provided for quiet thought and reflection, except on Remembrance Day once a year. Although there is some planned teaching through religious education there is no formal development of spiritual awareness in other areas of the curriculum.

27 Provision for moral development is good. A fundamental aim of the school is to provide an atmosphere based on honesty, fairness and trust which is promoted, not only through a wide range of planned activities and direct teaching, but also through personal example. Pupils are aware of right and wrong even though there are occasions when they choose to behave in inappropriate and anti-social ways. Opportunities are provided during 'tutor time' for pupils to talk about problems that are causing concern and also through the personal, social, health and citizenship curriculum when they discuss social and moral issues such as bullying, human rights and responsibilities.

28 Social development is unsatisfactory because there are too few opportunities for social interaction either with each other or with the wider community. Where opportunities are provided, the pupils benefit from the situations and make progress in their social relationships, for example, through various sporting associations and, for pupils aged 16, integration into the local Further Education College. There is some planning for the development of social skills, such as target setting in the individual behaviour plans and expectations for listening to each other, sharing and taking turns during lessons. However, there are insufficient planned external visits to practice these skills outside the structured environment of the school.

29 Provision for cultural development is unsatisfactory because opportunities are limited to help pupils develop an awareness of the richness in their own culture or the diversity in the wider multi-cultural society. Some experiences are provided within the curriculum, particularly in English, where pupils study a range of literature, both classical and modern, but similar opportunities are not available through art and design or music because of the current staffing difficulties. Pupils learn about other

countries through the valuable contact with a school in Gambia and through their French lessons. The school has not yet arranged appropriate outside visits to the wide range of local places of national and historic interest in the area.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30 The school has made a satisfactory start in the introduction of assessment procedures and has developed a comprehensive policy. There is no effective co-ordination of assessment across the school. The use of assessment to inform planning varies between very good and unsatisfactory and is on the whole satisfactory. Assessment systems in place for English and mathematics are particularly effective. Where assessment is secure it effectively informs planning in order to progress pupil learning. As subject co-ordinators monitor and co-ordinate their own subjects there is an inconsistent approach to assessment.

31 Initial assessment is successfully carried out as pupils enter school. Statements, reviews and reports are comprehensive and pupils and parents contribute fully to review meetings. Individual education plans have relevant and achievable targets for mathematics and English. Behaviour plans are comprehensive and pupils are well aware of their own targets. Targets are reviewed regularly and shared with parents. End of unit tests, course-work, standard tests and exams effectively show pupils attainment and progress in the subjects where assessment is established, for example English and mathematics. There is a need to extend the level of accreditation to ensure the most able pupils are fully challenged to achieve. Also the least able pupils need a greater range of accreditation to more fully meet their needs. An assessment co-ordinator is required to ensure an overview for all subjects and to build on existing good practise with the aim of providing consistent high quality assessment across the school.

32 Care procedures in the school are satisfactory. The designated person for child protection is the deputy head teacher and all members of staff are aware of the procedures for reporting and recording child protection concerns. The staff handbook and information for parents are clear on procedures to be taken by the school, if any child protection issues arise. Health and safety arrangements are satisfactory. The governing body has adopted the Northumberland authority health and safety procedures, but there is not a site-specific health and safety policy, which is a legal requirement, nor does the health and safety policy identify any named person with specific health and safety responsibilities. The school has not formally completed risk assessments, but there is a comprehensive policy for supporting medical needs that covers first aid and medication procedures. A few members of staff have completed first aid training, but there is no designated person responsible for first aid in the school. When pupils go out of school for an educational activity or trip, the school informs pupils of necessary safety procedures in public places, and so for example, when pupils were in the Concordia leisure complex and the fire alarm was sounded, they exited the building swiftly and safely. Emergency fire evacuation procedures are well known to pupils and staff, and the school is fully covered by fire and intruder sensors, which respond to smoke, heat and movement.

33 Staff demonstrate a strong commitment to ensuring pupils receive the personal support they need in order to progress. Teachers and special support assistants place an emphasis on creating opportunities to build pupils' confidence and self-esteem. For example, by playing football with them at break times and talking with them in their relaxation room when they are playing snooker or with the computer games. A member of staff prepares breakfast for pupils when they first come into school, filling the dining hall with the aroma of hot sausage sandwiches. Members of staff encourage pupils to have confidence in their own choices. For example, older pupils planning a trip to Diggerland, have been able to arrange to go to where they want to, organise the food they want to eat and the clothes they want to wear, and finally to write letters to their parents and carers themselves, to tell them all

about the trip. Careers and vocational education advice is well organized in the school and pupils benefit from the persistent attitude that staff show in making sure that pupils attend their career interviews. An emphasis on insisting on a code of uniform for pupils is reflected in the smart appearance of most teaching and support staff in the school, who are conscious of their position as role models to pupils. The school has a very detailed knowledge of the background of all of its pupils and uses this information well to guide and inform pupils with their personal development. There are good links to the youth offending team, social services, specialist support services for Looked After Children and the Blyth Valley Over Nine's Team. Personal support and guidance arrangements are good for those pupils who attend the school regularly. They are well supported by individual tutors, and through a well structured careers and guidance programme. The personal, social, health and citizenship programme is comprehensively planned and taught, providing good opportunities for pupils to explore, discuss and receive guidance on a range of age appropriate topics relating to their personal development and understanding of citizenship. The work experience programme is a very positive feature in helping the pupils develop personal knowledge and skills in realistic working situations locally. Pupils receive good guidance to help them select appropriate placements through the work experience scheme.

