

INSPECTION REPORT

**ST HILD'S CHURCH OF ENGLAND
VOLUNTARY AIDED SCHOOL**

Hartlepool

LEA area: Hartlepool

Unique reference number: 133293

Headteacher: Mrs C Roberts

Reporting inspector: Ms J M Jones

12460

Dates of inspection: 6th – 9th May 2003

Inspection number: 252954

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Comprehensive

School category: Voluntary aided

Age range of pupils: 11 – 16

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: King Oswy Drive
Hartlepool

Postcode: TS24 9PB

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Appropriate authority: The Governing Body

Name of chair of governors: Mr W Hibbert

Date of previous inspection: not applicable

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | | | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|--|---|
| 12460 | J M Jones | Registered inspector | | Information about the school The school's results and pupils' achievements How well are pupils taught? What should the school do to improve further? |
| 19698 | D Hirons | Lay inspector | | Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents? |
| 27050 | V Blackburn | Team inspector | Science | |
| 13734 | H Davies | Team inspector | Citizenship Geography | How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils? |
| 21971 | J Glennon | Team inspector | English Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | |
| 8756 | P Hanage | Team inspector | Mathematics | |
| 20287 | D Harris | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages | |
| 22906 | B Hodgson | Team inspector | Information and communication technology | |
| 19915 | P Hooton | Team inspector | History | |
| 3943 | D Innes | Team inspector | Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Inclusion |
| 22524 | S Innes | Team inspector | Design and technology | |
| 27665 | A Lees | Team inspector | Drama Music Vocational education | |
| 14446 | B Simmons | Team inspector | Physical education | How well the school is led and managed? |
| 3896 | R Tonks | Team inspector | Art and design | |

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REPORT CONTENTS

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT | 7 |
| Information about the school | |
| How good the school is | |
| What the school does well | |
| What could be improved | |
| How the school has improved since its last inspection | |
| Standards | |
| Pupils' attitudes and values | |
| Teaching and learning | |
| Other aspects of the school | |
| How well the school is led and managed | |
| Parents' and carers' views of the school | |
| | |
| PART B: COMMENTARY | |
| HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS? | 11 |
| The school's results and pupils' achievements | |
| Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development | |
| HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT? | 14 |
| HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS? | 15 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS? | 18 |
| HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS? | 20 |
| HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED? | 21 |
| WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER? | 24 |
| LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY | 25 |
| | |
| PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS | 27 |
| | |
| PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES | 34 |

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

St Hild's is a new school, which opened in September 2001 on the site of Henry Smith School in the north of Hartlepool. The new school took in the pupils and many staff of the previous school. A new headteacher was appointed and St Hild's became a Church of England school. Consequently, religious education and worship were not dealt with as part of this inspection. It is a mixed 11-16 school serving the local area. The school is average sized at 902 pupils. At present the whole school uses a dilapidated building that used to form half the accommodation for Henry Smith School. The other half suffered an arson attack in November 2002 and has been demolished ready for the new building into which the whole school will move in September 2004. The proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is above average at 32.5 per cent. The proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the proportion with statements of special educational need are average. There are very few pupils from ethnic minorities or who speak a language other than English. Pupils' attainment when they enter the school is well below average. The school is part of a small education action zone (EAZ) and is involved in a number of other initiatives to raise standards. The school has had difficulty recruiting staff and this is holding down standards, particularly in music and modern foreign languages.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school. Teaching is good and pupils make good progress in most subjects, so that attainment, although still below average when pupils leave, has improved. Results show a significant improvement on those of the former school, and this is due to very good leadership and effective management. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Leadership by the headteacher is excellent and generates enthusiasm and a sense of teamwork among staff.
- Pupils' achievement is good because teaching is good in most subjects.
- The very good links with the community and wide-ranging activities outside lessons make a significant contribution to pupils' personal development and raising standards.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils with exceptional needs and this is supported by good relationships at all levels throughout the school.

What could be improved

- Attendance is well below average, particularly among the older pupils, and this has an adverse effect on standards.
- Provision in modern foreign languages and music is unsatisfactory.
- Low standards of literacy are holding pupils back in a number of subjects.
- Information and communication technology (ICT) is not used widely enough in the curriculum.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

As St Hild's is a new school with a different ethos and management from its forerunner, the inspection team was not required to make a judgement about improvement. It is however clear that the school has made a good start, and there is an atmosphere of well-founded purpose and optimism. GCSE results in 2002 of pupils who had spent most of their secondary schooling in the former school were significantly better than those of the last years in the old school. This is a particular achievement in view of the very poor temporary accommodation.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 16 and 18 year olds based on average point scores in GCSE and A-level/AS-level examinations.

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

Achievement overall is good, although standards in literacy and numeracy are well below average and have an adverse effect on other subjects.

National test results and achievements of Year 9 pupils

In 2002 the first results of the new school were well below average overall. English results, though below average, were better than those of mathematics and science. The results were below average in comparison with schools where a similar proportion of pupils are eligible for free school meals, but average in view of the pupils' standards in tests in Year 6.

The standard of work of the present Year 9 pupils is below average in most subjects, including English and science, and well below in mathematics, geography, modern foreign languages and music. Standards in history and physical education are average and in art and design they are well above average. Overall, pupils achieve well in relation to their standards when they started in the school.

GCSE results and achievements of Year 11 pupils

GCSE results were well below average in 2002, but average by comparison with similar schools. Results were significantly higher in 2002 than the results of the previous school, where the Year 11 pupils had spent the last four years. The highest GCSE results were in art and design, where girls did better than average and boys' results were average. In 2002 the governors' targets were exceeded. The standards of work in most subjects, including English and science, of the present Year 11 pupils are below average for their age, and well below average in mathematics and modern foreign languages. Overall, the achievement of these pupils, whose standards on entry to the school were well below average, is satisfactory because though many achieve well, some are limited by poor attendance.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|---|
| Attitudes to the school | Good. Most are happy to come to school and enjoy their lessons and the wide range of out of school activities. |
| Behaviour, in and out of classrooms | Satisfactory overall. Generally the behaviour is good in most lessons and pupils are well motivated and work hard. Outside lessons pupils are orderly, both in the crowded corridors and in the grounds. Behaviour with temporary or undemanding teachers is sometimes unruly. The incidence of exclusions is high but has dropped significantly since last year. |
| Personal development and relationships | Very good. There is an ethos of mutual respect that enables pupils to get on well with each other and with teachers. |
| Attendance | Poor. The rate of authorised absence is close to the national average but the rate of unauthorised absence is well above. Although attendance is better this year than last, there is still a significant rate of absence among a group of mainly older pupils. |

TEACHING AND LEARNING

| Teaching of pupils: | aged 11-14 years | aged 14-16 years |
|----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Lessons seen overall | Good | Good |

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

Teaching is good overall. Teaching and learning were at least good in over seven out of ten lessons observed in the inspection. In a quarter of all lessons the teaching was very good or, occasionally, excellent. The rest of the teaching was mainly satisfactory, although there was a little unsatisfactory teaching, mostly in Years 7 to 9. Teachers plan well to match what they teach to the needs of particular groups and individuals.

Teaching in English, mathematics and science is good. Teachers know their subjects, plan well, and excite pupils' interest and desire to do well. There is also a high proportion of very good teaching in history and in art and design. Here, teachers combine an enthusiasm for their subjects with impeccable planning and assessment, so that pupils learn confidently and standards are rising as a result. The shortage of permanent specialist teachers in modern foreign languages and music leads to unsatisfactory teaching and learning in a significant minority of lessons in these subjects.

Literacy and numeracy are taught well in English and mathematics. In history also, pupils learn to read critically and express themselves clearly in writing. However, other subjects make a limited contribution to the development of language and number.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|--|
| The quality and range of the curriculum | Satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11 where there is a growing number of vocational courses. Music in Years 7 to 9 does not cover the National Curriculum fully. ICT is not used enough in several subjects. There is good extra-curricular provision including recreational and study opportunities. Careers, sex and drug education and citizenship are dealt with well in the personal and social education programme. Very good links with the community contribute to effective preparation for further education and work. There are very good links with primary schools and further education colleges. |
| Provision for pupils with special educational needs | Good overall; satisfactory in Years 7 to 9 and good in Years 10 and 11. Pupils are given very effective support in lessons. There is not enough individual specialist help for the few very needy pupils who can barely read. |
| Provision for pupils with English as an additional language | There is good provision, to suit each individual pupil's needs. Pupils make good progress and take part fully in the life of the school. |
| Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | Good overall. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory, and for social, moral and cultural development it is good. |
| How well the school cares for its pupils | Satisfactory. There is a wide range of well-coordinated strategies to support pupils in their personal and academic life. Pupils' work is assessed well and the information used effectively to check progress and raise standards. Staff know pupils well as individuals and ensure that an appropriate curriculum is available, whatever the need. There are good arrangements for child protection. A number of health and safety issues were brought to the |

| | |
|--------------------------|---|
| | school's attention during the inspection and the school moved quickly to put these right. |
| Partnership with parents | Satisfactory. There are close links with parents of pupils with particular needs, and some effective initiatives to link parents more closely with the school. . The school makes strenuous efforts to keep in touch with parents and welcomes their support. |

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

| Aspect | Comment |
|--|--|
| Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff | Very good. The headteacher provides excellent direction and is well supported by senior and middle managers. Management systems are very clearly expressed and carried out effectively and efficiently. The leadership group understands the principles of best value and applies them well. |
| How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities | Satisfactory. Governors are supportive and well informed and play their full part in policy making. They do not, however, fully meet their statutory responsibilities to ensure the health and safety of pupils. |
| The school's evaluation of its performance | Good. There are effective systems for evaluating the quality of major features such as teaching, learning, pupils' progress and personal development. Initiatives are routinely evaluated and action taken if necessary. The school compares its performance with others and consults widely. |
| The strategic use of resources | Good. The school uses its currently limited resources well, and makes very good use of additional funding, particularly through the management of the EAZ, to ensure that initiatives contribute to pupils' learning, and there is no unnecessary overlap. There are at present insufficient specialist teachers in modern foreign languages and music, resources are barely adequate and the appalling building has lively displays of pupils' work and a welcoming atmosphere. |

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 school is improving. • Children make good progress. • There is a good range of activities outside lessons. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is some unsatisfactory behaviour. • Children do not get enough homework |

The inspection team agreed with those aspects parents liked. They also found some evidence to support comments about what could be improved. Mostly behaviour is good, but there are a few occasions when pupils are not fully interested in what they are doing, that lead to unsatisfactory behaviour. In some subjects, homework is not set frequently enough, and some pupils fail to note it in their planners.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

Standards in tests at the age of 14 (average point scores) in 2002

| | In comparison with all schools nationally | In comparisons with schools in similar contexts | |
|--------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| | | Prior attainment | Free school meals |
| English | Below average | Above average | Average |
| Mathematics | Well below average | Below average | Well below average |
| Science | Well below average | Average | Well below average |
| All three subjects | Well below average | Average | Below average |

From the table above it can be seen that in terms of their prior attainment pupils do at least as well as can be expected in English and science, although results overall are well below the national average and below those of pupils in schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals.

Standards in GCSE and GNVQ

| | In comparison with all schools nationally | In comparisons with schools in similar contexts | |
|-------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| | | Prior attainment | Free school meals |
| 5 or more grades A*-C | Well below average | N/a | Average |
| 5 or more grades A*-C | Below average | N/a | Average |
| 1 or more grades A*-G | Well below average | N/a | Below average |
| Average GCSE points score per pupil | Well below average | N/a | Average |

1. Although the results above are well below the national picture, in most respects they are as good as could be expected on the basis of these pupils' standards two years ago. The school exceeded its targets, although these were based on sound knowledge of pupils' prior attainment and were sufficiently ambitious. In most subjects the results were better than those of the school's forerunner. In consequence, the school has received a School Achievement Award from the Secretary of State for Education. The best GCSE results were in art and design, where standards were close to average, and girls' results were above average. In English, results were below average, and therefore better than most other subjects. The worst results were in geography and modern foreign

languages. In these subjects there were very few higher grades and a high proportion of pupils did not achieve a grade at all. Generally boys do worse than girls, but in some traditionally masculine subjects such as mathematics and science, boys did better than girls in 2002.

