

INSPECTION REPORT

VENERABLE BEDE C of E SECONDARY SCHOOL

Ryhope, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 133391

Headteacher: Dr E J Yeates

Lead inspector: Mrs E Charlesworth
Dates of inspection: 13th – 15th October 2003

Inspection number: 258844

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 to 16 years |
| Gender of pupils: | Mixed |
| Number on roll: | 370 |
| School address: | Tunstall Bank Ryhope Sunderland |
| Postcode: | SR2 0SX |
| Telephone number: | 0191 5239745 |
| Fax number: | 0191 5239775 |
| Appropriate authority: | The governing body |
| Name of chair of governors: | Reverend D Meakin |
| Date of previous inspection: | None |

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

This new school, built in response to local need in a joint venture by the Diocese of Durham and the local education authority, opened in September 2002 and moved to its present site in September 2003. Parts of the building were still not complete at the time of the inspection but its position at the top of the hill has already made a strong impact on the local environment. The proportion of pupils claiming free school meals is below average, but in a former mining area where unemployment is high this is an inflated indicator of pupils' social and economic background. There are fewer pupils with special educational needs than is found nationally, but the number with statements of special educational needs is average. There are no pupils whose mother tongue is not English and no pupils from Traveller families. The unit cost is high but the school acknowledges its generous funding in the setting up of the school, allowing specialist staff to be appointed from an early stage.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Members of the inspection team | | | Subject responsibilities |
|--------------------------------|----------------|----------------|------------------------------------------|
| 19532 | E Charlesworth | Lead inspector | |
| 11041 | M Moore | Lay inspector | |
| 27416 | T Howard | Team inspector | Mathematics |
| 32782 | M West | Team inspector | English |
| 1407 | P Scott | Team inspector | Science |
| 28106 | M Majid | Team inspector | Information and communication technology |
| 15940 | N Godfrey | Team inspector | Art and design |
| 1782 | A Lyons | Team inspector | Design and technology |
| 3755 | T Hulbert | Team inspector | Geography |
| 19222 | N Jepson | Team inspector | History |
| 24127 | J Kidd | Team inspector | Modern foreign languages |
| 30297 | G Spruce | Team inspector | Music |
| 18888 | J Boulton | Team inspector | Citizenship, physical education |
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

This is a **good school in the making**, which is progressing rapidly towards the fulfilment of its aims. Standards at the beginning of Year 8 are higher than expected, and these pupils have achieved well to maintain their above average standards when they started the school. This has come about because of good teaching, which is at the heart of the school's ethos. The school has made such a good start in its new premises because of the strong commitment, hard work and team effort of the staff and pupils to rise above the inconvenience and setbacks caused by the building not being completed on time. The school is well led and managed and has the confidence of the parents and community, not only to provide a good standard of education, but to become a school built on Gospel principles at the heart of the community. The school provides **good value for money**.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- This is a Christian school whose founding principle, to provide a stimulating, secure, caring environment, is demonstrated through the care staff have for pupils and the attitude pupils bring to their work.
- Pupils achieve well because they are well taught.
- Although the management of the school has enabled a good start to be made, procedures are not strong enough to unify the staff in a common sense of purpose to maintain momentum and sustain high standards.
- There are very good opportunities for learning outside the school day, supported by pupils' desire to do well in the *Venerable Bede Challenge*¹.
- Parents and pupils very much welcome the help and support from all adults.
- Despite their commitment to the vision of the school, the governing body is not sufficiently well informed to offer objective advice and hold the headteacher to account.
- Assessment procedures do not fully inform pupils of their achievement and progress.

As this is a new school there is no previous inspection report against which to judge improvement.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Because pupils have not reached the year in which statutory tests are taken, there are no national tests or examination results to report. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their overall level of attainment is above average, based on the tests they took at the end of Year 6 in English, mathematics and science. During their first year in the new school, pupils worked hard, **achieved well** and maintained standards. By the beginning of Year 8, they were already performing at a higher level than usual for 12-year-olds and the highest attaining pupils in the school are now at a level not normally reached until the end of Year 9. The pattern is being repeated with pupils in Year 7, who have the added advantage of all being taught by specialist teachers now that the school has grown and appointed staff in all subjects. Year 8 pupils are working hard and making up for lost time, for example in music where, for the first time, they have a specialist musician teaching them. Even the lowest attaining pupils in the school and those with special educational needs are mostly working at the expected national level. Only in a very few lessons is progress held back because of weaknesses in reading and understanding.

Pupils' personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, is good. The school is developing an enthusiastic and encouraging learning environment for all pupils, fostering an ethos of community and personal growth. Relationships and behaviour are very good in an atmosphere of enjoyment and concentration. Pupils are taking advantage of the many opportunities for personal development, through extra-curricular activities, worship and membership of the school council, to grow in maturity.

¹ Pupils pursue the challenge at three levels – bronze, silver and gold, by collecting evidence from extra-curricular activities on how they develop their different intelligences.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is **good**. Teaching and learning are **good** throughout the school and the national strategy for Key Stage 3 provides a framework for teachers' planning, helping pupils to review learning in the light of clearly set out aims. Pupils learn well because teachers question and probe their understanding. Teachers have high expectations and pupils respond by working hard and achieving well. The variety of methods which teachers use makes sure the learning needs of all pupils are met. However, methods of assessing pupils' work and using the information, both to tell pupils how to do better and for teachers to plan for these improvements, are not consistent across the school.

The curriculum is good, providing opportunities for all subjects of the National Curriculum to be covered. Because the building was not finished at the time of the inspection there were restrictions on the teaching of information and communication technology (ICT) and the resistant materials aspect of design and technology. When everything is finished and in use the accommodation will provide an excellent learning environment.