34 Procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour are good and when applied consistently are effective. Bullying and harassment are not tolerated in the school. The Code of Conduct is an intrinsic feature of every day school life and has been negotiated between staff and pupils. Detailed and individual behavioural profile records are kept and used to decide if there has been, for example, any deterioration in a pupil's behaviour or if there is a necessity to amend behavioural targets or programmes. Tutorial support is an important aspect of evaluating a pupil's behaviour, as are end of day review assemblies, and the award of Pupil of the Week and Achiever of the Term. A structured system of earning points, linked to behavioural targets, during each lesson, break and lunchtime, enables staff to gain an accurate picture of a pupil's behaviour on a day-to-day basis. All pupils are profiled for their behavioural targets and helped and rewarded by staff with managing their behavioural objectives. All monitoring and recording of incidents, restraints and sanctions, meets with statutory requirements. The school has a detailed policy on the use of physical intervention and any use of physical control is seen, and recorded, as a significant event. The school's behavioural management strategies include a range of sanctions such as detentions that are a consequence of negative behaviour, but for example can be used to positive effect, as for example when a whole class used their detention to write a letter of apology to a teacher whose lesson they had disrupted.

35 Procedures for monitoring and improving attendance are satisfactory. The school swiftly follows up absences on a day-to-day basis and all communications about pupils and their families are efficiently recorded. This is an effective way for the school to monitor pupils' patterns of attendance and it is a useful source of information for the support staff assistant who liaises regularly with families to encourage and promote attendance at the school. Pupils who gain 100 per cent attendance over a term win a trip out to McDonalds. Despite the school acknowledging that there are a number of the older pupils who rarely attend, the school still tries to work with these pupils and their families to get them into school. Regular visits by the education welfare officer also support these efforts. The school's registration procedures do not meet statutory requirements, and registration does not take place, separately, in each class or tutorial group before the start of the morning session. Information in the current register, which is marked in pencil, does not always accurately reflect the attendance of pupils. The school has formal procedures for recording when pupils abscond from school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

36 Parents' think very highly of the school. They are generally pleased with the standards the school achieves, and appreciate that pupils achievements are valued for what they are, whether they are academic or for example, sporting. Parents are happy that most of the children like school and feel that it effectively boosts their confidence and self-esteem. They like the fact that the school encourages pupils to wear a school uniform and say that this gives pupils a pride in their school and an identity. Parents also feel that the school is a good influence on their children's behaviour, both at home and in school. They recognise that not all the pupils have good attendance records and suggest that the school might find different ways to motivate pupils to come into school. A significant number of parents are concerned that their children do not get much homework and would like them to be given more. Overall, they are pleased with the weekly reports about attendance and behaviour and schoolwork and the written annual reports. They feel that the school is responsive to their suggestions and concerns and there is a good level of care in the school for their children.

37 Annual reviews are well attended by parents and the school offers help to those parents who may find it difficult to arrange their own transport. Annual written reports are personal, informative and meet statutory requirements. Weekly reports cover pupils' behaviour and work in class and give parents and carers a clear message of the progress and attitude of pupils in lessons. Parents do not come into school on a regular basis, but for example, by regular telephone conversations with the school staff, very good links are established between home and school. Many parents and carers are spoken to on a daily basis by the school, to find out, for example, why a pupil is not in school or to speak about a pupils' behaviour or transport arrangements. Home/school links are also strengthened by the home visits made on a regular basis, by a special support assistant in his role as the school's education welfare officer. The information pack provided for the families of new pupils at the school is clear, comprehensive, and sympathetic to parents. Once a year, the school holds an open evening for each class, giving parents the opportunity to see their child's work and talk to staff and other parents.

38 The contribution of parents and carers to the work of the school and their involvement in their children's learning is limited. The school serves a wide area and many parents do not have transport or live a long way from the school. As there are no parents and carers in school on a regular basis and as homework is not given as a matter of course to pupils, there are limited opportunities for parents and cares to involve themselves with their children's learning. The good pattern of attendance for the younger pupils however, is evidence of these parents supporting their children to attend school regularly.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

39 The leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. This is a new school and in establishing itself there have been problems with pupil attendance and a high rate of exclusion. Both are now improving. The head teacher, supported by the governors and staff, has placed a strong initial emphasis on developing good behaviour management systems that when applied consistently, are effective. The head teacher is aware of the need to build on the curriculum strengths and lead the school to further develop the school's curriculum and place high expectations on pupils' progress and their qualifications, by the time they reach statutory school leaving age.