Standards at the end of Year 9 and Year 11 in work and lessons and achievement over time

2. Overall, standards by Year 9 and Year 11 are below average and in a number of subjects they are well below average. Exceptions are art and design and physical education. In art and design standards are above average by the end of Year 9 and pupils in the current Year 11 are working at well above average standards. In physical education standards are average by the end of Year 9 and above average by the end of Year 11.
3. Achievement overall is good. Pupils are reaching higher standards than could be expected from their well below average standards on entry. However, there is a difference in achievement between the younger and older pupils. While many pupils in Years 10 and 11 respond well to good teaching and their achievement is good in many subjects, a proportion cannot achieve so well because of their frequent absences. This is particularly significant in mathematics and science where gaps in learning have an effect on the understanding of the whole subject.
4. Standards in English and science are below average by the end of Year 9, but for younger pupils this represents good achievement because the standards of pupils in Year 9 were well below average when they started in Henry Smith School. Standards in both subjects are below average in Year 11, and in English, pupils' achievement is good because their standards were well below average when they were in Year 9. In science, poor attendance means that pupils' achievement in Years 10 and 11 is satisfactory rather than good.
5. In mathematics standards remain well below average, both in Year 9 and in Year 11, but achievement in Years 7 to 9 is good because pupils' number skills were very low when they started secondary school. In spite of good teaching, achievement is only satisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because too many pupils are frequently absent. Since the opening of St Hild's, the mathematics department has established itself as dynamic and effective, where pupils learn well and grow in confidence. This is starting to show in their performance in the classroom, particularly in oral work where standards are higher than in written work.
6. Standards in geography are improving, as a result of recent changes in the department. Although standards are still well below average by Year 9, the achievements of pupils in Year 11 is good and their standards, though still below, are closer to average. In history, standards are also rising and achievement is very good. By Year 11 standards are average, and, as a result of a very good start made by younger pupils, standards are average at the end of Year 9.
7. The weakest subjects at present are modern foreign languages and music, and this is due to the current shortage of specialised teachers in these subjects. Specialists in both subjects are due to take up posts in September, but at present standards are well below average in both subjects, achievement is unsatisfactory, and less than half the year group goes on to take modern foreign languages in Years 10 and 11.
8. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons and over time. Almost all on the register of special needs were entered for GCSE examinations in 2002

and gained results which matched and more often exceeded reasonable expectation based on attainment as assessed at the time of their entry to the school. The progress of pupils with severe problems of reading, writing and using numbers is limited by their having insufficient opportunities to receive specialist help as well as extra help provided within lessons. Pupils identified as being gifted or talented also achieve well.

9. Standards of literacy are well below average by the end of Year 9 and are still well below average by the end of Year 11. Pupils have difficulty translating spoken expression into writing and many of all ages make elementary mistakes in spelling and punctuation. Standards in numeracy are well below average, but generally pupils use graphs and simple calculations well enough to cope with the requirements in other subjects.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. Pupils' attitudes to school are good and there is a strong ethos of hope, pride and enthusiasm in this relatively new school. For those pupils who transferred from the previous secondary school, their attitudes to school have significantly improved and they themselves comment on the very good relationships that now exist throughout the school. This is as a direct result of the strong and consistent emphasis on the need for good behaviour and the impact it has on teaching and learning. Pupils are supportive of the very high levels of exclusion enforced last year, and confirm that this has had a positive impact upon their ability to concentrate, study productively and make progress.
11. Most pupils enjoy their work and contribute enthusiastically when teaching is inspirational and the pace of lessons is brisk. In a Year 10 aerobics lesson in physical education the energetic and enthusiastic teaching enthused and motivated the pupils, resulting in an exciting and physically demanding learning experience. Where teaching is less demanding, pupils with behavioural problems become disruptive and hence the learning experience for them and the whole class is unsatisfactory.
12. Exclusions for a fixed term are high at 160, but have reduced from last year by a third so far this year. Exclusions are used only when all other procedures and strategies have been tried. Permanent exclusions are significantly reduced since last year. Such has been the impact of the high standards of behaviour expected of pupils, it is having a positive impact on the behaviour of current Year 6 pupils in the local primary schools.
13. The rate of attendance for the school, at 88 per cent, is poor although there has been an improvement of one per cent this year. Attendance rates for boys and girls are broadly the same, with the exception in Year 9 and Year 11 where girls' attendance is better than that of boys. Unauthorised absence is well above national average. Most of the absence throughout school is for sickness. However, there is a significant number of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, for whom regular attendance in school remains poor despite the best efforts of the dedicated and committed staff.
14. Pupils welcome the opportunity to take on various roles of responsibility such as being members of the school council, prefects, and mentors. Year 8 pupils act as 'buddies' for Year 7 pupils and this ensures the youngest pupils in school settle quickly and easily into their 'new' school.
15. Pupils work very well together and have organised charitable collections for local and international organisations. Pupils are currently organising a fund-raising initiative to send a pupil with a degenerative medical condition on a 'Holiday of a Lifetime' to fulfil a dream to swim with dolphins.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. The school has a number of strategies and initiatives to raise pupils' attainment by improving teaching, and consequently, learning. The success of these methods is evident in the quality of teaching seen during the inspection. In the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, which make up 40 per cent of pupils' lesson time in Years 7 to 9 and nearly half of most pupils' time in Years 10 and 11, the teaching is usually at least good and in a significant number of lessons the teaching is very good. As a result pupils enjoy their lessons and learn well. In most other subjects too the teaching is good overall, with few unsatisfactory lessons and many good ones. Teaching is particularly effective in art and design where two thirds of the lessons seen were either very good or excellent, and led to learning that was very good in most lessons and never less than good.
17. There is, however, some unsatisfactory teaching and learning, mainly in modern foreign languages and music, and this is due almost entirely to the shortage of specialist staff in those subjects. In modern foreign languages the teachers are experienced and skilful. They plan lessons carefully and manage pupils well. However, they do not all know the language well enough to avoid making basic mistakes in pronunciation and grammar which they pass on to the pupils. Also, in these cases teachers are not confident enough in speaking the language to give pupils good practice in listening and speaking themselves. This means that pupils make too little progress in these skills.
18. At present there is no permanent music teacher. Planning is inadequate and most lessons are designed to maintain orderly behaviour rather than to develop the skills of making and enjoying music. There are some well-taught singing lessons where pupils are learning to sing in tune and in parts, and to appreciate different styles of music, but these lessons are taught to a minority of pupils only and most are getting a poor deal in music. Music and modern foreign language specialists have been appointed for September 2003.
19. The remaining unsatisfactory teaching is in engineering and ICT, where, in some lessons, there is little challenge for pupils, who waste time and are bored.
20. Almost all teachers plan their lessons carefully and usually include a lively starting activity and a session at the end of the lesson to review what has gone before. An enthusiastic and effective group of teachers from most departments is trying out a number of different ways of teaching. They evaluate their work frequently, concentrating on the effectiveness of their methods. Their work is already being felt in many areas through innovative ideas and the close attention to the way pupils learn. For example, pupils are helped to learn through drawing diagrams linking facts and ideas in science and other subjects, through dramatising ideas in history and through number games in mathematics.
21. Pupils are continually challenged to think – to such an extent that some complain that they are being made to work too hard. There is, however, too little attention in some areas – for example, science and geography, to making sure that pupils' written work matches their enthusiastic oral work. Work in these subjects is not always thoroughly marked.
22. Gifted and talented pupils are identified early in their time at school and teachers meet their needs in lessons where possible through extra challenges. These pupils also benefit from extra sessions after school when they are expected to think more widely and develop ideas and arguments through discussion and problem solving.

23. The good range of activities in most lessons helps pupils to concentrate, to enjoy learning and to behave well. In the few lessons where the teacher does not challenge the pupils, they become bored and rowdy and learn little.
24. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons because teachers are well informed about the difficulties they experience. They also benefit from the effective help received from a good team of trained teaching assistants.

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

25. The school's curriculum is satisfactory and meets the needs of pupils, particularly in Years 10 and 11, where the curriculum is good. Its range and organisation, particularly in Years 10 and 11, make an effective contribution to the standards achieved and prepare pupils well for further education and adult life. A weakness is the lack of sufficient opportunities in all years for pupils to use computers in subjects other than ICT. This is partly the result of the school's recent move to a smaller building.
26. The range of subjects is satisfactory in Years 7, 8 and 9 with all National Curriculum subjects being taught, although at present the music curriculum does not fully meet requirements. There are no separate drama lessons and the amount offered within English is small. The new subject of citizenship has been successfully introduced and further topics of personal, social and health education are taught in a weekly lesson for all pupils. Pupils are placed into one of two ability bands and setting takes place in the bands. Pupils can move between bands at the end of an academic year. Movement within sets is possible in most subjects when their progress merits this. This has enabled teaching to become better focused on meeting pupils' differing needs. It has been particularly successful in raising the standards of higher attaining pupils. The Key Stage 3 Strategy¹ is being introduced in a number of subjects and is starting to have a positive impact.
27. The provision for music and modern foreign languages is however, unsatisfactory. In music, practical skills are not developed. In modern foreign languages, time allocated is low in Years 7, 8 and 9 and this has an adverse effect on standards. In Year 7, all the lessons are on one day and this also has a detrimental effect on standards. No second language is possible and there is limited extra-curricular provision in the department.
28. The curriculum in Years 10 and 11 has sufficient breadth to enable pupils to follow courses that suit their abilities and aspirations. All pupils take English, mathematics, science, a technology subject and personal and social education including citizenship and health and sex education. There is a good range of academic and vocational subjects. There is an appropriate range of other GCSE options both academic and vocational, including religious education, physical education, business studies, engineering, manufacturing, music, art and design, ICT, and a choice of French and German. A key skills course is provided for weaker attaining pupils in place of double science. Pupils taking this course study single science. A small number of pupils benefit from a GNVQ construction course at Hartlepool Further Education College. Year 11 is currently finishing a health and social care GNVQ. There are no vocational courses in computing. The school plans to widen its key skills course and the number of vocational courses in September 2003.

¹ A national initiative to raise standards and improve the transition between primary and secondary education

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory overall and has a number of strengths. Pupils have full access to the curriculum and are well supported by teachers and teaching assistants. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, in addition to following GCSE courses, can also choose to study courses linked to future career possibilities or designed to develop their personal skills. Individual education plans provide teachers with helpful information and identify medium and long-term targets for these pupils. The school has not yet developed the use of short-term targets to motivate pupils and provide a focus for and a measure of their learning. The school is working towards meeting this need.
30. An unusually high proportion of pupils on the register of pupils with special needs has previously been identified in the primary schools as being affected by dyslexia. At present, the school does not use further specialised diagnostic tests to identify the precise nature of each pupil's difficulty and the strategies most likely to help. The school has plans to improve on this situation.
31. There is good provision for pupils for whom English is not the home language. Pupils' varied and individual needs are assessed and appropriate support is provided. Consequently these pupils quickly learn English and achieve well in other subjects too.
32. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities, which are particularly strong in sport. There are clubs in a number of subjects including mathematics, art and design, history, design and technology, and geography. There are visits to places of interest and a good range of speakers raises pupils' interest and awareness of life outside school as well as supporting learning within the curriculum. The Young Enterprise club provides good opportunities for pupils to develop team-building and entrepreneurial skills. Pupils are motivated by being entered for competitions in mathematics. However, there are only limited opportunities for pupils to further their interests in drama, music and modern foreign languages. There are only a rock band, which is organised by staff outside the music department and an annual talent show, though this involves around 140 pupils. No foreign visits are organised in modern foreign languages. Provision for more talented pupils is good and includes a range of visits, conferences and summer schools including visits to universities.
33. Residential visits are used well to promote and stretch the learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils. There is good provision for additional learning opportunities for other pupils in specific subjects such as history and art and design. Residential visits are also used to reward those pupils who have performed well, or, who have achieved 100 per cent attendance for the year.
34. The programme for personal, social and health education is very good. Since the introduction of citizenship as a new subject, personal, social and health education has been taught in modules by teams of tutors during a weekly lesson. The programme includes topics not covered by citizenship, such as drugs awareness and sex education, disability and stereotyping. Experts from local organisations are invited to give in-depth talks on these issues and tutors follow up with discussions. Pupils are encouraged to participate and discuss issues exploring values and discussing their views. The monitoring of personal, social and health education teaching and learning is carried out effectively.
35. There is very good careers education that starts in Year 7 and continues through to Year 11. Work in class on increasing pupils' knowledge and understanding of career possibilities is reinforced effectively through a well-planned programme of visits and outside speakers. A particularly good example was observed in Year 11, when a visiting speaker discussed 'employability skills'. While pupils were reticent to become involved

the speaker skilfully and subtly dispelled their own low self-esteem and succeeded in making them realise that they all have something to offer a potential employer. The school makes good use of local knowledge and expertise. For example, a one-day conference is held for Year 10 in which visitors from industry and commerce involve pupils in workshops to develop the skills needed to apply for courses or employment. Visits to local universities are very successful – some pupils from families where there is little experience of higher education are now keen to go on to university.

Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

36. The school's developing ethos as a church school is beginning to affect the lives of pupils and staff as spirituality is increasingly emphasised in subjects of the curriculum. For example, in English, pupils read a broad range of novels that make them explore complex ideas and emotions. In mathematics and science pupils are encouraged to challenge and debate, and deal with fundamental questions such as "What is infinity?" Art and design too plays an important role in stimulating pupils' interests, providing opportunities to handle original artwork produced by a visiting artist. During a Year 9 art and design lesson, pupils were requested to close their eyes and 'see' dancing light underwater. Such was the depth of pupils' spiritual experience, they all clapped spontaneously at the end of the lesson. The 'Thought For The Day' initiative is beginning to promote a calming ethos. A visit by Year 7 pupils to Durham Cathedral was judged by them to have been "awesome". Further visits to local churches for services during Easter stimulated pupils' sense of spiritual awareness. Some teachers do not yet grasp all opportunities to get pupils to think beyond the everyday aspects of school life.
37. The rigorous approach adopted by the school in promoting pupils' good behaviour has been very successful. It demonstrates the school's commitment to improving pupils' moral development. Pupils have firm views about the need to behave in lessons and in school and have a shared sense of what is right and wrong. They are strongly supportive of the stance the school made in excluding a significant number of pupils whom they deemed disruptive to their learning. Pupils are encouraged to care for others and regular and generous donations to local and world charities are evidence of their developing moral values.
38. Pupils' social skills are developed in many lessons where they are required to work in pairs or groups. In a Year 9 history lesson, for example, pupils worked together in pairs and were expected to pass on accurate knowledge to others. Time limitations and the 'feel good factor' experienced by them as their information was well received by others, produced a stimulating lesson, reinforcing their social and moral development.
39. The work of the EAZ staff and learning mentors with pupils for whom socialising or communicating with adults and other pupils presents a real challenge, is well developed and is producing good results. It enables these pupils to grow in confidence and to improve their learning skills.
40. Pupils' cultural development is supported by a wide variety of trips and visits to local museums, galleries, churches and theatres. A residential visit to Scarborough for a group of GCSE, borderline C/D grade pupils to enrich and stimulate their work in art and design was much valued. A workshop for gifted and talented pupils enabled them to widen their skills and knowledge through working with a professional artist. Teachers in geography, art and design, history, English and modern foreign languages also promote and develop pupils' cultural understanding. The art and design department in particular makes a significant contribution to pupils' personal development by entrusting them with original artwork from internationally renowned artists.

41. Pupils have little direct experience of life in a multi-cultural community. The school makes a satisfactory effort to compensate for this. There are displays of multi-cultures and multi-faiths around school and in classrooms. Teachers are sometimes able to introduce cultural and multi-cultural comparisons into their lessons to stimulate and challenge pupils' ideas, beliefs and values. In a Year 10 English lesson, the teacher was able to link the poem being discussed effectively to asylum seekers and this increased pupils' understanding of the poem's meaning. 'Africa Week' was a whole-school, multi-cultural focus and included pupils from six local primary schools. African artists and musicians in residence brought 'life and spirit' into the initiative to further pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

42. Monitoring pupils' academic performance and personal development is good and the personal support and guidance for pupils are strengths of the school. The identification of pupils' individual needs is a strong feature and builds upon the commitment by all staff to ensure pupils receive the necessary and appropriate support, enabling them to achieve both personal and academic success.
43. There is a broad range of very effective initiatives that provide timely, appropriate and individually tailored programmes to raise pupils' academic, personal, and behavioural standards. The work of the learning support unit, the EAZ and the learning mentors in particular, through their dedicated and committed staff, provides opportunities otherwise unavailable to the most disruptive and disaffected pupils in school.
44. The pastoral care team is well organised, and strongly led. Weekly meetings ensure information relating to pupils' personal and academic progress, behavioural and attendance issues is routinely discussed. Suitable strategies are implemented swiftly to ensure all pupils are well supported.
45. There are very good systems in place for recording and monitoring pupils' attendance and lateness using up-to-date technology. Technology is used effectively to record attendance. The recent appointment of an academic registrar means that staff have detailed reports and analyses of attendance, lateness and other useful information that may have an impact upon pupils' academic achievement. Staff work co-operatively with outside agencies through externally funded initiatives and learning mentors. The school makes good use of a broad range of effective support services including the local authority's education social worker to reduce incidents of absence.

Assessment of pupils' work

46. The school has good procedures for assessing pupils' academic progress. All subject departments except music assess pupils' work regularly and keep good records to show how they are getting on compared with their previous performance. Through its good central academic register the school keeps information on each pupil and is able to pinpoint where individuals are under-achieving. More importantly, most departments are effective in letting pupils know how well they are doing and giving them useful tips on how they can improve their work. This is done through day-to-day marking, formal tests and the twice-yearly reports to parents. In the best practice, for example in mathematics, history, design and technology and art and design, teachers discuss pupils' progress with them and set them realistic targets to help them focus on their weak areas. There is scope for doing this in a more systematic way in Years 7, 8 and 9 so that targets are more closely linked to National Curriculum levels and pupils have a clearer idea of what they are aiming at.

47. Some departments go further than this and expect pupils to review and evaluate their own work. For example, in history and design and technology pupils have an opportunity of looking back at their performance in a test and commenting, not only on how well they think they did, but also on where they could have done even better. This leads to the very good practice of pupils setting their own targets, which they then agree with their teachers. Pupils would benefit greatly if all departments encouraged them to do this.
48. The school is very effective in keeping an eye on pupils' progress and supporting them when they are struggling or under-achieving. Form tutors and assistant year co-ordinators have an overview of individual pupils and are able to take swift action when it is clear they are falling behind in a number of subjects. With the help of a large number of learning mentors from within and outside the school it is possible to give these pupils the individual attention they need. This scheme has become so successful that the school is able to provide every pupil in Years 9 and 11 with an individual adult mentor. There are a number of examples of how effective this has been with certain pupils. In one case a girl who had become disruptive and disaffected in Year 8 was referred to a mentor in Year 9. The very good one-to-one relationship between the two was a key factor in helping the girl grow in self-confidence. By the end of Year 9 she had increased her grades significantly and she in turn has started a course in learning to become a mentor to younger pupils. This is a notable success story.

Support for pupils with exceptional needs

49. With one exception, no pupils with learning difficulties are withdrawn from lessons to receive additional help with basic literacy and numeracy development. The school offers a range of learning opportunities to pupils after school for learning support such as help with coursework organisation, paired reading and the teaching of phonics. However, attendance is voluntary, and sessions, particularly in the summer term, are liable to cancellation.
50. The school has established a learning support unit for pupils who are in danger of exclusion because of poor behaviour or are returning to school after a period of exclusion. Pupils spend all or some of their time in the unit according to their readiness for reintroduction. There is a strong emphasis in the work done upon building pupils' confidence, encouraging positive attitudes to work and developing skills of collaboration. The success of this work is evident in the significant reduction in the number of pupils excluded this year compared to last year. Some other pupils are withdrawn from lessons for short courses in behaviour management and setting targets for improvement, to which they respond positively.
51. In accordance with the local education authority's guideline the school has identified one in five of its pupils as being talented and/or gifted. Those with identified sporting and artistic talents are helped to develop their interests both within school and through links with external providers such as local clubs. There is a good variety of provision to encourage pupils to develop their academic interests and to think about their opportunities for the future. The programme being developed already includes visits to universities, visits by students now at university, hearing presentations by adults from a range of employment, and workshops run by visiting writers and artists. Pupils studying religious education are being entered for GCSE in Year 10.

Health and safety

52. Given the dilapidated condition of the buildings, there has been insufficient attention and commitment paid to health and safety matters by the governing body. The former health and safety governing body sub-committee has been incorporated into the staffing and

finance sub-committee. This has further eroded the emphasis on health and safety issues. This is unsatisfactory. However, the school dealt swiftly and effectively with matters brought to the attention of the headteacher and chair of governors during the inspection.

53. Pupils' toilets are generally of unsatisfactory condition and are inadequate for the numbers of pupils in school. These unsatisfactory conditions are in marked contrast to otherwise high standards of care and consideration the school enthusiastically promotes and provides for pupils.
54. The school's provision for child protection is good. Clear, comprehensive guidance is provided in the staff handbook. Clear lines for reporting concerns by staff about pupils are clearly defined. The policy conforms to the local authority's guidelines.
55. Administration staff play an important part in the care and welfare of pupils. They undertake a broad range of duties and their pleasant and friendly manner has a positive impact on pupils, staff and visitors to the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

56. Parents and carers indicate there has been a significant improvement in the relationships between them and school since the new school was established. Parents recognise the recent improvements in the school. They are supportive of the former high exclusion initiative and the positive impact it has made on pupils' behaviour and their ability to make progress in lessons.
57. Most parents receive satisfactory information about the progress their children are making in the twice-yearly reports. Information for parents of children with special education needs and those being supported by staff through other initiatives such as the learning support unit and the EAZ is comprehensive. Contact between school staff and parents varies appropriately according to the needs of pupils and the sort of help given by school staff. Contacts can be on a daily basis where necessary, and are designed to involve parents with their children's learning at home. Meetings held for parents of gifted and talented pupils, and for those aspiring to five or more A*-C GCSE's are seen by them to be informative and helpful.
58. Although parents are generally supportive of school and their children's learning, some keep their children away from school for holidays and for other occasions. This adversely affects standards, particularly in Years 10 and 11.
59. A particularly well supported sponsored initiative was the family learning day, designed to encourage families to have fun and learn together. The rich variety of activities provided clearly indicates the school's commitment to involving parents with their children's personal and social development.
60. A pilot Year 7 newsletter was well received by parents. Additional letters that strengthen links with parents are sent out half termly together with other useful information. For example, 'The EAZ Newsletter', sent to parents during this current term, is bright, informative and very well presented.
61. The information contained in the prospectus and governors' annual report to parents is comprehensive and provides a good insight into the work and aims of the school and its provision for high quality education in a Christian context. It meets statutory requirements.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

Leadership

62. At the time of the inspection the headteacher had been in post for under two years. In this relatively short time the school has undergone highly significant changes in almost all aspects of its life. The headteacher has demonstrated excellent leadership. She is a very visible presence around the buildings, and no one is in any doubt about who is leading the school. She and her re-organised senior management team have a clear vision for the school which is beginning to be made manifest. They have achieved much.
63. The major vehicle for this change was the publication of the school mission statement. This made clear that this is a church school, that standards are to be raised, that the community is to be totally involved in the school's life and that pupils' aspirations are to be raised. Very significant progress in all these areas is now observable and forms the basis for the school's future. Other major issues that have been successfully addressed are the raising of staff morale, the changed perception of the school by parents, and teacher recruitment.
64. The school now has a well- structured management system with a framework of regular meetings. Consultation is now well developed, and through membership of working parties, pastoral groups, and departmental meetings all staff have the opportunity to have their views listened to, although no one is in doubt that the final decisions rest with the headteacher and the governing body.
65. Heads of department are currently involved in extending their roles in monitoring and evaluating standards of teaching and learning and are developing satisfactory systems to support this process. There are good strategies and structures are in place, but some heads of department are now in need of management training in order for them to carry out this process efficiently.
66. The governing body is committed to the success and prosperity of the school. They know the school's strengths and have suitable priorities for improvement. 'Raising standards' is at the top of the list. Relationships with the local education authority and the diocese are close. Governors are fully involved in development planning and associated expenditure. They do not, however, keep a close enough watch on ensuring pupils' health and safety.