Pupils are very well cared for and the guidance and support given to pupils are very good. There are close and trusting relationships throughout the school, which has the confidence of parents.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The school is **well led** and **management is very effective** at both senior and middle management level. The staff have worked hard to minimise the interruption to learning caused by the move to the new building. As management systems have evolved to accommodate the growing school, the headteacher has not always communicated clearly with all staff. Governance is **satisfactory**. The governing body is committed to providing high quality education in a community school but its members are not always sufficiently aware of its strengths and weaknesses to act as objective assessors of provision or to hold the headteacher to account. There is clear vision at all levels of the school about the place the school will eventually play in the life of Ryhope and Silksworth, but this is not as yet supported by a clear strategic plan agreed by all members of the school community. All statutory requirements are fully met.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Many parents attended the pre-inspection parents evening and many more submitted completed inspection surveys. Most are very positive about the school and describe its strengths as 'care within a Christian community'. Pupils are also positive about how good a school it is: they are expected to work hard and they trust the staff to be supportive, helpful and fair.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things the school should do to improve are:

- (1) to develop procedures for the assessment of pupils' work so that teachers convey an accurate picture of pupils' achievement and progress and adapt their teaching to meet identified needs;
- (2) the governing body must fulfil its responsibility to be questioning and supportive in holding the school accountable and supporting the work of all the staff.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Given the current age of pupils in the school there are no national examination or test results to report. Achievement throughout the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well, maintaining their above average standards when they enter the school in Year 7.
- Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 are already working beyond the level usually reached by the end of Year 9.
- A weakness in reading is holding back a small number of pupils with special educational needs, especially in science.

Commentary

1. Because pupils have not reached the year in which statutory tests are taken there are no test or examination results to report. When pupils enter the school in Year 7 their attainment is above average overall, although in 2003 it was well above in science and average in English. Pupils work hard and achievement is good, maintaining these standards, so that by the beginning of Year 8 pupils are performing at a level above that which is usually found for 12-year-olds. Most pupils are competent users of English, which helps them to achieve well in talking and writing about their work in all subjects. Their use of mathematics across subjects, although satisfactory, is less well developed, especially in interpreting graphs in science and geography.
2. Pupils' very good attitudes and the very high expectations which teachers have are leading to very good achievement in many lessons. Higher attainers throughout the school are pursuing learning with enthusiasm and performing well above expected levels. For example, in lessons with higher attainers in mathematics, very good achievement means that many pupils are already working at Level 6 in Year 8. A particular strength in drama is the way pupils are encouraged to evaluate their learning and to set targets to help them reach ever higher levels of performance. Higher attainers in history are developing understanding very well and work independently and in groups to interpret factual knowledge.
3. In the English lessons where the majority of pupils have special educational needs, achievement is good, pupils speak with confidence but writing is below the expectation for their age. In art and design, pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because they are very well supported by the teacher. A weakness in reading is holding back progress in science for pupils with special educational needs. In a Spanish lesson, achievement for a group of lower attainers, including many special educational needs pupils, was excellent; they assimilated new words and spoke with an accent much better than usually heard because they listened carefully and copied the teacher.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes are **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' relationships are based on Christian beliefs of respect for the feelings and values of others.
- Pupils respond very well to the school's high expectations of conduct.
- Pupils enjoy school and show this in their good attendance and participation in school life.
- Pupils are becoming mature, responsible young adults.

Commentary

4. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work and every aspect of school life. They enjoy school and a strong indicator of this is that attendance is above average and lessons start on time. The school is a very orderly community where pupils behave very well, are polite to each other and to visitors. At lunchtime, for instance, pupils are happy to mix with each other socially and discuss in a mature way what they have done during the morning. The inspectors were impressed by the courtesy shown to them by pupils, who were keen to show them around the school and discuss their achievements, expressing confidence in their teachers and pride in the building.
5. Most pupils know the high standard of behaviour expected of them and behave very well both in and out of lessons. Relationships with pupils are very good. Pupils value the fact that they are well supported and that the school is a caring community. Pupils take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities at lunchtime and before and after school.
6. Pupils' personal development through spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good. Pupils are maturing well and becoming very responsible young adults. The school works very hard to promote good relationships and racial understanding. Incidents of bullying are rare but when they occur they are dealt with promptly and efficiently by staff. Pupils have a good understanding of the values and beliefs of others, based on the Christian ethos of the school, with a strong respect for other people's feelings.
7. Pupils take responsibility seriously and are proud to serve as elected members of the school council and citizenship leaders. As a result of training provided by the school, they are equipped to fulfil these duties very well. A particularly successful venture involves pupils in interviewing new members of staff.
8. The school provides well for the spiritual and cultural development of its pupils. Central to this provision is the daily worship which gets the day off to a good start as pupils pray and sing together. Their consideration for others is expressed most tellingly through their support for their sister school in Tanzania. Posters around the school and their fund-raising activities serve not only to remind them of those with less financial advantages but also to enrich their own understanding of a different culture.

Attendance

There are no national figures available for comparison. Attendance last year was 95.5 per cent and all absence was authorised.

Exclusions

There have been no exclusions since the school opened.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school is providing a good standard of education for its pupils. The curriculum covers all statutory requirements and together with good teaching promotes good achievement in pupils.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning throughout the school for all pupils are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teachers' enthusiasm inspires pupils to learn.
- Pupils respond well to the very high expectations which teachers have of their behaviour and achievement.
- Teachers vary their methods to match the learning needs of all pupils.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well taught and make good progress.