40 The senior management team does not make a sufficiently formal contribution to the leadership of the school as the head teacher has responsibility for too many aspects. He is clear in the need for greater delegation and the roles and responsibilities, particularly for the deputy head teacher, to ensure that the senior management team makes an effective contribution to the continual development of the school. The senior teacher is new to the school and it is essential that his full potential is used as the school works towards making more effective provision. The management of

subjects is variable across the school and for most of the subjects their co-ordination is at an early stage of development due to changes in the staffing. English is an example of a subject that is well managed and this factor makes a significant contribution to the good progress that the pupils make in English. Some of the co-ordinators are new to their post as nearly half of the teachers are recent appointments and there are gaps in provision due to a staff vacancy. However, the head teacher is aware of the need for an energetic and determined approach from all staff to quickly develop effective subject management to ensure that the necessary improvements in the curriculum take place. The teachers have not been involved in the training provided by the New Opportunity Funding for information and communication technology and this limits the teaching of this aspect of the curriculum in some subjects. The school secretary makes a very effective contribution to the day-to-day management of the school.

41 The governing body has clear roles linked to leadership and these guidelines are put into practice. The governing body are at full stretch because, in particular, there are two staff vacancies. The governors have an appropriate range of committees that have clear terms of reference and place a high priority on applying the principles of Best Value and the school provides satisfactory value for money. The governors are fully involved in drafting and agreeing the budget and School Improvement Plan. This plan is detailed over the short-term but does not provide a long-term strategic vision for the future of the school. The governors are attached to a specific year group and take a particular interest in their development and the progress that they make. This initiative gives the governors the opportunity to get to know the pupils and provides continuity for the pupils, the governors are fully involved in the life of the school. They maintain their involvement and work hard in the best interests of the pupils. They see the management of behaviour as the first priority for the new school and are aware that pupil attendance at the school is a problem. The governors have a satisfactory insight into the strengths and areas for development in the school in the short-term but have yet to produce a long-term development plan.

42 The quality and provision of the accommodation is good and it is well kept. There is ample space for the number of pupils on roll and there are plans to further develop the existing provision. The specialist subject rooms do give the pupils the opportunity to be fully involved in practical and investigative work. Good use is made of local facilities for the teaching of physical education but the lack of a covered outside area does adversely affect the on-site provision for the teaching of this subject. Resources in the school are adequate. There are very good resources for the teaching of religious education and personal, social, health and citizenship education and are good for English, mathematics and design and technology. The suite for teaching information and communication technology is well equipped although there are shortages of the appropriate equipment in some classrooms and this is a factor in limiting the use of information and communication technology in some subjects. Resources are unsatisfactory in art and design and music and this is reflected in their unsatisfactory provision in the curriculum. There is a lack of expertise in the teaching of art and design, music and design and technology and a high turnover of the teaching staff with three new appointments during recent months. In the short-term the resistant materials aspect of design and technology is taught by special support assistants and the pupils enjoy making a range of wooden objects.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

43 In order to improve further the head teacher, staff and governors should;

- (1) Improve the overall curriculum by;
 - a) ensuring that the pupils up to the age of 14 receive their entitlement to the full range of subjects including art and design, design and technology, geography and music.
 - b) ensuring that the curriculum is better managed.
 - c) increasing the range of extra-curricular and residential activities.
 - d) Providing more opportunities for the pupils' social development including promoting the use of their own initiative and increasing personal responsibilities.
 - e) Increasing the planned provision for the pupils' cultural development across the curriculum.
(Paragraphs 6, 7, 10, 16, 17, 19, 28, 29, 60, 61, 64, 78, 81 and 88)

- (2) Improve the overall leadership and management of the school by;
 - a) formalising the work of the senior management team with increased delegation by the head teacher and a clearer definition of the roles and responsibilities of its members.
 - b) the production of long-term school and subject development plans to provide the school with the basis for continual improvement and a clear direction for the future.
 - c) building on good practice in the school to effectively extend the roles of the subject co-ordinators.
 - d) ensuring that all statutory requirements are met including the setting of whole school targets and the correct marking of the register
 - e) ensuring that all available grants are used to raise the quality of teaching and standards in the school.
(Paragraphs 5, 30, 40, 41, 49, 59 and 67)

- (3) Improve the attainment of the pupils in their external accreditation by the time they reach the statutory school leaving age by;
 - a) raising expectations of their ability to make progress
 - b) improving the attendance of the older pupils in the school
 - c) the consistent use of assessment across the school
 - d) establishing homework as a means of boosting the pupils' progress.
(Paragraphs 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 11, 15, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38, 39 and 53)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	30

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	0	4	12	29	1	0	0
Percentage	0	9	26	63	2	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	39
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	24

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	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	3

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	22.5%

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	12.9%

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete 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	39	30	0
White – Irish	0	0	0
White – any other White background	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Black African	0	0	0
Mixed – White and Asian	0	0	0
Mixed – any other mixed background	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Indian	0	0	0
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani	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	1	1
No ethnic group recorded	0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Financial information

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7 – Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	5.6
Average class size	7.8

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	162.5

Financial year	2001 - 2002
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	£
Total income	£489,892
Total expenditure	£425,376
Expenditure per pupil	£10,634
Balance brought forward from previous year	£45,246

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Balance carried forward to next year	£52,899
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Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	4
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	3
Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	1
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	39
Number of questionnaires returned	17

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	41	53	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	41	0	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	23	47	29	0	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	12	29	23	12	23
The teaching is good.	82	12	0	0	6
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	82	18	0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	94	6	0	0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	76	18	6	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	76	23	0	0	0
The school is well led and managed.	71	23	0	0	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	53	47	0	0	0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	76	12	0	0	12

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

ENGLISH

44 The provision for English is good and makes effective use of the National Literacy Strategy. The pupils make good progress in reading, writing and speaking and listening over time, well supported by good targets set by the teachers to develop the pupils' knowledge, skills and understanding across the curriculum. Assessment for the subject is very good, it guides teachers' planning well and the evaluative comments made on a regular basis and the clear targets set for reading and literacy have a positive impact in helping pupils to understand the progress they make over time. The overall good teaching has a positive impact on the progress made by all the pupils, including those with additional special educational needs, where additional support, given by the special support assistants enables them to take part fully in the lesson. The dedicated literacy session, after lunch each day, supports the teaching and learning in English across the school.