Efficiency

67. The school plans its spending well, to make efficient use of the basic income and the additional funding from other sources such as the Education Action Zone. There is a very clear long-term development plan as well as a one-year action plan and funding is closely linked to planning. The appointment of non-teaching staff to manage attendance and pupil records, finance and the site has allowed senior teaching staff to focus on the fundamentals of teaching and learning and the success of this is already evident.
68. The leadership seeks to obtain the best value for all outlays. Initiatives are monitored carefully and those that work are encouraged and those that do not are aborted. The leadership consults its staff, pupils and parents where appropriate and compares its performance with other schools nationally and locally. So far the school has not been in a position to make many purchases, but observes stringent procedures when it does so.

Staffing

69. The development of teaching and learning is the central focus of provision that enriches and broadens the repertoire of teachers' skills. It successfully dovetails the needs of the school with those of individual teachers, several of whom are supported in increasing their qualifications. The climate of consultation and collaboration in school encourages all teachers to raise their expectations of themselves and contribute to the development of others. The school led the way in the region in developing the role of Advanced Skills Teachers and continues to see the results of sensitive help and advice to teachers in, for example, mathematics.
70. It is typical of the school to open up opportunities for responsibility to teachers of all levels of experience. For example a newly qualified teacher co-ordinates provision for gifted and talented pupils; the Action Research Group makes recommendations to all teachers about classroom practice; returning from a course, teachers are expected to pass on, formally, to others what they have learned.
71. Those supporting newly qualified teachers and students in training enhance their own management skills while providing good support and professional advice to beginners. The school makes the most of opportunities opened up through the EAZ initiative, the Beacon School and City Learning Centre and best value principles are applied to funding.
72. All staff are entitled to opportunities for skills' development and a pilot group, managed by a non-teacher, is currently devising a training plan for teaching assistants, clerical staff, technicians, administrative staff etc.
73. Performance management is on target, records are thorough and policies for managing weak teaching and complaints are clear. A 'Quality Standard' is applied to the work of all who are responsible for aspects of professional development and support. The deputy headteacher who has very clear oversight ensures that everything contributes to school self-evaluation and closely monitors all the very effective provision. She enables the school's aspirations to be translated into practice.
74. Currently staffing is unsatisfactory in music, geography and modern foreign languages. While there is good support for supply teachers in geography, the lack of suitably qualified teachers is most acute in music and modern foreign languages and is adversely affecting pupils' learning.

Accommodation

75. The school manages well with the deplorable and cramped temporary accommodation. The dismal exterior belies the cheerful displays and bright paintwork within. Nevertheless, the quality of education suffers, particularly in subjects needing specialist accommodation. For example, in a singing lesson pupils took longer than they should to learn to sing a simple tune as a canon, because there was no piano to help them hold their parts. In science teachers struggle valiantly to carry out investigations in rooms with carpeted floors and no Bunsen burners. This inevitably leads to some failed experiments and too much time dealing with equipment. Younger pupils will benefit from the new purpose-built school due to open in 2004. Older pupils have been disadvantaged in spite of heroic attempts by the staff to compensate.

Resources

76. Resources for teaching are just satisfactory, with departments having an adequate supply of text books and other materials. In art and design good use is made of artists in residence, and there are plenty of materials in the department. The library provides very good support for pupils' learning. It is very well organised with many imaginative features. Consequently it has a welcoming atmosphere and is well used at lunch time and after school. Well-trained pupil librarians make a good contribution to its effectiveness. There is, however, a shortage of ICT equipment – one computer to six pupils – which restricts departments' use of ICT. The ICT department has sufficient computers, although some need to be updated.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

77. In order to raise the attainment of students, the governors and management should:

- 1 Improve attendance by:
 - i) impressing on parents even more strongly the importance of regular attendance for their children's success, exploring patterns in pupils' absences still further and targeting support even more closely, particularly through those staff, such as learning mentors, who have close links with pupils who are reluctant to attend school. (Paragraphs: 3, 5, 13, 89, 97, 107, 126, 136)
- 2 Improve provision in music and modern foreign languages by:
 - i) ensuring as far as possible that teachers in music have adequate teaching skills; (Paragraphs: 156, 157)
 - ii) in modern foreign languages, ensuring that pupils are taught by specialist language teachers, developing a new vision for foreign languages in the school, and spacing language lessons more evenly through the week. (Paragraph: 152)
- 3 Further develop a whole-school approach to literacy to include: providing greater opportunities for extended writing, improving speaking and listening skills, and making special provision for pupils with the greatest problems in reading and writing. (Paragraphs: 95, 110, 111, 131, 132)
- 4 Increase the use of ICT, particularly in art and design, design and technology, geography and modern foreign languages. (Paragraphs: 25, 102, 112, 113, 127, 135, 148, 154)

In addition to the above key issues, the school should consider the following other less important issues for inclusion in its action plan:

- a) Improve the number skills of those pupils for whom elementary problems such as accurate counting and measuring, and adding small numbers present great difficulty. (Paragraph: 110)
- b) Improve consistency in marking work and setting homework. (Paragraphs: 21, 110, 152)
- c) Improve procedures for identifying health and safety risks. (Paragraphs: 52, 66)
- d) Establish greater consistency in the way staff approach low-level disruption, particularly when teachers are new or temporary, and ensure that every teacher recognises the link between dull teaching and disruptive behaviour. (Paragraphs: 11, 18, 19, 101, 134, 155, 156, 167)
- e) Providing more specialist teaching for those pupils with very basic needs in reading and number. (Paragraphs: 49, 91, 104)

LINKS WITH THE COMMUNITY

78. In its short life the school has forged very effective links with many branches of the community. These widen pupils' learning opportunities and support their personal and social development, good behaviour and attendance.
79. Participation in the EAZ scheme, based at St Hild's, also enhances close co-operation with primary schools. There is very good co-operation with the local college of further education and with a number of universities. Pupils are made aware of choices available to them, especially in vocational courses such as engineering and manufacturing. This is particularly beneficial for pupils wishing to study engineering and manufacturing while still at school and strengthened the school's bid for Engineering College status. In addition, visitors from local government, industry, the police, prison and fire services, local sports organisations and the City Learning Centre increase provision very effectively.
80. The school has very good links with its feeder primary schools. Teachers from St Hild's work closely with primary schools and some teach primary classes, developing continuity and progression across the two phases of education. Links are particularly close in art and design, and design and technology. In other subjects promising links are being established.
81. A community-based project supports the most disaffected pupils when they transfer to St Hild's. These pupils, who are in danger of poor attendance due to behavioural or personal problems, are given volunteer learning mentors from the community. With help from Year 7 staff mentors encourage these pupils to make their transition with minimal disruption to their learning.
82. External funding is used well to provide pupils with a range of additional learning opportunities through the EAZ unit such as 'Curiosity Bags' which provide a range of reading materials to develop pupils' interest in literacy, particularly for boys.
83. Links with a local Beacon School has had a positive impact on raising standards of teaching for some subjects.
84. The school makes good use of the local City Learning Centre as a homework study centre and as an additional, high quality ICT resource experience for pupils. It has been particularly successful in motivating Year 11 boys in their pre-examination revision work in February. Attendance at the centre is rising with over 40 pupils studying each evening. Loan of hi-tech resources is preparing staff well in preparation for the move to the new school.
85. The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is used well to provide for additional staff to support pupils requiring additional support with their learning.
86. The Prince's Trust xl Club works with a number of pupils who are experiencing problems in school. During the inspection, a presentation by eight pupils provided clear evidence of the benefits this initiative has been to their personal and social development. Significant improvements in their rates of attendance, incidents of lateness, and poor behaviour were celebrated.

87. At the recent 'Celebration of Achievement' evening, held at the Borough Hall in February, 2003, many of the trophies and awards were sponsored by local and wider community companies. This is clear indication of the impact St Hild's Church of England School is having in promoting itself, whilst enlisting the support and partnership of industry for the benefit of all pupils in school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed

127

Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils

61

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

| | Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|------------|-----------|-----------|------|--------------|----------------|------|-----------|
| Number | 4 | 28 | 58 | 30 | 5 | 2 | 0 |
| Percentage | 3 | 22 | 46 | 23 | 4 | 2 | 0 |

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching.

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

Y7 – Y11

Number of pupils on the school's roll

902

Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals

259

Special educational needs

Y7 – Y11

Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs

31

Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register

183

English as an additional language

No of pupils

Number of pupils with English as an additional language

6

Pupil mobility in the last school year

No of pupils

Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission

22

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

35

Attendance

Authorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 7.9 |
| National comparative data | 7.8 |

Unauthorised absence

| | % |
|---------------------------|-----|
| School data | 4.2 |
| National comparative data | 1.2 |

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

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 85 | 110 | 195 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task Results | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 39 | 37 | 37 |
| | Girls | 74 | 45 | 50 |
| | Total | 113 | 82 | 87 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 58 | 42 | 45 |
| | National | 66 | 67 | 66 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 18 | 26 | 17 |
| | National | 32 | 45 | 33 |

| Teachers' Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|---------|-------------|---------|
| Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above | Boys | 33 | 35 | 39 |
| | Girls | 72 | 47 | 48 |
| | Total | 105 | 82 | 87 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above | School | 54 | 42 | 44 |
| | National | 67 | 70 | 67 |
| Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above | School | 18 | 28 | 17 |
| | National | 32 | 44 | 34 |

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

| | | | | |
|--|------|------|-------|-------|
| Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year | Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
| | 2002 | 73 | 94 | 167 |

| GCSE results | | 5 or more grades A* to C | 5 or more grades A*-G | 1 or more grades A*-G |
|---|----------|--------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified | Boys | 16 | 60 | 66 |
| | Girls | 36 | 82 | 89 |
| | Total | 52 | 142 | 155 |
| Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified | School | 31 | 85 | 93 |
| | National | 50 | 91 | 96 |

| GCSE results | | GCSE point score |
|-------------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Average point score per pupil | School | 30.6 |
| | National | 39.8 |

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

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

| Categories used in the Annual School Census | No of pupils on roll | Number of fixed period exclusions | Number of permanent exclusions |
|---|-----------------------------|--|---------------------------------------|
| White – British | 888 | 238 | 12 |
| White – Irish | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| White – any other White background | 9 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Black African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – White and Asian | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Mixed – any other mixed background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Asian or Asian British - Indian | 1 | 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 | 1 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – Caribbean | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – African | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Black or Black British – any other Black background | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Chinese | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Any other ethnic group | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| No ethnic group recorded | 0 | 0 | 0 |

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

Teachers and classes**Qualified teachers and classes: Y7-Y11**

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of qualified teachers (FTE) | 52.3 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher | 17.3 |

Education support staff: Y7-Y11

| | |
|---|-----|
| Total number of education support staff | 27 |
| Total aggregate hours worked per week | 937 |

Deployment of teachers: Y7-Y11

| | |
|---|------|
| Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes | 73.3 |
|---|------|

Average teaching group size: Y7-Y11

| | |
|-------------|------|
| Key Stage 3 | 24.7 |
| Key Stage 4 | 22.2 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

| | |
|----------------|--------|
| Financial year | 2001/2 |
|----------------|--------|

| | |
|--|---------|
| | £ |
| Total income | 3155561 |
| Total expenditure | 3206838 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3571 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 88036 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 36759 |