Commentary

9. The development of teaching and learning in the school is led by the two deputy headteachers. They have produced an excellent document, full of practical advice as well as broader principles, to support the school's approach to teaching and learning. In order to make the best of this, a system of pairing teachers to learn from each other, set up initially when the school opened, stimulates the level of professional debate and supports inexperienced teachers very well. Since the school opened, teaching has been rigorously monitored and, where weakness was observed, help and support offered, so that, by the time of the inspection the overall quality of teaching is good, with many very good features.
10. Now that the school has a full complement of specialist teachers, a major strength of teaching is their subject expertise. Eagerness for learning is stimulated because teachers have such enthusiasm themselves. This is a particular feature of lessons in art and design and Spanish, where pupils are rapidly gaining the skills they need to be successful by following the example set by the teachers. Pupils respond very well to the very high expectations which teachers have both for behaviour and achievement. These are major factors in securing good achievement. Teachers are very good at questioning pupils to probe their knowledge and deepen their understanding. The development of pupils' literacy is shown in the confident way they answer questions. Special educational needs pupils in an excellent ICT lesson responded to the teacher's skilful questioning to improve their understanding of the topic.
11. Teachers' methods are very effective, especially in catering for pupils' many different learning needs. Most lessons are well planned, following the guidelines for the national strategy for Key Stage 3, which provides a framework within which teachers set out the aims of the lessons. In the very good and excellent lessons observed, the final few minutes were used very effectively to pull together and reflect on the learning. Pupils benefit greatly from this approach, as can be seen in their good achievement through the school. However, learning is not reviewed in this way in all lessons and this is an area that the senior managers know can be improved.
12. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from the expert help from learning support assistants as well as from the effective way in which teachers vary their methods to take account of individual learning needs. A good example of how special educational needs pupils take a full part in lessons was observed in ICT when the teacher made sure they had their fair share of answering questions out loud.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 87 lessons

| Excellent | Very good | Good | Satisfactory | Unsatisfactory | Poor | Very Poor |
|-----------|-----------|----------|--------------|----------------|--------|-----------|
| 11 (14%) | 26 (31%) | 38 (33%) | 18 (22%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) | 0 (0%) |

The table gives the number of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about lessons; figures in brackets show percentages where 30 or more lessons are seen.

13. Excellent teaching was observed in science, ICT, art and design, Spanish and citizenship. There were elements of very good teaching in all other subjects. Where teaching was satisfactory, teachers did not make the best use of time to review learning at the ends of lessons, and did not plan enough opportunities for pupils to work independently.

Assessment

14. Methods used to assess pupils' work are satisfactory. The school collects a wealth of information about pupils' academic performance and personal development. However, this has not yet been brought together to give a clear picture to teachers, pupils and parents of how well pupils are doing and what they need to do to improve further. Overall, in subjects there are good procedures but class and homework which is assessed routinely and the reporting of National Curriculum levels to pupils and parents are not linked and lead to a certain amount of confusion. This is a particular issue in science where assessment is unsatisfactory. Although in English the marking of work is very good and gives pupils a clear picture of what they need to do to improve, this is not replicated across the whole school. Teachers are not using the information they gather from marking and assessment enough to plan their teaching and pupils' learning.

The curriculum

The curriculum is **good** overall and has some very good features.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Many pupils take part in the very good range of enrichment opportunities.
- The *Venerable Bede Challenge* provides pupils with many opportunities to enhance their out-of-hours learning in a variety of ways.
- There is very good provision for art and design and modern foreign languages.
- Not enough time is allocated to teach all the prescribed elements of design and technology.
- The new building and resources make the school an exciting place to learn.
- There is a strong vision for the development of the curriculum.

Commentary

15. The school has a clear vision for the development of the curriculum and all statutory requirements are met. Although not all ICT facilities are yet available to pupils, teachers are using those in place well to enhance learning. In particular, there is very good provision for art and design and modern foreign languages, and over half the pupils study a second foreign language in Year 8. In design and technology, there is insufficient time for resistant materials, although pupils' entitlement to the full range of design and technology options should be fulfilled as pupils move up through the school and more facilities become available.
16. Curriculum leaders are already preparing for the examination courses to be offered from Year 10, and it is intended that those pupils who are making exceptional progress should be entered for a small number of GCSE examinations at the end of Year 9 rather than the normal Year 11.
17. Pupils eagerly attend the very good range of extra-curricular activities where they are encouraged to learn in a variety of different ways. The *Venerable Bede Challenge* encourages them to develop skills in the many clubs and societies, from lunchtime concerts to the Young Engineers Club and from the Eucharist preparation to the *Be(de) Mad Production Company*, where they discover different approaches to learning. Their efforts are recognised and rewarded as they work their way through the levels of challenge.

18. The match of teachers to the curriculum is satisfactory. The school is now fully staffed with specialist teachers and curriculum area leaders. The building was not finished at the time of the inspection, making difficulties for teachers in some subjects, especially ICT. However, the entrance hall and the specialist areas are only a few weeks away from completion and will provide excellent accommodation. Already completed are the modern spacious laboratories, affording excellent opportunities for investigative science. The school hall is beautifully decorated and the hand-made wooden altar, given to the school by a local Christian community, is a commanding focal point for worship. The sports hall is an excellent indoor facility but other provision for physical education is still not completed.
19. Resources are very good in most subjects but at present all are not in use as they have not been unpacked because of temporary lack of completed storage areas. The main ICT suite is not complete but lessons take place in subject ICT areas which are very well resourced. All rooms are fitted with electronic whiteboards. In modern foreign languages, the new textbooks and teaching provided by two foreign language assistants make the resourcing excellent. In the art and design area, facilities are not in place for resistant materials and a shortage of reference books restricts pupils' research.

Care, guidance and support

The school makes **very good** provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school has very good child protection procedures.
- The school seeks, values and acts very well on pupils' views.
- Procedures to ensure pupils work in a healthy and safe environment are excellent.
- Induction arrangements for pupils are very good.

Commentary

20. The very good care which the school takes of all its pupils begins while they are still in primary school, so that they settle in quickly when they arrive in the new school. Pupils about whom there may be concern, such as those with special educational needs or who have social and pastoral needs, are identified early and all adults in the school are well trained in child protection. The school chaplain has an important role and, together with the youth worker, provides additional support, working particularly well with pupils with special education needs to reinforce their learning and ensure they make progress. The school takes excellent care over the health and safety of pupils, particularly in keeping pupils safe from the building work currently in progress.
21. The learning co-ordinators, one for each of the current two year groups, ensure that pupils' personal development and academic progress are monitored fully. As a result, pupils are given the pastoral support they need and achieve well. Relationships at the school are very good and all pupils feel confident that they can go to staff for advice and guidance and will be treated sympathetically.
22. The school is very good in seeking, valuing and acting upon the views of its pupils. Pupils are keen to be elected as members of the school council and regularly offer their views to senior management.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Links with parents are **very good** and links with the community and other schools are **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Provision to parents of information about the school is very good, although information about pupils' standards and progress is not always clear.
- Links with the local community on an individual and corporate level are very good.