45 Between the ages of 11 and 14, the pupils develop their speaking and listening skills and listen carefully to instructions, poems and songs. They make good progress because the teachers ask good questions, which helps the pupils to focus on what they are hearing and to extend their answers. Pupils aged 11 are able to identify specific sounds in a paragraph read by the teacher who reinforces their listening skill well by encouraging them to focus on hearing the 'oi or oy' sound, which they identify correctly. They are able to listen in absolute silence to a poem set to music about a disabled person and make good suggestions about how to help 'Martin', the person in the poem who is sad and tired. This leads to a good discussion about life after death and the pupils are able to recount experiences about losing a relative, giving them confidence to express their feelings. They speak fluently, although at times they have a tendency to talk rather than listen. The pupils aged 12 to 13 make good progress in their speaking and listening and are able to discuss the reasons for and against blood sports. The pupils develop the ability to express their feelings, for example, after watching a video about hunting, they are able to explain how they feel, 'sad, angry, and fed up'. Pupils are enthusiastic about sharing their views even when these are against the general opinion; one boy describes blood sports as 'good but cruel'. At the age of 14, the pupils are able to listen to and identify instructional texts supported by careful listening to what the teacher is reading and are able to answer questions accurately. They discuss their work well, are able to predict, responding to questions such as 'what will happen when?' By the age of 16, the pupils continue to make good progress and are able to discuss different forms of communication, such as the telephone or email. They talk with confidence and are able to relate the different ways that they speak and are spoken to, for example, as adults on work experience. The teacher's use of very good questions, to extend the responses of the pupils, has a good impact on speaking and listening skills.

46 The pupils make good progress in reading, supported by the good teaching. The regular testing of the pupils' reading ages informs teachers' planning and has a positive impact on progress. By the age of fourteen the more able pupils read with confidence and are able to answer questions about the text, that is well selected by the teacher, to interest them, for example, dinosaurs. The teacher recognises any difficulties and additional help is given. They can follow the text accurately and explain the words they read. By the age of sixteen the pupils' work shows that they are able to read and follow instructions, they can extract information they need from text and identify specific information from text. For example, they are able to use newspaper advertisements to find information about different cars for sale. The more able pupils understand the plot of 'Romeo and Juliet' and can answer questions about the play. The less able pupils are able to identify the facts in a piece of writing but do not analyse these as well as the more able pupils.

47 Progress in writing is good throughout the school when the teachers' good planning extends their skills and understanding as they move through the school. The more able pupils, at the age of 14, use capital letters and punctuation well, their handwriting is clear although tends to be printed rather than in cursive script. The teachers' consistently good marking ensures that any spelling errors are identified and corrected, helping the pupils to develop spelling skills. The more able pupils are able to write stories using paragraphs, speech and question marks correctly. Extended writing develops and the good support they receive in drafting and writing their work is reflected in the good progress they make over time. A pupil wrote an excellent letter protesting against blood sports, to a member of parliament, with good arguments for the banning of the sport. The less able pupils start with a less secure knowledge and understanding of the use of grammar but over time they extend their understanding of the use of punctuation, capital letters and paragraphs, which has a positive effect on the extended writing that they produce. By the time they are aged 16, the pupils are able to complete forms accurately, write instructions clearly and use a word processor for extended writing. The more able pupils use a word processor to write letters and include relevant information, for example, in a job application. Handwriting does tend to be untidy and in some cases, not well formed, however the use of a computer helps the pupils to produce neat copies.

48 The pupils achieve well and make good progress across the school because the teaching is good overall, and there are some examples of very good teaching. Lessons meet the needs of individual pupils, and support staff are very well deployed to ensure that all the pupils are able to complete the work. The brisk start to the lessons helps the pupils focus on the task quickly and they listen well and answer the well-directed questions fully. In one good lesson observed, the pace is good helping to keep the pupils' attention and keeping all the pupils involved in the task of ordering chronological texts. They learn to put lists of instructions in order accurately. They are involved all of the time and the teacher links the use of instructional texts with other subjects, such as recipes in food technology. The teachers use a good range of resources, including videos and records, that supports the pupils learning well, giving them visual and audio clues to develop their understanding of different types of writing and capturing the pupils' interest. The teachers have high expectations that the pupils will present work well and emphasise this when the pupils begin writing. Teachers plan to use information and communication technology well for the pupils to draft and complete work. The teaching of English for the older pupils, based on skills needed in life after school and the good use of age appropriate resources and subject matter encourages the pupils to have a positive attitude to the subject.