Recruitment of teachers

| | |
|--|----|
| Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years | 19 |
| Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years | 16 |

| | |
|--|-----|
| Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE) | 6.8 |
| Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE) | 3 |
| Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE) | 3.2 |

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

| | |
|-----------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out | 902 |
| Number of questionnaires returned | 133 |

Percentage of responses in each category

| | Strongly agree | Tend to agree | Tend to disagree | Strongly disagree | Don't know |
|--|----------------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|------------|
| My child likes school. | 34 | 49 | 9 | 8 | 1 |
| My child is making good progress in school. | 36 | 50 | 5 | 6 | 3 |
| Behaviour in the school is good. | 26 | 42 | 21 | 5 | 6 |
| My child gets the right amount of work to do at home. | 26 | 41 | 23 | 7 | 4 |
| The teaching is good. | 27 | 56 | 5 | 2 | 11 |
| I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on. | 38 | 37 | 17 | 8 | 2 |
| I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem. | 62 | 31 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best. | 61 | 32 | 3 | 3 | 1 |
| The school works closely with parents. | 32 | 44 | 18 | 4 | 3 |
| The school is well led and managed. | 38 | 41 | 11 | 3 | 7 |
| The school is helping my child become mature and responsible. | 36 | 47 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons. | 29 | 50 | 8 | 5 | 8 |

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Pupils of all ages achieve well.
- Pupils learn well because teaching is good.
- The pilot scheme for assessing pupils' achievement in Year 7 is excellent.
- The department is very well led and well managed.
- Teaching assistants are very effective.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below average and there is not enough emphasis on raising boys' attainment
- Some pupils with special educational needs do not receive the specialised teaching they need.
- Poor attendance hinders the achievement of many pupils.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards of work seen | Below average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Good |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Below average | Below average |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership of the subject | Very good |
| Management of the subject | Good |

88. In Year 9 pupils are working at a standard that is below the national average. However, as they entered the school in Year 7 with standards that were well below average, this signifies good achievement. In their study of *Macbeth*, higher attaining pupils show good insight: they are aware of the various themes, and they compare and contrast scenes with understanding. They discuss the play confidently with each other and with the teacher. They write competently for a variety of purposes. For the most part they have good control of language and of technical skills such as spelling and punctuation. However, errors occur when they try to express more complex ideas or use less common language. Lower attainers read simple material quite successfully. They can hold simple conversations but their vocabulary is very restricted and they can not express their ideas in more than a few unconnected phrases. Their written work contains many mistakes, often merging into one another. There are a few pupils with special educational needs who have not mastered the most basic rules of reading and writing and do not receive the specialised teaching they require.

89. In Years 10 and 11 pupils continue to achieve well although their standard by Year 11 is still below average. Their understanding of literature develops well and is better than indicated by the results in the 2002 GCSE examination, where the results were lower than those for English language, particularly in the case of boys. This improvement is because of well-focused teaching. The highest attainers show good understanding of the dramatic techniques used by J. B. Priestley in *An Inspector Calls*. They discuss their work with each other and join in class discussion meaningfully and competently.

Nevertheless their oral skills are not extensive. They write about a range of subjects of increasing complexity. There are, for example, perceptive accounts of how excitement is built up in a chase scene in a James Bond film. Most pupils draft their work well. Even so, the higher attainers make more technical errors than expected. Lower attainers read quite confidently but have difficulties with unfamiliar words such as 'warily'. When speaking they are mostly confined to simple utterances and the reader often struggles to make sense of their written work. Poor attendance hinders the achievement of many pupils and lowers the general standard.

90. In lessons pupils learn well because teaching is good. Teachers plan well and ensure that lessons are at the right level of difficulty. They have very good management skills based on good relationships with pupils. Consequently lessons are conducted pleasantly and purposefully, and most pupils show a good attitude to English. In a very successful Year 10 lesson pupils were seen reacting well to the teacher's enthusiasm and well-structured teaching to improve their oral skills in a role-playing exercise.
91. Teaching assistants provide very effective help for pupils who have special educational needs, who consequently achieve well. Homework is given regularly and supports what pupils learn in class. Many pupils make good use of computers to present their work attractively. On the other hand, there are too many examples of untidy and careless work.
92. Some teachers mark pupils' work to the very highest standard with comments very clearly aimed at showing pupils exactly what they need to do to improve. However, not all attain this high standard and there are examples of comments that are too vague to be of any help. The department is making good use of the assessment information on pupils. There is an excellent pilot scheme in Year 7 where pupils have individual targets based on their performance in the national tests in Year 6. In the best practice teachers tailor their comments to each pupil's target.
93. The recently appointed head of department provides very good leadership. Consequently teachers feel they are well supported and all are focused on raising standards. The teaching schemes provide a good basis for teaching but as yet do not take into account the department's contribution to aspects of learning such as citizenship or pupils' personal development. The development plan is comprehensive but needs to be rationalised and suitable priorities established. The need to raise boys' standards is not given enough emphasis. At present the department's accommodation is unsatisfactory as there are not enough specialist rooms and teachers often do not have ready access to reference materials or wall displays.

Literacy across the curriculum

94. Pupils enter the school with literacy standards that are well below the national average. They are still well below average by Year 11. The school has a literacy co-ordinator and extra support is at present being provided by the local authority and by a literacy co-ordinator funded by the EAZ.
95. Although provision overall is satisfactory there are marked differences between departments. In art and design, design and technology, and history provision is good. In these subjects there is a strong emphasis on the need for pupils fully to understand the technical language that is used. In English, geography and history pupils receive practice in listening and speaking skills by working in pairs and groups. In general, however, these skills are not given enough emphasis. Consequently when pupils are expected to make presentations, as in art and design, they are reluctant to do so. Similarly there is no concerted effort across all subjects to improve reading skills. Apart

from in English, reading occurs only incidentally when some research is needed. In most subjects there is no planned scheme to use the very good resource provided by the school library. Similarly pupils, especially in Years 7 to 9, are not required to do enough extended writing. They do more in Years 10 and 11 because of coursework requirements. The school's strategy for literacy is not coherent enough to ensure that all subjects contribute fully to raising standards.

Drama

96. Pupils in Year 11 have completed their GCSE course in drama, many successfully. In addition to a few high attaining pupils who chose to study the subject, the group contains many lower attaining pupils and those whose behaviour can be very challenging. Available evidence during the inspection shows that most will achieve a grade and many will achieve a grade between A and C. It was not possible to observe a drama lesson during the inspection because the course has now finished. The same group were observed, with their teacher, rehearsing varied sentence construction in preparation for their GCSE English examination. Pupils worked hard with a sense of purpose in a lesson that was very well taught. The teacher knows these pupils very well. Their respect for and trust in their teacher is very obvious. These strong relationships have considerably enhanced pupils' behaviour and learning.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- The very effective leadership and management of the head of mathematics are key factors in the improvement in mathematics.
- Teaching and learning are good so pupils enjoy mathematics and work hard.
- A well-planned curriculum provides a good framework for teaching and learning.
- Good teaching assistants are an integral part of the mathematics team.

Areas for improvement

- Although standards are improving they are still not high enough.
- ICT is not used consistently enough to support pupils' learning.
- A few pupils with very weak number skills need additional support to help them improve.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Well below average | Well below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Satisfactory |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Well below average | Well below average |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership of the subject | Very good |
| Management of the subject | Very good |

97. Standards on entry to the school in Year 7 are well below average, and towards the lower end of that category. Many pupils enter the school with very weak mathematical knowledge and skills. As a result of good teaching and a well-planned curriculum, pupils' achievement is good in Years 7 to 10 and satisfactory in Year 11. The poor attendance of some average and lower attainers, especially in Year 11, is adversely affecting their

achievement over time. Standards of work are improving steadily. Outcomes from school tests, and from GCSE modules already completed in Year 10, show that external test results in Years 9 and 11 should be better than previously.

98. The very effective leadership and management of the new head of department, in post for four terms, have had a significant positive impact on the reputation of mathematics in the school. Changes made include a well-planned curriculum, matched carefully to pupils' needs, and recognition and action on key priorities, one of which is monitoring and improving teaching. There has been considerable change in staffing. An Advanced Skills Teacher has been in post for two terms, another factor in improving teaching. Currently there are two supply teachers; school staff and also staff from the local education authority and the Education Action Zone support them effectively. The department is expected to be fully staffed for September 2003. Teaching assistants make a strong contribution to the achievement of pupils and are an integral part of the mathematics team.
99. Although standards of work seen in Year 9 are still well below average, the work seen compares much more favourably to that expected for their age group than on entry in Year 7. Nearly all pupils are making good progress in lessons so that achievement over time is good.
100. Many pupils now in Years 10 and 11 started their preparation for GCSE with a low skill base, especially in accurate recall of number facts and of understanding how to apply their knowledge to different situations. Due to good teaching and most pupils' positive attitudes to learning, pupils in Year 10 are making good progress and their achievement is good. The achievement of higher attainers in Year 11 and some average and lower attainers is also good but a poor absence record means the achievement of other pupils in Year 11 is only satisfactory, and a few who rarely attend make very little progress. In all years, pupils are developing their understanding of mathematics, as well as learning to improve the speed and accuracy of calculations and to apply their skills to particular types of problems. Higher attainers are developing their algebraic skills well. Many pupils in the top sets in Years 10 and 11 were able to manipulate algebraic expressions confidently.
101. There was no unsatisfactory teaching or learning seen during the inspection, and in a significant majority of lessons, teaching was good, and some very good. Teachers' class management skills are a real strength. In most lessons, working routines are well established and pupils quickly settle down to work. A good, well-planned, variety of methods is used, which captures pupils' interest and helps them to remember topics covered. For example, a 'starter' activity, getting pupils to visualise different shapes, caught pupils' attention and helped them understand the concept of symmetry. When teaching and learning are very good, probing questioning makes pupils think critically about their methods and gets them to work at increasingly conceptual levels. This helps them to investigate unfamiliar situations and as a result some higher attainers in Year 9 and Year 10 are reaching well above average standards. When teaching is satisfactory but not good, there is not enough variety to keep pupils' interest, or too much time is spent dealing with problems on an individual basis rather than with a larger group. Occasionally, too much time is spent dealing with low-level disruption to work. However, nearly all pupils now have a positive attitude to mathematics and behave well.
102. ICT is used effectively to help pupils learn. For example, in one Year 11 class, pupils' ability to simplify linear algebraic expressions was improved by use of a computer program. However, difficulties in access to resources mean ICT is not used consistently in all classes.

103. An appropriate curriculum and attention to individual needs by teachers and teaching assistants are key factors in helping nearly all pupils, including the few who speak English as a second language, to learn well and make good progress. There is a good range of study support activities such as revision clubs. There is little difference in the standards reached by girls or boys or in their progress or participation in lessons. Demanding class work, and out of school events, such as attendance at master classes, are helping gifted and talented pupils to make rapid progress and reach well above average standards.
104. Nearly all pupils with special educational needs make good progress and achieve well. However, there are a few pupils whose number skills are so weak that they need additional specialist support, in addition to their normal mathematics lessons, in order to improve.

Numeracy across the curriculum

105. Although pupils' numeracy skills are well below average, they are usually sufficient to help them cope with work in other subjects. Pupils' measuring skills are accurate enough to help them with their tasks in design and technology. In one Year 7 class pupils could develop a numeric key to help them to evaluate projects. In geography pupils can carry out surveys; they collect data and present and interpret the results graphically. They can understand grid references and use scale factors. In one Year 9 group, pupils could successfully interpret economic development indicators for different countries. Generally pupils' skills in representing data and interpreting graphs are sufficient for work in science. However, some lower attaining pupils in Year 7 had difficulty in comparing different measurements in metric form.

SCIENCE

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

Strengths

- Good teaching is helping to raise standards.
- The leadership of the experienced head of department is good.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.