Commentary

23. Almost half of parents responded to the inspection survey. The overwhelming majority say their children like school and are making good progress, they are kept well informed about school, the school seeks the views of parents and staff encourage their children to become responsible. A small minority of parents feel they are not kept well informed about their children's progress and the school does not seek the views of parents. The inspection findings agree with the positive views expressed and do not confirm the negative views.
24. Information provided by the school is very good. There is an excellent school brochure, and regular newsletters which provide information about the school and future events, and the way parents can become involved. The governors' annual report to parents is concise, clearly written and gives all statutory information, including a full financial statement and examination results. Reports, which are written at the end of the summer term, give very clear information to parents about what pupils have studied, but information about results achieved and target setting does not always link with the week-by-week assessments which pupils have in their exercise books. Parents are warmly welcomed into school, especially at open evenings and events dedicated to foreign languages, mathematics and paired reading to enable parents to work with their children to improve their literacy, numeracy and language skills.
25. All parents sign the home-school agreement and the school planner is a useful form of two-way communication between school and parents. All of this has a very significant impact on the progress that pupils make. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are always invited to their children's review of statements and individual education plans.
26. The school has good links with the community and other educational establishments. Links with the Anglican Church are very strong. The school is involved in an active partnership in regeneration plans for the local village through individual membership of the Ryhope Regeneration Trust. Pupils are involved in research with members of the local historical society and are about to start work on writing a musical, based on the life and times of members of the local community.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are **satisfactory** overall. The school is soundly led, management is very effective and governance is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Management is very effective and ensures very good practice in the monitoring of teaching and learning.
- Curriculum area leaders are strongly committed to sustaining improvements in teaching, learning and achievement.
- There is clear vision but this is not supported by longer-term strategic financial planning.
- Staff views on the development of the school are insufficiently sought and valued; planned opportunities for teachers to proffer their ideas, options or opinions on ways to improve provision are not yet embedded.
- The governing body ensures that all statutory requirements are met but is not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of the school.

- The school's approach to financial management is linked to educational priorities.

Commentary

27. Very good management systems and a strong team effort have led to a smooth transition into the new school building. Team work, expertly led by the senior management team, is also very effective in establishing reliable procedures for the monitoring of teaching and learning. Moreover, performance management arrangements are very good and teachers speak highly of the quality of induction of staff new to the school.
28. The quality of leadership of curriculum area leaders is good overall and is very good in art and design, modern foreign languages, music and ICT. There is a strong commitment to improvement in teaching, learning and achievement and a clear vision for the development of the school. However, effective channels of communication from and to the headteacher are not yet embedded and the consultation process, inherent in the school's drive to improve the educational experience of all its pupils, is not wide enough. Furthermore, not all staff are clear about issues in relation to strategic planning and delegation of financial resources to departments.
29. The governing body, in only 15 months since it was constituted, has achieved much in establishing the ethos and development of the school and has ensured that all statutory requirements are met. However, it is not fully aware of the strengths and weaknesses of provision and is, therefore, not yet in a position to challenge the policy and practice of the headteacher effectively enough.

Staff performance management, induction and professional development

30. The excellent system for managing staff performance is led at deputy headteacher level, with curriculum area leaders formally involved in the performance management cycle. The induction programme is very good and supports teachers new to the school and the profession equally well. Very successful residential team-building experiences, a middle management conference and training by an outside expert, have all helped to improve teaching and learning through shared experiences and recognition of colleagues' strengths.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

| Income and expenditure (£) | |
|----------------------------|---------|
| Total income | 690,000 |
| Total expenditure | 604,000 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 3,574 |

| Balances (£) | |
|-------------------------------------|--------|
| Balance from previous year | NIL |
| Balance carried forward to the next | 86,000 |

Finance

31. The school managed its first budget effectively over the financial year. However, the school's vision is not supported by long-term financial planning and the governing body is not active in this strategic planning. The school has changed its method of allocating funds to departments and not all curriculum leaders are clear about the new arrangements, which have led to some unevenness in the level of funding across the school.

32. The finance officer, as a member of the senior management team, is well placed to oversee the linking of spending decisions to educational priorities. In terms of day-to-day financial transactions, the principles of best value are applied, for example when obtaining tenders for services and goods.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGE 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected nationally and demonstrate good achievement.
- Pupils learn well in lessons and make good progress because teachers work hard to adapt teaching to meet pupils' needs.
- There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to learn independently of the teacher and to take a more active part in the lesson.
- Teacher expectation is high and support is targeted effectively to ensure all pupils make good progress.
- Very good assessment supports good learning and identifies what pupils need to do to improve.

Commentary

33. Pupils enter the school with average attainment in English. The standard of work at the beginning of Year 8 is higher than is usually found. Achievement is good and at times very good. For example, writing produced by some pupils in Year 8 in response to poetry is well above average. Most pupils are confident and articulate when expressing their ideas and opinions; they particularly listen well. The standards of reading and writing are good overall and at times very good. The minority of pupils who have difficulties with reading and writing receive effective additional help and consequently also make good progress. Pupils' progress is supported by the very good use of assessment. Marking is accurate, supportive and detailed, identifying what pupils need to do to improve. Some learning opportunities through involving pupils actively are, however, missed and the capacity for independent learning is not fully developed.
34. In lessons, most pupils learn well and make good progress because of the good quality of the teaching. Teachers' expectations are high and work is challenging, which results in most pupils achieving well. The planning of lessons is a particular strength with teachers modifying their approach to take account of the needs of all groups, including those with special educational needs. In a low ability Year 7 lesson, pupils made very good learning gains because the teacher provided a highly structured environment, through the imaginative use of the electronic whiteboard, to explore use of words in a way that was both challenging and fun. The use of teaching assistants in this lesson was very effective, adding significantly to the pupils' development of language. Indeed, in the best lessons seen the brisk pace encouraged pupils to offer ways to improve their learning. This was possible because a positive learning culture has been established and the quality of relationships with pupils is very good, characterised by care and mutual respect.
35. Leadership and management are good. The curriculum leader has substantial expertise in the subject and has identified priorities for the department. There is good team work and a readiness to exchange ideas to improve standards.