49 The leadership and management of the subject are good. The co-ordinator analyses pupils' work on a regular basis giving her a good understanding of pupils' progress across the school. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the additional daily literacy session taught by other teachers, rather than the two English teachers. The curriculum for the subject is well matched to the National Literacy Strategy and also to examination units of study for the older pupils. Resources and accommodation for the subject are good and the school library is in a separate spacious room and has a suitable range of fiction and non-fiction books available.

MATHEMATICS

50 The quality of teaching and learning in mathematics is satisfactory, overall. It is good for the pupils up to the age of 14 and as a result they make good progress and achieve well. The enthusiastic teachers have a good relationship with pupils and this ensures that they feel secure and respond by trying hard. The co-ordinator has made a very good start in her short time in post to establish structured lessons. The school has a good approach to the teaching of numeracy skills and is now ready to introduce the National Numeracy Strategy. Information and communication technology is used well to support mathematical learning.

51 Although pupils are restless and noisy when they enter the classes, they settle to the challenging work and high expectations from the teacher. Most pupils, up to the age of 14, use calculators confidently to calculate the area of complex shapes. The teacher and special support assistant encourage the pupils while working with them individually and this ensures they concentrate and attempt to work on their own. Particular attention is paid to levels of understanding, where work is broken down into achievable tasks, especially for the least able pupils. The most able pupils are challenged with mathematics course books. Pupils interpret graphs and calculate angles; they particularly enjoy the challenge of remembering their tables at the end of the lesson. Pupils aged 14 are successfully using work books to complete problems where they are able to work at their own pace. All of the pupils, up to the age of 14, use a computer during the week to complete mathematical exercises that complement their mathematical learning.

52 The pupils aged 14 to 16 make satisfactory progress during lessons and overtime. The work is challenging and a few boys complete practice examination papers. The teacher gives very clear explanations about expectations in an examination situation. The pupils engage quite well in a group discussion about algebraic statements. The teacher is extremely enthusiastic and has a very good relationship with the pupils. By the end of the lesson the boys can understand the statement and give the expression in algebraic terms. The lessons are successful as the teacher breaks every lesson down into achievable parts.

53 Homework is not set on a regular basis although if asked for, it is given. The co-ordinator teaches all of the pupils up to the age of 14. More involvement by the co-ordinator in teaching the older pupils would ensure an overview and continuity, especially for examination work. The well-planned lessons follow the National Curriculum framework and meet individual needs.

54 Resources are good and the new textbooks support learning well. Work is marked alongside the pupils and useful comments inform them of their progress. Merit awards effectively encourage them to produce neat work. The good use of correct terms and the challenging interesting work provides a firm basis for pupils to develop mathematical knowledge. The use of number across the curriculum is evident; for example in design and technology where pupils measure wood and weigh ingredients. However, more emphasis is needed to highlight opportunities to reinforce mathematical concepts in the other subjects of the curriculum.

SCIENCE

55 The provision for science is satisfactory and pupils make at least satisfactory progress, with the pupils up to the age of 14 making good progress. The teaching and learning in science are best where there are well planned opportunities for the pupils to carry out investigative work. The pupils' work during the recent months does show an improvement in their progress.

56 The rate of progress for the younger pupils has increased in the last few months. The work of the younger pupils does show improvements in the pride that they take in their work and the standard of their presentation. The more able pupils are competent in identifying ways that an animal is adapted to its' environment. The less able pupils sort and group animals by recognising their major features, such as the number of limbs they have. Again, the more able pupils are able to use scientific terms for the major organs of the human body and correctly identify their relative positions. Pupils can plot and name the major aspects of the digestive systems. They can also accurately use a range of chemical symbols. Pupils can describe and sequence methods, such as filtration, to separate simple mixtures. Pupils also understand that different soil conditions suit different plants.

57 The end of unit tests for the oldest pupils are recorded in detail but there are insufficient opportunities for the pupils to be involved in practical work and they express their disappointment at this. The pupils have investigated the properties of a spring and understand the effects on the spring as the load is increased. The poor attendance of the oldest pupils has made a significant contribution to their limited progress. Attendance is better for the pupils aged 15 and there is evidence of some satisfactory progress. They have a clear understanding of acidity and alkalinity in soil and how this affects the plants that can be grown. They understand the principle of attraction and repulsion in relation to the polarity of magnets. These pupils show an understanding of the need to care for the environment. There is again limited opportunities for the pupils to be involvement in investigative work in the units that they have studied.

58 Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory with good teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14. In the best teaching, a good selection of resources is used effectively to maintain the interest of the pupils as they extend their knowledge of different parts of a flower. The pupils aged 14 are made fully aware of the teacher's high expectations and they respond well to this challenge. The consistent use of the school's behaviour management systems helps to maintain the pupils' focus on their work and there is a sense of purpose in the lessons. The contribution of the learning support assistants does make a significant difference to the progress that the pupils make. When teaching is satisfactory the staff work hard as a team to maintain the pupils' interest as they improve their understanding of how to carry out a fair test. There are too few opportunities for the pupils to carry out experiments and there is insufficient use of information and communication technology to support the pupils' learning in science. Pupils, up to the age of 16, are frequently reminded about the value of gaining qualifications but they show little interest in using their abilities to the full.