Areas for improvement

- There is some inconsistency and lack of detail in marking pupils' work.
- There is insufficient focus on developing pupils' literacy skills.
- The attendance of some pupils is affecting their achievement.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards of work seen | Below average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Satisfactory |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Well below | Well below |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Satisfactory |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |
| Leadership of the subject | | Good |
| Management of the subject | | Good |

106. Standards in tests and public examinations are well below all schools nationally. Results in 2002 show that pupils' achievement is good since they started school with well below national standards.
107. From the work seen in school it is clear that many pupils are now achieving well and this reflects the work taking place to raise standards. Many of the higher attaining groups in Years 7 and 8 are attaining levels in line with or above that expected nationally. The same is true for many of the GCSE groups in the upper band. However, there are still many pupils whose standards are well below national levels. These are mainly in the lower sets in all years where poor attendance is a major contributory factor affecting learning and consequently final examination results. Within GCSE groups overall achievement is satisfactory due mainly to the impact of attendance on learning by many pupils.
108. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well, particularly when helped by teaching assistants working closely with them or when given specially prepared resources such as easily read sheets. Those pupils identified as being of higher ability make good progress as they are offered different courses and additional work to present them with more intellectual challenge. In a Year 7 top group, pupils carried out an experiment to test six unknown solids and were able to evaluate their method as they did so. This is a higher level skill and shows good achievement.
109. Teaching is good overall and sometimes very good. Pupils and teachers get on well together and show mutual respect, and any incidences of poor behaviour are treated firmly and without confrontation. This leads to lessons where the majority of pupils want to do well. Under the good management of the experienced head of department a great deal of work has gone into improving the quality of teaching.
110. In all lessons teachers explain what the lesson will contain and summarise the learning at the end. Teachers use many different methods, such as card games, group work and individual whiteboards for pupils to write on so that they can show what they have learnt. Whilst there is much verbal praise given within lessons, the detail and frequency of marking of pupils' written work are inconsistent across the department. This is particularly important given that most pupils have more than one science teacher in the week and many staff fail to give pupils any indication how they can improve their work. Homework tasks are limited to written exercises, mainly on work sheets, and homework is not set rigorously, particularly to the lower sets. This, together with the inconsistent marking, is not helping the improvement of literacy in many pupils.
111. There are insufficient opportunities for most pupils to develop their literacy skills, particularly in writing. Whilst there is some use of key words, pupils are given few opportunities to write down what they know in their own words except when writing conclusions to experiments. Opportunities to speak about the subject are limited to answering questions.
112. At present, the school has totally inadequate science accommodation. However, teachers are trying valiantly to give pupils as many experiences of practical science as is possible given the facilities. The very effective support from the science technician, the good behaviour of pupils and their observance of identified procedures means these lessons are carried out safely. The accommodation is also preventing any use by pupils of ICT to record data while carrying out experiments. The inadequate facilities are also having some effect on the pace of certain lessons as pupils try to carry out practical tasks with unsuitable equipment.

ART AND DESIGN

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

Strengths

- Standards are higher than in other subjects, and by Year 11 are above average.
- There is high quality teaching, where excellent subject knowledge and artistic expertise are readily shared with the learners.
- A challenging and relevant art and design curriculum has the additional benefits of an exciting programme of curriculum enhancement opportunities.

Areas for improvement

- There is a bigger than usual gap in achievement between boys and girls.
- There is not enough use of ICT to aid the processes of art and for storing images of pupils' work.
- There is not enough regular, formative feedback for learners on the work produced in class and at home through evaluative comments, accompanied by well-judged targets for improvement.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | | |
|------------------------|---------------|--------------------------------|
| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
| Standards of work seen | Above average | Well above average |
| Achievement over time | Very good | Very good |
| Results in GCSE | | In line with national averages |
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Very good |
| Quality of learning | Very good | Very good |
| Attitudes of pupils | Good | Very good |
| Leadership of subject | | Excellent |
| Management of subject | | Very good |

113. Pupils in Year 9 reach standards that are above national averages in art and design. Given that they enter with below average standards, pupils are achieving very well. Pupils can explore and select visual information in relation to their ideas for art work and can manipulate materials and processes to communicate those ideas. Homework is directly linked to work in the classroom and pupils understand how it positively contributes to standards. Access to computers is restricted in the teaching rooms and there is not enough use of ICT to support and extend pupils' work.
114. Overall, pupils in Year 11 are working at levels that are well above average, and well above the standard of the 2002 GCSE results. The department has already started to implement strategies that seek to address the considerable gap between boys' and girls' achievement in art and design. Pupils have well-developed skills in drawing, painting and collage and ability to organise and presenting visual ideas, often relating to their own personal interests and culture. Pupils with special educational need achieve well and those identified as 'gifted and talented' achieve very high standards.
115. Teaching and learning in art and design are very well managed and organised. The teachers are artists and designers in their own right and readily share their artistic concerns with the learners. They are enthusiastic and have very high expectations for all pupils. Pupils are informed of the level they are currently working at, but are less aware of the subject-specific criteria being used for assessing their work and progress.

116. Attitudes to learning are very good and teachers have established a good working relationship with pupils. Teachers have created a good climate for learning in the art and design department, where pupils respond with interest and enthusiasm. Consequently behaviour is good and the routines for learning are generally understood and respected.
117. Art and design makes an excellent contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural education and to the ethos of the school. Pupils are encouraged to consider a range of ethical issues associated with environmental concerns, use of resources, exploitation of animals, or such issues as those of race and gender. Pupils are provided with opportunities to study art works in their social context and consideration is given to the roles and status of artists, craftspeople and designers within society. Pupils are exploring the conventions of art from other peoples to learn and understand how these are used to convey ideas, beliefs and values. The department hosts frequent residencies for artists in school, often from other cultures. For example, the Jewish artist Nahem Shoa recently made a valuable contribution to extending pupils' knowledge and use of cultural imagery and language. Original paintings by Nahem, and of St Hild's pupils, now adorn the entrance foyer to the school. There are regular residential visits for pupils of all ages; visits to galleries are undertaken and a productive link with the Hatton Gallery in Newcastle has been established.
118. There is excellent leadership and management in art and design, where the head of department provides a clear vision and direction for the subject. Organisation and planning are exemplary and there is very good support for the newly qualified teacher. A 'can do' culture has been established, where a relevant curriculum and exciting learning opportunities fully engage the learners.

CITIZENSHIP

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

Strengths

- The teaching scheme adequately meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- The range of visits, visiting speakers and activities raises pupils' awareness of citizenship matters and issues
- There is good subject documentation and guidance to teachers.
- The school council is effective in involving pupils, thereby promoting participation in school activities.

Areas for improvement

- There are insufficient formal assessment procedures to evaluate learning and achievement.
- Reports for parents and pupils lack detail.
- The number of staff managing this subject area makes co-ordination difficult.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 10/11 |
|-----------------------|--------------|--------------|
| Attitudes of pupils | Good | Good |
| Leadership | Good | Good |
| Management of subject | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |

119. During the course of the inspection week no citizenship was taught. As current work is primarily of a discussion nature with only a small amount of written work it is not possible

to make any valid and reliable overall judgements on standards, achievement or teaching.

120. The teaching scheme fully meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. All the required aspects are in place. Citizenship is taught in six-week modules with personal and social education, which covers health and sex education, equal opportunities and careers and employability. There are currently separate co-ordinators for each module under the overall supervision of an assistant headteacher. It is a well-considered and planned programme. Subject documentation and guidance to teachers are good.
121. Both from observation of the coursework booklets and from talking to pupils it is clear that the course is effectively widening knowledge and understanding of what is necessary to become a responsible and informed citizen. Pupils are developing enquiry skills and participation skills. They enjoy the opportunity to discuss issues such as law and order, human rights, democracy, voting systems and local and national government. They consider that the course enables them to find out about the society in which they live. They particularly enjoy the variety of visiting speakers who come in to provide expert knowledge in their particular field. One particularly effective input is the Crime and Safety Awareness day organised for Year 9. The day covers issues relevant to young people as well as the local community. Pupils are given good opportunities to take part in workshops alongside magistrates and the police prison and fire services. Other aspects of the course cover disability, stereotyping, and social issues associated with health and sex education. The school council is effective in involving pupils, thereby promoting participation in the life of the school.
122. In Year 11, the course concentrates on preparing pupils for the world of work and post-16 education. The good range of visits and visiting speakers effectively meets the needs of pupils. These include the armed forces, the local authority, health authority and the careers service and a 'Making Opportunities' conference is held. This links closely with the modules taught in Years 7 to 10.
123. Pupils' progress is assessed on the basis of participation. More formal assessment in line with other subjects needs to be undertaken. While pupils' progress is reported to parents, reports are not sufficiently detailed. The management of the course, with a co-ordinator for each module, has enabled citizenship to be established within the curriculum. As the subject grows, management in terms of monitoring teaching and learning and assessing pupils' progress would benefit from less fragmentation.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

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

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well and standards are rising.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good and takes good account of the learning needs of all pupils.
- The quality of marking and assessment of pupils' work are very good and both are used effectively to plan future work and to help pupils to aspire highly.
- There is very good leadership and very good management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of ICT to enable pupils to gain full benefit from using computers to research and present their work.

- The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils in Years 10 and 11 restricts their achievement.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|--------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Below average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Good |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | N/A | Well below average |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership of the subject | Very good |
| Management of the subject | Very good |

124. Standards seen in work by Year 9 are below average. This represents an improvement from the previous year and is largely due to improved teaching methods that inspire and engage pupils in lessons and result in good motivation. Pupils use the design process fully to plan, develop and evaluate a range of products made from wood, textiles, food and modelling materials. Pupils' practical skills are of a higher standard than their written work. Their writing and formal drawing skills are often below average so that they cannot always fully communicate what they know and understand. A small proportion of higher attaining pupils reach average standards and their work shows clear writing, careful presentation and annotation, understanding of materials and developing graphic skills. Achievement from entry is good. Pupils quickly learn to use a good range of hand and machine tools and are very safety conscious. They acquire appropriate technical language and learn about the materials they use, including the impact of their use on the environment and where the materials come from.
125. Standards by Year 11 are below average although a significant proportion of pupils reach standards that are close to average. Pupils organise their examination coursework logically and show continuous evaluation of their work, in order to modify and improve products when necessary. Practical work shows understanding and appropriate interpretation of problems pupils have been asked to solve. Higher attaining pupils research their work in depth and write about their work in detail. Their designs show flair and imagination and work is clearly presented with annotated drawings to show development of ideas. In food technology, higher attaining pupils have a good understanding of the function of ingredients and the underlying science for food preparation. Lower attaining pupils communicate their ideas simply and their written work is brief and lacks reasoned explanations for decisions they make.
126. Achievement is good. Almost all pupils exceed the standards predicted by earlier testing. This is because teachers have high expectations of all pupils and plan work best suited to individual needs. The standards and progress of a significant minority of pupils are adversely affected by poor attendance. The work of pupils is frequently assessed and targets are set which help pupils to aspire highly and to improve their work. Year 11 pupils have made particularly good progress over the year in resistant materials because they now have a regular teacher and feel more secure because they have established routines. Pupils with special needs achieve well throughout the school because teachers manage them exceptionally well and provide interesting and challenging work for them. The proportion of pupils gaining grades A*-C at GCSE in 2002 was well below average with a greater gap between boys and girls than is seen nationally. Results compared well with results in other subjects for which pupils were entered.