Spanish

Provision in Spanish is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are well above those expected nationally and demonstrate very good achievement.
- Teaching is very good and leads to high levels of engagement by pupils.
- Leadership and management are very good and there is very effective monitoring of departmental performance.
- Assessment for learning is very thorough and pupils evaluate their own performance.

Commentary

36. Because teachers offer pupils a wide range of assignments and introduce complex grammatical constructions early in the course, standards as they enter Year 8 are well above what would be expected. There are instances, for example, of pupils already using both the future and conditional tenses in Year 7. When they add the use of the past tense, these pupils will be demonstrating high levels of attainment at an early stage in their learning. Pupils with high levels of linguistic competence have an extensive vocabulary and demonstrate real fluency in writing. Pupils who find learning a foreign language difficult assimilate new words and phrases quickly and are reaching average standards at the end of Year 7.
37. Pupils often surprise themselves at how much they can say in Spanish and their achievement is very good, irrespective of their ability. Because teachers mostly use Spanish extensively in the classroom and because pupils are more than willing to imitate the phrases used by their teachers, pupils in Year 7 use classroom vocabulary accurately. Pupils in Year 8 take part in role-plays, ordering a variety of drinks and introducing more and more new phrases into their conversations.
38. Teachers have a strong belief in the talents, industry and commitment of their pupils and use a range of methods to meet their individual learning needs. Their very extensive subject knowledge, effective use of the electronic whiteboard and skilled questioning techniques, lead to pupils demonstrating a willingness and, on occasions, a desperation to speak the foreign language. Furthermore, warm relationships and secure classroom management create an atmosphere in which pupils can do nothing else but make progress. Opportunities for pupils to evaluate their own learning are legion and pupils are more than aware of what they need to do to improve their standards. Teaching is, therefore, never less than satisfactory, is very good overall and in two-fifths of lessons seen, excellent.
39. The department is very well led and managed and teachers evaluate performance on a regular basis. The departmental handbook is a most impressive source of advice for all teachers. Monitoring of teaching is a major strength and the curriculum leader has already identified areas for improvement, for example the increased use of Spanish. There are many opportunities for enrichment in both French and Spanish and parents benefit from the annual Spanish evening. Classrooms are vibrant and the walls are adorned with pupils' work. The department is very well placed for future development and further success.

French

40. Approximately half the pupils in Year 8 take French as a second language. In work seen, standards were what would be expected after only a few weeks of learning a new language. Teachers have considerable expertise and use French extensively in lessons. Pupils respond positively and understand instructions spoken at speed.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

41. Overall standards of literacy are good. There is very good provision in modern foreign languages, art and design and music. In these lessons, learning is significantly accelerated by teachers' use of questioning and a systematic method for pupils to evaluate their work very well. Most teachers are aware of the importance of literacy but there is a lack of consistency, and the potential for literacy support across the curriculum is not fully exploited.
42. For pupils whose attainment is below average on entry in Year 7, extra classes are arranged for them to catch up, as well as classroom support through teachers and assistants. Pupils are mostly confident and fluent when speaking, they listen and concentrate well. Pupils understand the range of texts and most adapt their writing to the demands they meet in different subjects.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected nationally and demonstrate good achievement.
- Very good leadership provides a clear vision for development of mathematics.
- Good teaching provides a variety of learning experiences.
- Very good relationships promote an enjoyable learning environment for pupils.
- Assessment procedures are not sufficiently refined to provide pupils with short-term targets for improvement.

Commentary

43. Pupils enter the school with above average attainment in mathematics. At the beginning of Year 8, standards seen in lessons and in pupils' books are above that expected for their age group nationally. This is good achievement. The higher attaining pupils in Year 8 work confidently at very high standards. Most pupils work at levels which are at, and often above, that expected for their age and they achieve well during lessons. This was evident when a Year 8 pupil was able to build on his previous learning and explain how to draw a regular octagon within a circle. Pupils are eager to learn and often volunteer to demonstrate their thinking to the group. This practice develops their understanding, confidence and speaking. Lower attaining pupils often work at levels expected of most pupils of their age. Basic number skills are good which aids progress of all pupils. However, there is some weakness in their ability to measure angles accurately. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well.
44. Teaching is good overall, with much that is very good. High quality teaching challenges pupils; there is a good pace of learning. Pupils are offered a wide variety of activities to enrich their learning experiences which maintains their interest and application. This is a major factor in pupils' high standards. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils are the second important factor in the high quality of learning. Mutual respect is evident in the way teachers and pupils work together, discovering and mastering new information. Pupils are frequently invited to demonstrate their understanding to the group or explain their observations about possible methods of solution of problems. These aspects develop confident learners. Very good use is made of the new electronic whiteboards as teaching tools, further enhancing pupils' learning experiences.
45. Subject leadership is very good. The new curriculum area leader, in post since September 2003, has a clear vision of how to develop the subject as the school grows and what will be required for successful introduction of new courses. He is an enthusiast for mathematics and presents a very good role model to teachers and pupils. Management of the subject is good.

In the short time he has been in the school, the curriculum area leader has begun to monitor teaching and has put in place schemes of work which have immediate impact on pupils' learning. He has developed an effective pupil performance monitoring system which he plans to develop further, as the current system does not provide pupils with sufficient short-term targets for improvement. Ambitious targets have been set for the department and for individual pupils.