59 The current science co-ordinator is a recent appointment and is aware of the challenges of improving the previously unsatisfactory management of the subject and is determined to lead the continual improvement of science in the school's curriculum. There is no science policy and there is an over-reliance on a commercial scheme to guide teaching for the pupils up to the age of 14. Currently the future of the subject is not guided by a subject development plan but the co-ordinator does have clear ideas for moving the subject forward. The external accreditation for the older pupils is well managed but there is insufficient challenge in the level of the course for the more able pupils. The specialist accommodation for the teaching of science is good and does provide opportunities for the pupils to be more fully involved in investigative work. The quality and range of resources are adequate and well organised.

ART AND DESIGN

60 The pupils' progress in art and design is unsatisfactory. The pupils aged 14 work on colour mixing on a photocopied sheet, they are able to build figures using a simple plan of ovals and all of the pupils, up to this age experience the same work. The drawings generally lack form, there is no evidence of drawing from life, of figures or objects and the majority of their work is copied directly from books. There are opportunities for the pupils to use clay, which they are able to fire in the kiln. Each pupil does have a sketchbook, but it is not used to develop different techniques or to develop specific skills such as shading, hatching or still life drawings. In the one lesson observed during the inspection, the relationships between the staff and the pupils are good and the pupils settle to work very well. There was no written planning for the lesson, however all the pupils were busy and concentrated very well on their drawings. The special support assistant who teaches art and design does very well, even though there has been no clear guidance about pupils' learning objectives or the requirements of the curriculum. The curriculum for art and design is unsatisfactory and does not meet statutory requirements in the breadth and balance of what is taught to the pupils. The school is trying to appoint a teacher for the subject but has so far been unsuccessful in finding a suitable candidate.

The accommodation for the subject is good, the art room is light and roomy, and has good displays of the pupils' work. Resources for the subject are satisfactory and contribute to pupils' experience of different materials and media.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

61 At present there is no teacher for design and technology and the provision for this subject is unsatisfactory. The resistant materials section of this subject are taught by two special support assistants and they provide interesting work for the boys. The facility for experiencing textile work is not provided. One teacher, who provides continuity for the pupils, teaches food technology. Resources are good with well-designed specialist rooms that provide appropriate opportunities for the pupils to be fully involved in practical work.

62 The pupils up to the age of 14, work enthusiastically and accurately to make wooden flowers on a stand; they burn patterns into the leaves and petals for decoration. They use tools with growing confidence and make satisfactory progress when recognising and naming the equipment needed to make a range of wooden structures. Some pupils have been taught effectively to sequence their work to choose suitable tools and name the correct technique to achieve the task. They can confidently chop vegetables and grate cheese and help the support assistant to make a tomato sauce. They are confident to design and make a pizza. The pupils develop good evaluation skills when assessing the taste and consistency of a series of pasta dishes they have made. They recognise this is a healthy dish which they could make at home and perhaps take on a picnic. The pupils work co-operatively and can complete tasks with little help. They are accomplished at making pastry for a quiche and decide on an appropriate filling.

63 The pupils aged 14 to 16 complete modules of work to plan a menu and cook their lunch. They work well as a team to produce the meal and can peel potatoes and mash them and fry sausages. They are beginning to gain confidence in making a cake and choose the flavour. As this is a healthy choice a little more thought as to content and method of cooking is required. The good use of tools encourages boys to produce a coffee table to take home. They can measure and use a saw and electric sander independently. They are keenly engaged in work on a kart that is used in the Friday Club.

64 At present there is very little planning, design and evaluation process in design and technology and food technology. The appointment of a specialist teacher for design and technology is a top priority for the school and in the short term the deployment of teaching staff to cover this subject is being planned. However the pupils are introduced well to safety in the work place and the competent use of tools and food preparation. They are impatient to have a finished product and are easily bored if a project is long term.

GEOGRAPHY

65 The provision of geography in the school is unsatisfactory and the pupils make unsatisfactory progress. Until the beginning of this term the records of pupils' progress did not indicate what had been covered or what pupils had learned and the more recent evidence is very limited.

66 Only two lessons were observed in the teaching of geography during the inspection and therefore no judgement can be made about the quality of teaching. The pupils up to the age of 14 are beginning to develop the basic skills needed for geographical investigation such as understanding the symbols used in map reading. By the good use of a question and answer technique, pupils are encouraged to think for themselves and work out their own solutions to a problem that leads to a

greater understanding of the task. For example, they are able to use information from contour lines on two different maps to identify which landscape would be flat enough to build houses on.

67 In the past geography teaching relied heavily on a commercial scheme which had not been adapted for the particular needs of the pupils or their wide range of abilities, nor was there any indication of continuity or progression. The present subject co-ordinator has only been in post since the beginning of this term and is in the process of developing an appropriate curriculum with schemes of work and the possibility of accreditation, designed to have a positive effect on pupils' achievements in geography.

HISTORY

68 The provision of history meets statutory requirements and is taught to the pupils up to the age of 14. Over time the pupils' achievements in history are satisfactory and satisfactory progress is made in those areas of the curriculum that are covered. By the age of 14 most of the pupils have acquired the basic factual knowledge from several important periods of history. For example, they are aware that conditions in Medieval Britain were extremely harsh for the ordinary people and understand that, eventually this was one of the causes of the 'Peasants' Revolt'. They have traced the 'time line' across the Tudor and Stuart periods and understand the cause of the 'gunpowder plot'. When studying the slave trade they have been effectively encouraged to discuss issues of crime as part of their citizenship curriculum.