127. The quality of teaching and learning is good and often very good. It is occasionally excellent and never less than satisfactory. Pupils listen carefully, concentrate on demonstrations and show a good level of interest in tasks set. This is due to very good classroom organisation and management of pupils together with high expectations of work and behaviour. Teachers use methods which engage and interest pupils throughout lessons and plan work to suit individual needs of pupils. In the best lessons, learning is well structured and practical work is integrated with learning about materials and processes so that pupils gain understanding through doing. The principles of design and technology are taught consistently across all materials areas so that pupils have their understanding reinforced no matter what materials they are studying. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use ICT in lessons because there is insufficient access to computers.
128. Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and their behaviour is good in design and technology. The majority respond readily to questions although they have too few opportunities to develop oral skills fully by giving presentations. They work confidently in groups with boys and girls working together easily. Relationships are good and mutually supportive.
129. Leadership is very good. The head of department has a clear understanding of the needs of the department and the means of achieving them. Management is very skilful and has generated a sense of purpose shared by members of the department which leads to rising standards.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- There is very good leadership and educational direction given by the newly appointed head of department.
- There are significant recent improvements made to the planned work.
- Standards are improving in Years 10 and 11 as well as in some classes in Years 7 to 9.
- There are good quality assessment procedures and effective use of the information to improve both learning and lesson planning.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient formal monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning at present.
- Provision for field study is too limited.
- Opportunities for development of spiritual, moral, social and cultural education and citizenship are not built into the teaching scheme.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Well below average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Satisfactory | Good |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | | Well below average |
| Quality of learning | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Quality of learning | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Attitudes of pupils to work | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership of the subject | Very good |
| Management of the subject | Good |

130. GCSE results in 2002, the first group in the new school to take this examination, were significantly below national averages.
131. By the end of Year 9, standards overall are well below average and pupils' achievement is only satisfactory, in relation to standards on entry. From observations in lessons and from scrutiny of work files there is evidence in some classes of good achievement and higher attainment, particularly in the top bands. This is a consequence of some good and very good teaching from the one specialist teacher. Pupils' achievement is frequently hindered by a combination of very weak literacy skills, frequent absence and difficulty retaining and recalling information. Higher attaining pupils are more secure in recalling what they have learned and explaining what it means. These pupils are developing a sound knowledge of geographical language. In the well-taught lessons pupils are encouraged to develop thinking skills and carry out enquiry tasks. A particularly good example was seen in a lesson on crime in Hartlepool, when pupils were applying these skills to carry out a survey in the town and analyse and present their results graphically. Many pupils use computers effectively to research information and present their work. The work of some lower attaining pupils is often brief, reflecting shallower knowledge and understanding and weaker literacy skills.
132. Standards in Year 11 are below average but overall pupils achieve well in relation to their standards at the beginning of the course. Standards have improved significantly compared to the results in 2002. Pupils, particularly the higher attainers, are becoming more effective independent learners. They use computers well to gather information, analyse coursework data and present findings. This was seen in some good coursework when they applied these research skills to an environmental study of Hartlepool. Year 10 pupils are able to make judgements on aspects of river flooding and management. They came to conclusions about the causes of the Lynmouth disaster in 1952 and made links between physical and human aspects of the subject. As in earlier years, difficulties with literacy, frequent absence and poor retention skills impact negatively on standards.
133. Teaching is satisfactory overall with a range from unsatisfactory to very good. The department has had serious problems with staffing in recent times and currently two temporary teachers are involved in teaching the subject. The school has very realistic hopes of rectifying this situation by September. The learning of most pupils is also satisfactory although in the good and very good lessons it is better. When teaching is engaging pupils respond well and learning is good or very good. This was observed in lessons in Year 8 with pupils developing geographical skills researching crime in the town and in Year 10 examining the causes and consequences of river flooding. Teachers often plan lessons well to meet pupils' individual needs. The specialist teacher is very secure in her subject knowledge and uses a wide range of interesting methods that motivate pupils.
134. Other teachers who have only been in the school a very short time do not know the pupils well and have been relying on work books which lack challenge and do not motivate pupils. These poor resources will have been phased out by September. In the best lessons pupils are expected to think about what they are doing and appropriate emphasis is placed upon the development of enquiry and discussion work in pairs and groups. In the current circumstances expectations in some lessons are too low, classroom management is weak and the pace of lessons is too slow. This has a negative impact on learning and achievement. Relationships are good in the best lessons and enthusiastic teaching combined with good attitudes to work results in good and very good progress. The unsatisfactory teaching seen was associated with slow

pace and insecure subject knowledge with the result that pupils' behaviour was unsatisfactory and too little was learned. Good learning is a consequence of both good quality teaching and the positive and hard-working attitudes of the vast majority of pupils. Pupils with special education needs and the small number with English as an additional language achieve as well as other pupils when they are well supported.

135. The newly appointed head of department is providing very clear leadership in difficult circumstances. Management is good; the head of department is enthusiastic and hard working and in a very short time has made significant improvements to the teaching scheme and in teaching and learning methods. Planning and documentation are much improved and appropriate priorities for improvement have been identified and are being acted upon. Assessment of pupils' work is good and the information is used effectively to improve standards and evaluate teaching and learning. Currently, formal monitoring of teaching and learning is limited, as are the opportunities for field study. Geography makes a satisfactory contribution to pupils' personal development but opportunities are not built into the teaching scheme. A lack of computers and access to the ICT suite reduces their potential use as a tool in learning.

HISTORY

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

Strengths

- Lively teaching involves all pupils actively and leads to very good learning.
- Leadership ensures a climate of collaboration where decisions are based on monitoring.
- Excellent relationships develop respect between pupils and teachers.

Areas for improvement

- Lower attaining pupils do not have sufficient simplified preparation for writing.
- Moral issues are not considered in sufficient depth because the range of conflicting views explored is too narrow.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Good |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | | Well below average |
| Quality of teaching | Very good | Very good |
| Quality of learning | Very good | Very good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Very good | Very good |
| Leadership of the subject | | Very good |
| Management of the subject | | Very good |

136. Although GCSE results in 2002 were well below average, standards of work seen during the inspection are better, touching average at the end of Year 9 and below average in Year 11. This represents good achievement given the low level of pupils' history skills when they arrive in Year 7. Achievement is distorted in Year 11 by significant non-attendance for which the department has a tight network of remedies including support for pupils' studies and changes to the curriculum. Consequently, there are more pupils working at A*-A than previously, including boys, where there were none before.

137. Standards are rising because of very good teaching and effective procedures for pupils to set targets and review their own achievement. The most telling indication of the quality of teaching and relationships is the fact that over half of pupils choose GCSE history, well above the national average. Teachers are positive and sensitive towards their pupils who reciprocate with remarkable commitment, which makes for very good learning.
138. Very good leadership and effective collaboration drive the development of exciting learning rooted in analysis of where and why change is needed, reflecting the school's culture of self-review. Intelligent discussion of how pupils learn and teachers' openness to change underpin the dynamism of this department, so standards are rising.
139. The impact of radical change in teaching style challenges pupils by requiring greater participation and responsibility. The minute they enter the classroom, pupils are engaged in 'Remember Me, 'Last Person Standing' or other quick-fire methods for consolidating previous learning. Subsequent tasks challenge pupils to apply knowledge in seeking answers to the 'big' questions. This fast-paced and hands-on approach particularly excites boys. By the end of Year 9, pupils have a broad understanding of influential civilisations and people of the past, including Islam, and the reasons behind Britain's' political, economic and social evolution and its consequences for her position in the world. Pupils sharpen their technique of extrapolating information from historical sources through various stimulating activities. For example, the 'Jigsaw' process requires pupils to teach each other. Each pupil researches one aspect of a topic, explains it to three others in turn, who take notes as they listen to the explanation. Each pupil is now eager to contribute to class discussion, teasing out implications, interpreting findings and expressing reasoned points of view. At this point, teachers' subject knowledge is best deployed as they summarise, link together pupils' ideas, illustrate and question, ensuring all take part. They use many devices like this, which develop literacy and social skills in tandem with history skills, and both teachers and pupils are very clear about the quality of learning that has taken place. In diaries, letters, newspaper front pages and booklets, pupils express their own view or step into others' shoes. They develop independence through extended personal projects and fieldwork studies.
140. Gifted and talented pupils learn to think more broadly and they can follow through a hypothesis with illustrations and implications. High attaining pupils are very comfortable with the demands of writing at length. More simplified steps are required for lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs to better prepare them for writing.
141. In Year 11, pupils apply knowledge to interpret a view or a judgement in assessing, for example, the work of key 19th century reformers, or teasing out the factors which brought economic prosperity hand in hand with unbearable degradation in Britain's northern cities. Pupils feel it too. One Year 11 pupil, having studied a picture summarised the desperation: "The sunlight never got into the centre of this housing area." There is a need for deeper exploration of moral questions and conflicting views to encourage talk across the class between pupils.
142. Pupils effectively draw out inferences from sources, identify bias and decide on the usefulness of a source, having learnt the 'Concept Map' technique. Higher attainers can illustrate the power of irony and satire. Good learning support keeps pupils with special educational needs and intermittent attenders abreast of the class and they make good achievement.
143. ICT made a strong contribution to learning until the recent fire and teachers are ready to exploit innovative technology in the new building.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall the quality of provision of information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good and pupils' achievement is good.
- Teachers have very good relationships with pupils.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and they behave well in lessons.
- There is good leadership and management of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Some teaching is poorly planned and leads to unsatisfactory learning.
- There is not enough use of National Curriculum or equivalent levels in teaching to help pupils set targets.
- There is no system to ensure that all pupils in Years 10 and 11 receive their full entitlement of ICT.
- The range of courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not wide enough to meet all pupils' needs.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|
| Standards of work seen | Below average | Below average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Satisfactory |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Below average | Below average |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Leadership of the subject | Good |
| Management of the subject | Good |

144. By the end of Year 9 the standards reached by pupils are below the national average. However, many pupils have low standards in the subject when they enter the school, and have to learn many new skills in each year as they progress through the school. In Year 7 pupils make extensive use of word-processing skills, using a range of fonts, *clip art* and *word art*. In Year 8 pupils understand how to use search engines on the Internet, and are beginning to make critical evaluation of websites. In Year 9 pupils are producing more sophisticated slide shows on topics such as fox hunting. They make extensive use of word processing to complete short projects. They can create databases and understand different types of fields.

145. In Years 10 and 11 pupils make a wider use of more advanced skills to complete project work in GCSE courses. Pupils select a variety of topics, such as bookshops, clothes catalogues or school websites. They make good use of graphs and charts from spreadsheets to display information, and also use more advanced formula. Higher attaining pupils evaluate their work well. However, the majority of pupils describe what they have done rather than evaluate strengths and weaknesses. Lower attaining pupils have more limited tasks and not all work is fully completed.

146. Pupils learn well in lessons as they increase their skills, knowledge and understanding in the use of a variety of software applications. There is good achievement in Years 7, 8 and 9 as they become confident users of computers. There is satisfactory achievement

by pupils in Years 10 and 11 taking GCSE, as they reach their predicted grades. Achievement in these years is restricted due to a combination of pupils' absence, unstable staffing in previous years and, for some pupils, an inappropriate course.

147. Most teaching is good, and some lessons are very good. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge as well as knowledge of examinations to give clear explanations, which help pupils learn, and find out what they need to do to get best results in their exams. There are good relationships between pupils and teachers and the pupils' positive response in lessons contributes to their learning. Lessons are usually well planned and tasks selected are appropriate to pupils' attainment levels. However, there is a small amount of unsatisfactory teaching where the work set is not appropriate so that pupils lose interest and do not learn enough. Most teachers have high expectations of pupils being able to work independently and complete tasks set. Data projectors are well used to show pupils how to use programs, but there are no interactive whiteboards in the department. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, and helpful comments are made to help pupils improve their standards, little use is made of National Curriculum or similar levels in teaching and marking in Years 7, 8 and 9 to help pupils set targets for their work.
148. There is good management of the department, with clear leadership and a commitment to improve standards. The range of courses for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is limited to GCSE ICT; there are no vocational courses. Pupils who do not take GCSE ICT still make use of their computer skills in other subjects as they complete project work. However, there is no record of how other subjects provide these pupils with ICT experiences required by the National Curriculum.

ICT in other subjects

149. All teachers have completed their New Opportunities Funded (NOF) training for ICT in their subject. Departments have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work; however, since the move to the single site, continued development in the use of cross-curricular ICT has been severely restricted. The availability of computer rooms is just sufficient to meet the needs of the ICT department, and therefore there is little spare capacity for other departments. The ratio of computers to pupils of 1:6 is worse than that seen nationally, and therefore there are insufficient computers in departments. English and design and technology make good use of computers, but other subjects lag behind.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

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

Strengths

- Teachers set a good example to pupils, manage them well and encourage good relationships.
- The majority of pupils are well behaved.
- The department has productive links with the local Beacon school to help pupils learning German.