Mathematics across the curriculum

46. Provision for mathematics across the curriculum is satisfactory. The development of numeracy has been included in the policy documentation of subjects and identified in schemes of work. However, due to the rapid changes taking place over the academic year in the development of the new school, it was decided to delay full implementation of the policy until the new co-ordinator of mathematics was appointed. Now, a re-launch of the initiative is under way. Training for teachers is planned in the current year to fully implement the numeracy policy. Currently, pupils' numeracy skills are sufficient to support learning in all subjects. However, a weakness in Year 7 pupils' skills of plotting graphs of data was observed in science and lower attaining pupils in a geography lesson could not recognise very large numbers and read them aloud. There are some good examples of numeracy development in art and design, where pupils use measurement and understand two- and three-dimensional work, and in French and Spanish lessons, where pupils count and use dates in the language.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards reached are above national expectations.
- Pupils' attitudes towards learning are very good and they achieve well.
- Teachers' expectations are high and pupils are challenged rigorously to extend their learning.
- Assessment is not used well enough to improve pupils' achievement, especially of the most competent girls.
- Learning support given to pupils with special educational needs is effective.
- Pupils do not present their work well in books.
- There is weakness in numeracy and aspects of literacy among lower attaining pupils.

Commentary

47. Standards overall are above national expectations. Pupils are achieving well as they move into Year 8 and most are making good progress in relation to when they started at the school in Year 7. Higher attaining pupils are reaching standards which are well above expected levels and are likely to be even higher, especially from the girls. Lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs, are achieving well and are reaching nationally expected standards.
48. Overall, pupils' numerical skills are satisfactory, although lower attaining pupils have difficulty using the rules of number and, in particular, the drawing and interpretation of simple graphs. Pupils have good oral skills. Lower attaining pupils read satisfactorily but most have difficulty understanding written texts, which hampers them, for instance when they are taking tests. Standards of presentation in most pupils' work are lower than expected, and do not mirror those standards reached in test and oral responses. Pupils' use of ICT to improve their learning is not being developed sufficiently, partly because equipment and materials have not been delivered.

49. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Pupils have very positive attitudes towards learning, with commitment, application and concentration being particularly strong features. These attitudes are fully exploited by teaching, which is demanding and rigorous. Pupils are encouraged to work hard, and they do. Teachers' expectations are high: sharp, succinct and searching questioning, that compels pupils to deduce logically and reason scientifically, challenges and extends pupils' thinking. Pupils' retention of previous learning is good and they readily transfer knowledge and understanding to new situations to extend their learning further. Pupils' thinking and manipulative skills are developing well because teachers plan investigative work using good resources in excellent laboratories. The needs of individual pupils with learning difficulties are met fully by learning support teachers working closely with teachers. Teachers' use of the national strategy for Key Stage 3 to raise achievement by improving teaching and developing learning skills is largely successful. The strategy is having a positive influence on the preparation and pace of lessons. However, the ends of lessons to re-inforce and consolidate learning are sometimes hurried and do not give enough time to review the learning. Assessment to improve pupils' learning in science is unsatisfactory; it is not used to inform individual pupils of how well they are doing and how to improve.
50. Leadership in science is good and management is satisfactory. The subject leader has established an ethos, which meets fully the aims of the school. Priorities, which include a commitment to improve teaching and learning and to raise standards further, have been correctly identified and pursued. Others, in a detailed and ambitious, yet realistic, subject development plan are not yet under way, for example the monitoring of marking and of pupils' work. There is a clear vision for the direction of the subject and the department is well poised to meet its declared aims.

HUMANITIES

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good and results in good learning.
- High standards of behaviour and attitudes to work mean that pupils achieve well to reach standards higher than expected for their age.
- Good marking gives pupils constructive advice on how they can aim for higher levels.
- Teaching does not meet the needs of lower attaining pupils.

Commentary

51. Owing to timetable provision, it was only possible to observe history being taught in Year 7. Achievement overall is good. Above average and average attaining pupils achieve well, reaching standards above that expected for their age, responding well to high expectation and challenge. The lack of opportunity for lower ability pupils to carry out practical activities results in satisfactory achievement. Because pupils are encouraged to identify with historical situations, they distinguish between cause and effect and appreciate aspects of human motivation. In a lesson on the Battle of Hastings, pupils displayed perceptive insight into the respective motives of King Harold and William the Conqueror.
52. Teaching and learning are good. In above average and average ability groups, teachers offer wide scope for pupils to develop evidence-based skills. Most pupils in these groups are becoming adept at asking perceptive questions of historical evidence and developing reasoned judgements about the reliability of the source material available to them. Lesson planning and preparation are good for the above average and average attaining groups of pupils but do not ensure sufficient progression for lower attaining pupils. For above average

and average attaining pupils, effective use is made of resources whilst homework reinforces and extends classwork. Marking of work offers most pupils constructive advice as to how they can aim for higher levels. The learning needs of lower ability pupils are not always met because lessons are not active enough for them to make good progress.

53. Leadership and management are satisfactory. There is lack of continuity in the learning of history because of the alternate provision shared with geography. The drawbacks of these arrangements have not been considered by the head of department.

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Specialist teachers plan good lessons in which pupils learn well.
- Teachers in the two specialist rooms make very good use of the latest teaching technology.
- Good progress has been made in establishing schemes of work and identifying clear priorities for development.
- Pupils make good progress.
- The rapid pace of lessons and change in activities do not allow slower workers sufficient time