69 Wherever possible teaching relates the historical events and conditions to the everyday experiences of the pupils, in order to increase their level of engagement, awareness and understanding. Teaching is unsatisfactory when some pupils are disinterested and find it difficult to attend and concentrate on the subject, resulting in disruptive behaviour and this has a negative affect on the progress of all of the pupils.

70 The current subject co-ordinator has only been in post since the beginning of this term. It is planned to review the curriculum and the timetable to ensure the organisation of the subject is well adapted to meet the particular needs of the pupils and their wide range of abilities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

71 The school make satisfactory provision for information and communication technology and the pupils make good progress. There is a well-resourced computer suite and also equipment in the classrooms that gives the pupils good access to the subject. Information and communication technology to support pupils learning and progress in other subjects is used particularly well in English, mathematics and French, however it is not planned for sufficiently across the school to support some of the subjects. All of the pupils have equal access to the computers, including those with additional special educational needs who are well supported by the special support assistants.

72 The pupils make good progress because planning for the work they do, in specific lessons, is good with clear links to the National Curriculum programmes of study and the accreditation syllabus. When the pupils enter the school they lack many of the skills or knowledge needed to use computers but they make good progress over time. By the time the pupils are aged 14, they are able to manipulate an on screen turtle and use the correct instructions for the turtle to write their initials. This supports their work in mathematics well because the pupils learn about the use of angles and length. Pupils are able to use graphics programmes and develop good skills in creating three-dimensional shapes on the screen, which are then printed. They understand and can use a simulation programme to create a room design well and can use text and graphics in a document. Pupils up to the age of 14

are able to name the x and y-axis on graphs, and know the legend gives relevant information about the chart or graph. This work is enhanced by the teacher's good use of a projector enabling all the pupils to see the graph and discuss it. By the time the pupils are 16 years old; they are confident in using spreadsheets and understand how to use formulas for addition up to two decimal places, again supporting work in mathematics. The pupils have a good understanding of how to use a word processor, although they do not always employ the spellchecker before printing their work. They can use databases to find information and use the Internet to support research in English. There is access to the Internet in the computer suite, which the pupils can use, and protected by a firewall to stop access to unsuitable sites, however the class teacher is vigilant while the pupils access the Internet as additional protection. In French, the pupils use the Internet to find the flag, currency and the capital of France, which gives them a better understanding of the difference between our two countries, particularly with reference to the written language.

73 The teaching and learning observed during the inspection was satisfactory, although work over a longer period indicates good progress, well-planned teaching and good assessment. The good deployment of special support assistants and the good relationships they have with the pupils has a positive impact on the pupils' learning. They concentrate well when they are supported and complete the work set, such as, creating shapes by typing in instructions for a screen turtle. When the teaching is good, pupils' understanding is extended, for example, one of the pupils asked 'How do I create a circle' on the screen with a turtle and through good questioning by the teacher about the number of degrees in a circle, the pupil managed to create the repeating formula he needed. When teachers are consistent in applying the behaviour policy and conduct guidelines the pupils behave well, however, on occasions, the older pupils do try to push the limits and this can result in unsatisfactory attitudes. This disrupts the lesson for everyone and limits the learning opportunities. The teacher uses good explanations to help the pupils 'log on' to the newly set up computer system and the clear introduction to the lesson helps the pupils to settle quickly and get on with their work. They are enthusiastic about using the computers and do so with confidence because they have learned the skills to access their own work and understand the clear lesson objectives for their learning.

74 The leadership and management of the subject is satisfactory and the co-ordinator has rightly chosen to use as much commercial software as possible so that it is familiar to the pupils when they leave school. The assessment of information and communication technology is good and used by the teacher to effectively plan lessons and encourage good progress. Pupils are assessed against National Curriculum levels of attainment at the end of each module, this has a positive impact on the teacher's planning, and pupils' learning ensuring the focus on skills, knowledge and understanding is good. The resources and accommodation for the subject are satisfactory overall, and the computer suite has good provision, which can be booked for use by teachers when specialist lessons are not taking place.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

75 The opportunity to study French is good and pupils make satisfactory progress during lessons and overtime. Although most pupils have not studied a language before entry to school, they are beginning to retain a French vocabulary and enjoy games and exercises. The co-ordinator has a good overview of the progress of each pupil; this is successfully incorporated into the planning of lessons. The co-ordinator for French also co-ordinates and teaches English. This continues the good overview of pupil ability with sound grammatical knowledge.

76 The pupils, up to the age of 14, are encouraged to listen to and express themselves in French as the teacher speaks French throughout most of the lesson. Good reference is made to words in the French dictionary. A calm atmosphere and a subject, such as naming pet animals, encourage all pupils to remember the French words and phrases. The pupils combine parts of the French verb 'aller' with

phrases to create sentences. Good use of resources ensures the work is interesting and staff work hard to involve all pupils. Pupils accurately recall the months of the year and exchange simple greetings. The good use of question and answer sessions encourages pupils to work as independently as possible. They are making good progress to translate French into English and English into French. Good use of information and communication technology encourages pupils aged fourteen to find out information about French speaking countries.