Areas for improvement

- Standards in French and German are too low and many pupils, particularly those of higher attainment, are under-achieving.
- Learning is held back in many lessons by teaching that is not proficient in the foreign language.

- The department has not yet got to grips with under-achievement or the poor motivation of a few pupils, mostly boys, in Years 10 and 11.
- Many Year 7 pupils learn less because both their language lessons are concentrated into one day.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|--|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Well below average | Well below average |
| Achievement over time | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Results in national tests and GCSE French German | | Well below average Very low |
| Quality of teaching | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Quality of learning | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory |

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Leadership of the subject | Unsatisfactory |
| Management of the subject | Unsatisfactory |

150. The modern foreign languages department has suffered in recent months from disruptions in staffing and accommodation which have taken their toll on morale and on pupils' achievement. Teachers in the department are experienced professionals and manage pupils successfully. However, they are not all proficient in the languages they teach. In six out of ten lessons teachers are not confident in using French or German with the ease and fluency needed to give pupils good exposure to the language. In spite of careful planning and firm discipline, this inevitably affects the quality of pupils' learning and partly explains the widespread under-achievement of pupils currently studying a language. The department badly needs more specialist teaching and a fresh vision for the future of foreign languages in the school.
151. Standards in both languages are currently too low, as were the results in the GCSE examinations in 2002. This applies especially to the skills of speaking and listening at which pupils in Year 11 are unusually lacking in confidence. Hardly any pupils feel ready to enter the higher tier at GCSE in these skills and as a result will not be able to achieve better than a grade C. Boys in particular have great difficulty in pronouncing the language and in remembering important phrases needed for the speaking examination. In a number of cases they have lost their interest and motivation to succeed. Girls, too, are often very shy and reluctant to speak. Even the highest attaining among them are unsure of themselves, though they are more eager to learn. They have had too little practice in hearing French or German spoken authentically and in speaking the language themselves. This is particularly the case in German for which there is no specialist teaching. Higher attaining pupils in Year 11 write better than they speak in the foreign language. Their coursework shows signs of an understanding of different tenses and a fair range of vocabulary. The majority, however, have a limited grasp of French and German grammar and have considerable difficulty with forming sentences.
152. Pupils in the younger years are also under-achieving, particularly those of higher attainment who have too little opportunity of speaking and listening in the foreign language, as with their older peers. They receive too little homework and cannot yet achieve a higher level because they have not adequately covered the grammar and tenses required. At least half of pupils in Year 7 have all of their language teaching in two lessons on the same day. This further holds back learning because, by the last lesson of the day, pupils are restless and cannot be taught much that is new. Pupils with

learning needs and those of low attainment, however, make satisfactory progress in lessons. Teachers' experience and skill in handling these pupils are more important at this stage than their expertise in the language. In one Year 8 French lesson, for example, a small class of pupils with learning difficulties made good headway in saying which sports they played. One very well motivated girl took real pride in her well-presented exercise book.

153. Although teaching has many strengths, it cannot be satisfactory while so much is done by non-specialists. Lessons lack the pace and challenge that come from a confident grasp of the subject. Mistakes are passed on to the pupils. There is too little of that authentic 'buzz' found in classrooms where the language is used naturally. As a result pupils do not learn in a natural flowing way. By the time they reach the end of Year 9, a large proportion of them decide to drop a language altogether.
154. The department has not adequately tackled this trend of declining numbers opting for languages after Year 9. Pupils need to be stretched and motivated, and, through enrichment beyond the classroom, to see that languages are more than just a school subject. There is, for example, very little opportunity for pupils to learn enjoyably through ICT, reading for pleasure or trips abroad. The employment of a German-speaking assistant for six hours a week benefits pupils. Equally, the help of the local Beacon school with pupils learning German goes some way to compensating for the lack of expertise in the language. However, fresh thinking is needed to find ways of raising standards and helping pupils achieve their full potential. The school is already taking action to reduce the proportion of non-specialist teaching in the future. If the department matches this with positive action of its own it will be better placed to improve.

MUSIC

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

Strength

- In a few lessons pupils are making satisfactory progress.

Areas for improvement

- Standards and GCSE results are well below average and below pupils' potential.
- Teaching and learning are unsatisfactory.
- Pupils' attitudes overall are unsatisfactory.
- There is no assessment strategy to help pupils make improvements to their work.

Summary of inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Standards of work seen | Well below average | Well below average |
| Achievement over time | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Above average | Well below average |
| Quality of teaching | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Quality of learning | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Unsatisfactory | Unsatisfactory |

| | |
|---------------------------|----------------|
| Leadership of the subject | Unsatisfactory |
| Management of the subject | Unsatisfactory |

155. Music had been declining in the school's forerunner and continued to decline at the start of the new. The school has not yet had the benefit of a permanent music specialist. As a

result of unsatisfactory teaching, poor behaviour and attitudes, and mismanagement of the department, pupils have underachieved. They are reaching standards that, at best, are well below average throughout the school. The teacher assessments for Year 9 in 2002 were grossly over-estimated. Out of 16 pupils taking GCSE in 2002, 14 achieved a grade, but only three achieved a grade between B and C. There were no A* or A grades. The number of pupils taking the examination is too few to compare with national averages or results of boys and girls. During the current year both teachers have left the school.

156. Temporary teachers have entered a very difficult situation. In spite of hard work there are still severe shortcomings in pupils' learning. Practical work on performance and composition is avoided in many classes because behaviour is poor. Too often in class, pupils listen to music only passively or are reduced to copying text into their books. These tasks are appropriate neither for developing independent learning, nor for developing the necessary musical skills to achieve the required level and the statutory requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils are not engaging with the subject in these lessons. In the few lessons where teaching is stronger and pupils are amenable, they work satisfactorily and occasionally well. In Year 7 pupils sing *Swing Low, Sweet Chariot* well in two parts without any accompaniment. In Year 9, using suitable computer software, pupils build up their dance compositions using well-chosen units and phrases. In these lessons, pupils are involved, generally concentrate well and enjoy what they are doing.
157. In Year 11 there are a few keen pupils, but several pupils do not want to be there. The temporary teacher has worked very hard to redress the very negligible amount of work done in the first 18 months of the course when pupils achieved very little. However, standards are still very low and few of the pupils are expected to achieve higher grades. One or two pupils play musical instruments, but composition, listening skills and background knowledge of music are weak. Teaching and learning over time at this level are unsatisfactory, although just satisfactory in the lesson observed.
158. The school has plans for the new academic year and a new appointee is expected to bring experience and enthusiasm to the department. The department will then be able to draw on the enthusiasm of the few pupils who, together with other teachers, enjoy playing in the 'Rock School'. A practical and exciting series of projects for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is urgently needed. Pupils need to engage with the subject and become involved with the quality of their own work. To do this, a clear procedure for assessing their work needs to be put in place so that pupils know what they must do to improve.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- There is very good leadership of the department.
- There are good opportunities in extra-curricular activities that are well supported by the pupils.
- The quality of the teaching is good.
- Very good relationships and lesson management mean that pupils have a very positive attitude to the subject.

Areas for improvement

- The accommodation is barely adequate.

- Teachers need to ensure that all pupils are involved in the planning and evaluation of their work.

Summary of key inspection judgements

| | Year 9 | Year 11 |
|------------------------------------|---------|---------------|
| Standards of work seen | Average | Above average |
| Achievement over time | Good | Good |
| Results in national tests and GCSE | Average | Average |
| Quality of teaching | Good | Good |
| Quality of learning | Good | Good |
| Attitudes of pupils to their work | Good | Good |

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------|
| Leadership of the subject | Very good |
| Management of the subject | Very good |

159. In the July 2002 GCSE examination the number of pupils gaining A*-C grade passes was in line with that gained nationally. The results pupils gained in the examination compared very favourably with those gained by these pupils in their other subjects.
160. Pupils arrive from their primary school bringing with them a range of physical education experiences and standards, with some below those expected. However, with the appointment one of the department's staff as co-ordinator for physical education in the local primary schools, the standards of pupils now entering the school is rising and are now closer to average overall. During Years 7 to 9 pupils' achievement is good, and by the time they are 14 years old most are attaining levels of performance that are in line with national expectations. This judgement is in line with the school's assessments. Some pupils arrive at the school not able to swim. Very good use is made of the school's swimming pool. Pupils' achievement is good and by the time pupils have reached the end of Year 9 there are very few non-swimmers, and most pupils demonstrate a high level of competence in a range of swimming strokes. They also demonstrate good levels of competency in personal survival and life-saving techniques.
161. Achievement is good in Years 10 and 11, and by the time they are 16 years old pupils are attaining levels that are average, and some, especially those in the examination groups, are doing even better. In a very good GCSE swimming lesson pupils demonstrated levels of competence that were well above average. Good levels of skill are clearly evident in a range of activities. Pupils are also able to undertake a range of roles including coaching, umpiring and recording. Pupils in the examination groups are developing understanding and expertise in both the theoretical and practical aspects of the subject. High attaining pupils present work that is well structured, with some using their ICT skills to produce good quality coursework folders. However, some have limited subject knowledge and their coursework folders are sometimes incomplete. Some pupils find success in the theoretical aspects of the course hard to achieve.
162. Pupils with special educational needs are well integrated and given much support by both teachers and other pupils, and most reach satisfactory standards. Teaching is sensitive, and there is no evidence of pupils with special educational needs being disadvantaged by the curriculum that is on offer. Talented pupils are encouraged to extend their skills both in school lessons and with outside clubs. Individual pupils and teams achieve high standards in district and county competitions. There are currently pupils in the school who are members of national school teams in swimming and football.

163. The learning of most pupils is good because the teaching is well managed and the relationship between teachers and pupils is very good. Teaching and learning in all lessons observed were judged to be at least satisfactory, and the vast majority were good or very good. There is an expectancy that pupils will work hard, behave well and achieve good standards, and generally these expectations are met. Some pupils are able to make perceptive comments on how improvements can be made, but others are given too little opportunity to develop this aspect. Pupils respond very positively to the good quality teaching. They are enthusiastic, behave well, and are prepared to work hard. Their enjoyment of the subject is very evident.
164. The curriculum offers pupils the opportunity to participate in a wide range of activities and is meeting statutory requirements. Many staff including non-specialists give very freely of their time to provide a wide range of extra-curricular activities that are well supported by enthusiastic groups of pupils.
165. Strong leadership, clear direction and a positive ethos characterise the management of the subject. High quality documentation covers all aspects of the department's work, and helps the delivery of the subject. Hard-working teachers work effectively together, support each other and show a strong commitment to their pupils, and to the improvement of the department.

VOCATIONAL COURSES

166. The school offers additional subjects in Years 10 and 11 including some more vocationally orientated. Manufacturing and engineering are offered at GCSE, as aspects of design and technology. Engineering is taught partly in school but mainly at Hartlepool Further Education College. Business studies is popular as a GCSE subject. There are two GNVQ courses. Intermediate health and social care is taught in school. Foundation construction is taught at Hartlepool Further Education College with which the school enjoys a very positive relationship. These subjects make an effective contribution to opportunities for learning at this stage.
167. Lessons were sampled in business studies, manufacturing, engineering, construction, and health and social care. In these lessons teaching and learning were good overall. Most lessons are well prepared and organised, providing interesting and relevant work that engages pupils. It is well matched to their ability in order to challenge them to achieve their potential. Lessons are conducted at a good pace, some with very effective and imaginative ways of learning. ICT is used very effectively in business studies. Pupils are interested, well motivated and keen to learn, and listen carefully to important instructions. In business studies, more opportunities for independent learning could be provided. In an engineering lesson, pupils did not learn satisfactorily because the lesson was badly planned. Pupils were inattentive and wasted much time because activities failed to challenge them sufficiently.