Commentary

54. Only Year 8 geography lessons were taught during the inspection week and limited information was available from the previous Year 7. Standards achieved by the beginning of Year 8 are in line with National Curriculum expectations. Good progress has been made because these pupils entered the school with very variable geography skills.
55. Overall, teaching and learning are good. The most effective teaching results from extremely careful planning in which lessons develop through a variety of quite short and interesting activities. The pace of such lessons is fast. This style of teaching means that pupils with short attention spans work hard throughout lessons and achieve well. However, sometimes the pace is so fast that not enough time is allowed for pupils to complete the tasks. Good use is made of latest technology in the two specialist rooms. A balanced mixture of music, projected maps and diagrams onto electronic whiteboards makes lessons dynamic. Pupils are used to this way of working and find the short bursts of music help them to concentrate. Pupils do not always get sufficient opportunities to work with the whiteboards, and the computers for their own use are still waiting to be installed.
56. Lessons are based on national strategy for Key Stage 3, the ideas from which are effectively extended. In one lesson, two boys led a plenary session which resulted in a most challenging series of questions that had the whole class sharing its learning. Relationships in classrooms are good. The respect shared by pupils and staff contributes to an atmosphere of confidence in which all pupils feel able to share their difficulties as well as triumphs. There is good learning by lower attaining pupils and those with statements of special educational needs, especially where there is support from classroom assistants. High quality homework is set and completed regularly. Marking systems are still variable because there simply has not been time for the head of department to monitor what is happening and feed that back to teachers. Descriptions of features of National Curriculum levels in geography are displayed in classrooms. These are written in a way that pupils can easily understand. A selection of work that illustrates what these levels look like is planned for use by pupils. The use of marking as a way of providing detailed guidance to pupils on how to make progress is not yet sufficiently widespread but has been identified as a whole-school priority in the school development plan.
57. Leadership and management of the department are good. In the very short time since his appointment, the head of department has formed clear views about how geography provision

can be improved. The scheme of work does not provide pupils with enough challenging activities.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

The provision for information and communication technology (ICT) is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is very good and sometimes excellent, leading to high standards and good achievement of pupils.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject promote very good attitudes and behaviour of the pupils.
- Control and measurement are not taught, but will be as soon as the resources are available.
- The needs of gifted pupils are not being met through enrichment opportunities.
- Very good assessment data are not used effectively.

Commentary

58. Standards at the beginning of Year 8 are above expectation. The department is following the national strategy for ICT and this is being carefully planned and adapted to suit the abilities of all pupils. This is adding to the breadth of the curriculum to improve standards further. Pupils in both years are achieving well. In a very good Year 7 lesson, pupils learned to capture and manipulate images when preparing a presentation. Year 8 pupils are making very good progress in using spreadsheets for modelling. In an excellent lesson, lower attaining pupils made very good progress as they worked on the effects of changing variables in a spreadsheet. These pupils were so delighted with their achievement that all were smiling as they left at the end of the lesson. Pupils have a high level of interest in ICT and their attitudes and behaviour are very good overall. They work independently and are also very willing to help each other. There is open access to computers before school and at lunchtime and pupils make very good use of the facility. However, there is no specified provision of enrichment activities for gifted pupils to reach their potential. Because the school's main ICT suite is still not completed there is, at this time, no provision for control and measurement.
59. The pupils respond very well to very good and sometimes excellent teaching. Teachers are enthusiastic about the subject, plan their lessons very well and have excellent relationships with the pupils, creating an atmosphere of mutual respect. A particularly strong aspect of teaching is the use of questioning which encourages the pupils to think for themselves. Teachers ensure that pupils of all abilities, especially those with special educational needs, have the opportunity to answer questions.
60. The subject is very well led and managed. The co-ordinator is providing the drive and direction for raising achievement. He ensures that he keeps up to date with current trends in ICT and has a clear vision for the school in the future. He is forming a high quality team which includes an experienced network manager. As an excellent teacher, he is able to provide a good role model for other staff and pupils. He has organised comprehensive assessment procedures to gain insight into pupils' progress and recognises the need to ensure that these procedures are used effectively by all teachers to improve teaching.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. Electronic whiteboards and computers are being used very well by teachers, who have been trained in their use. This practice adds quality and speed to the lesson and enhances the learning experience for pupils. However, at the moment, opportunities are limited because the ICT rooms and access to the Internet are not

available, though use is being made of the design and technology and science suites as an interim measure.

TECHNOLOGY

Design & technology

Provision in design & technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils receive a high standard of teaching from committed and enthusiastic teachers which enables them to achieve well.
- There are very good relationships between pupils and teachers, promoting very good standards of behaviour, with pupils working supportively together in groups.
- At the beginning of Year 8, attainment is broadly in line with national expectation.
- Pupils have not had the experiences required in the National Curriculum of working in wood, metal and plastics.

Commentary

62. At the beginning of Year 8, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectation in designing and making. Pupils work in food, textiles and electronics, but not in wood, metal and plastic as required in the National Curriculum. Facilities should be available later this academic year to rectify this deficiency when the new accommodation is completed. Particular strengths in pupils' evaluation of their work and graphic skill development were identified through examining their work, although three-dimensional work is currently weak. Achievement of all pupils is good.
63. Pupils work hard to respond to the very good quality of teaching, which has high levels of challenge and expectation, both of work and behaviour. Learning is very good. For example, a group of lower attaining pupils in electronics were captivated by their teacher's use of the electronic whiteboard. He used it to revise previous knowledge, set the objectives of the lesson and developed the learning through a very good question and answer session which was well recorded on the whiteboard. After a crisp demonstration, he then set the task with the accompaniment of a song lasting five minutes and twenty seconds, just time for them to complete the first practical task. The excitement was evident and all completed the task just in time, being proud of what they had done and the speed in which they had done it.
64. The department is developing effective resources, real expertise and a genuine commitment to the school, all in a short space of time as two of the three staff only joined this September. There are good schemes of work which cater for most pupils well but tasks which will stretch the most able have not been included. Marking and recording of pupils' National Curriculum levels at the end of each project are satisfactory.
65. There is good leadership of a team of proficient and effective teachers and day-to-day matters are managed well. There have been weaknesses in direction where responsibilities have not been clear. However, the curriculum leader has recently been given a clearer identification of her role so that she can complete the development of the new accommodation.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

Provision in art and design is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are above those expected nationally and demonstrate good achievement.
- Very good teaching ensures good achievement by all pupils.
- Relationships in lessons are excellent, resulting in a very good learning partnership between teachers and pupils.
- The leadership and management of the subject are very effective in providing good learning opportunities for all pupils.
- Resources are satisfactory but with few reference books in classrooms.