77 There are opportunities to gain accreditation and the older pupils are competent with the use of information and communication technology to produce a copy of their timetable in French. The well-planned lesson encourages the boys to work independently. However, their behaviour is poor and progress is slow.

MUSIC

78 The provision for music is unsatisfactory. No formal music lessons have taken place this term and the pupils have made unsatisfactory progress. The school does not meet the requirements of the National Curriculum and to rectify this they have appointed a teacher for the subject who will start work at the school in April 2003. There is a good induction procedure for the teacher, planned prior to the start of the term. During the autumn term of 2002, the pupils experienced the sound of African drumming and rhythms, once a week from a visiting teacher and this term they have experienced playing steel pans, but only for one session. The school continues to have the support of the County's music service to enable the pupils to experience different types of music. There are sufficient resources for the teaching of music including a full drum kit, African drums, guitars, both electric and acoustic and keyboards.

Personal, social, health and citizenship education.

79 Pupils' achievements in personal, social, health and citizenship education are satisfactory on the whole, although they are good for pupils up to the age of 14. The curriculum is appropriate for their needs and the teacher works hard to build pupils' self esteem and confidence ensuring they feel confident to take an active part in class discussions.

80 For the pupils aged up to 14, as a result of the calm atmosphere created by staff and the good use of question and answer techniques, most pupils are interested and confident enough to take an active part in lessons. As a consequence, by the age of fourteen, pupils are aware of themselves within the wider community and accept that growing up should carry additional responsibilities. Unfortunately, they do not always recognise the need to apply this knowledge in their day-to-day behaviour. Through the citizenship curriculum the less able pupils know that rules and laws exist and should be followed, while the more able can give reasons and understand some of the implications for not obeying them. For example, after a session with the local fire fighters pupils held a wide reaching discussion on the outcome of 'playing with fire'.

81 Although the pupils aged 14 to 16 are encouraged to discuss topics of social and moral issues, as they impinge on their own lives, some find this very difficult, trying to put on a show of bravado and disinterest. One boy, however, was sufficiently affected by the stories of suffering from Ethiopia that he has elected to take on a project for the whole school to raise money in support of the catastrophe. The subject is well managed and an appropriate curriculum for citizenship has been developed.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

82 The provision for physical education is good. Very good use is made of a local leisure centre to use the trampolines, swimming pool and to play badminton. The outside play area is marked out for games and there is access to a playing field that is used to develop the pupils' football and rugby skills. Pupils, up to the age of 14, build on skills and fitness while older boys are encouraged to develop skills while learning how to use their leisure time. The structure of the physical education lessons encourages very good personal and social opportunities.

83 The pupils up to the age of 14 play badminton in doubles and they are encouraged well to hold the racquet correctly and use height when hitting to each other. Pupils are encouraged to co-operate with a partner. This they do well, playing a competitive game with each other. The good teamwork of the staff ensures all pupils to take full advantage of the sporting activities. Most pupils understand the rules of the game and respond well to the advice of the teacher, who sets a target of 20 in a volley. This encourages a team spirit where pupils are making good progress to develop skills of hitting to each other. Pupils aged 14 enjoy the trampoline lessons with an instructor. They are very sensible and co-operate well with all the staff. The pupils are developing good skills to stop, bounce, touch their knees and toes. They are making good progress to put two or more movements together for example, seat drops and half and three quarter turns. Very good attention is paid to safety and all boys know they take turns and then spot for each other. They make constructive comments to each other about their skills and how to improve.

84 The pupils aged 14 to 16 effectively use the weight training room and follow a fitness and leisure programme. There is a good range of sports activities throughout the year to cover athletics, gymnastics, field games and ball games. Team games are encouraged with a football team and opportunities to play rugby and cricket. More opportunities to gain accreditation and recognition of achievement in skills would support learning further. The co-ordinator plans lessons in detail and records progress in skills and social interaction.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

85 Religious education is taught within the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education and as a consequence the areas that can be covered in the time allocated are restricted. The teaching of the subject does relate to the Locally Agreed Syllabus. During the inspection only one lesson was seen that was specifically focused on religious education. However, the evidence obtained from pupils' previous work indicates their achievements are satisfactory for the pupils up to the age of 14. The older pupils make unsatisfactory progress because of their negative attitude and disinterest in the subject.

86 As a result of the firm but sensitive approach of the class teacher, pupils show interest in religious education in the lower part of the school so that by the age of 14 most pupils know some of the fundamentals of the Christian religion and have compared various celebrations and festivals between this and other major religions, in particular Sikhism. They are able to put their own interpretation on 'Images of God' and have some understanding of Christian beliefs. They can recognise important symbolism from different religions, for example the relevance of the Cross for Christians and know about the Pillars of Islam.

87 The older pupils find more difficulty relating to the factual aspects of religious education so that it becomes much more integrated into the curriculum for personal, social, health and citizenship education where social and moral issues are discussed as they relate to the pupils' own lives. Whenever relevant the Bible is used as a main source of reference. Within the requirements of the chosen modules, for the two study units, pupils discuss the existence of God and the sanctity of life.

88 Management of religious education is incorporated into personal, social, health and citizenship education but the specific resources for the teaching of this subject are good and meet the needs of the taught curriculum. There are few opportunities provided for pupils to benefit from either visits or visitors to enhance the learning experience in religious education.