Commentary

66. At the beginning of Year 8, standards are higher than is usually found in 12-year-olds, representing good achievement by all pupils, because of very good teaching and the often excellent attitudes of the pupils. Pupils are eager to learn and take pride in their achievements. Craft skills are progressing well and the knowledge and understanding of art and design is improving at a significant pace because lessons usually include references to significant artists and cultures. The ability to work in two and three dimensions is developing well and powers of observation in drawing and painting are improving due to a very effective basic skills programme in Year 7. Sketchbooks and other work show competence in a range of materials and research skills are above expectations. All work is well presented, often including good written descriptions because aspects of the school literacy policy are promoted in all lessons. Pupils with special educational needs are particularly well supported by teachers and teacher assistants and therefore progress for them is very good.
67. Teaching and learning are very good. Teachers have a good command of the subject and, through their example and focused teaching, pupils develop their skills and deepen their understanding. Teachers challenge pupils and offer suggestions, developing excellent relationships which give pupils the aspiration to work together. Teachers use a wide variety of teaching styles, meet pupils' learning needs, promote literacy and applied mathematics and make good use of technology in lessons. All lessons end with a class discussion and an evaluation of the work completed, giving pupils an understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses.
68. The subject manager provides very good curriculum leadership, which affords very good learning opportunities for all pupils. There is a shared vision within the department and the monitoring to improve teaching and learning has been a major influence on the high standards achieved. Work is marked regularly and pupils are given written and oral feedback, which gives them an idea of how they can improve their work. Extra-curricular activities are expanding knowledge and understanding. Accommodation is good, providing pupils with a good learning environment. Resources are satisfactory but pupils lack sufficient reference books to afford opportunities for research, thereby expanding knowledge and understanding.

Drama

69. In lessons taught by subject specialists, teaching is very good. In these lessons pupils use a range of drama terms to reflect on their work and ways to improve it. For example, in a Year 7 class studying bullying through the poem, 'Four O'clock Friday', pupils made very good progress in developing their skills in freeze-framing techniques. This was because of the high challenge and expectation from the teacher to encourage pupils to evaluate their own

performance. Pupils worked sensitively and supportively with others. All pupils contributed very well to performance and were beginning to apply ideas well. Provision will be much improved when the specialist teaching spaces become available.

Music

Provision in music is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The leadership by the head of music is very good.
- Pupils' attitudes to music are very good.
- Teaching is good overall.
- Singing is enthusiastic and is a particular strength of pupils' attainment.

Commentary

70. At the beginning of Year 8, standards are above what is normally observed in 12-year-olds. Singing is a particular strength and pupils sing with a good tone and diction. However, although pupils' understanding of musical terminology is insecure, their appraisal of their performance is perceptive and reflective. Last academic year there was no specialist teaching in music and so standards in both years are currently very similar. Pupils in Year 8 are now making up for lost time and all pupils are achieving well.
71. Overall, teaching is good with some very good features. Lessons have good pace and are characterised by the infectious enthusiasm of the teacher which results in pupils being highly motivated. Questioning is very good, particularly when it is used to revise learning from earlier lessons. A particularly strong feature of the teaching is the use of technology and the culture of singing that is being developed in the school. Boys are encouraged to develop their vocal skills and they sing with particular enthusiasm. However, teaching does not concentrate sufficiently on improving the accuracy of the singing. Pupils' literacy is well supported in music lessons with many opportunities being given to discuss music using correct terminology. In some lessons, however, it is not made clear to pupils what musical learning they are meant to achieve through the activities they do. In these lessons, pupils do not make the progress of which they are capable.
72. The leadership of the head of music is very good. He has a strong vision for the role of music in the school. The scheme of work provides pupils with the opportunities to experience music from a wide range of cultures as composers, performers and critical listeners. The department's strategies for assessment are satisfactory, linked to the National Curriculum levels of attainment and showing pupils what they need to do in order to improve their work in music. The head of department makes a valuable contribution to the training of new teachers through his role as a tutor on a local teacher training course and this will place the school in a good position to take a fuller part in initial teacher training when the school has all year groups.
73. In the few weeks that the head of department has been in post, he has established a range of extra-curricular musical activities which involve a large number of pupils. A well-attended choir rehearsal was characterised by motivational leadership to which the pupils responded with enthusiasm and commitment. Particularly notable was the involvement of a large number of boys in this group. A guitar group run by a teacher from another department was expertly led. Pupils not only played their guitars but also listened to recordings of different guitarists. This session was a rich musical experience for all concerned.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most pupils achieve well to reach standards above those expected for their age.
- The good leadership and management of a developing department promote very positive attitudes and relationships between staff and pupils.
- The quality of teaching is good overall.
- The facilities are unfinished and the resources are not yet complete.
- There are very good extra-curricular activities.

Commentary

74. The facilities were not fully completed at the time of the inspection. The playing fields were not ready for use, storage areas had not been finished and the changing rooms were opened two days before the inspection. Lack of specialist accommodation had restricted the range of activities in the previous year. Nevertheless, standards are above what is expected nationally of pupils by the age of twelve. The leadership and teaching within the department deserve particular credit for this, given the difficulties caused by the lack of facilities.
75. Boys attain higher standards than girls in games activities, although both boys and girls have a secure knowledge of fitness and understand the reasons for warming up and stretching muscles. The standards of girls observed when attending gymnastics and dance clubs are above expectations. Since pupils join the school with average standards, many pupils, particularly boys, achieve well as they respond to good teaching. Pupils' analytical skills are not as well developed as their performance skills and there is a lack of emphasis in promoting this strand of the National Curriculum in teaching. Pupils have very positive attitudes and very good relationships with their teachers. This causes pupils to think about their performance and make every effort to improve. Pupils are enthusiastic and interested in the wide range of extra activities provided in the department. Their involvement in these activities, some of which are taught by outside coaches, helps to raise standards and provides very good opportunities for talented pupils.
76. The overall good achievement of pupils is directly attributable to knowledgeable and competent subject expertise that guides pupils' performance. Teachers skilfully manage pupils using established routines which create a positive learning environment. Boys respond very well to being given responsibility for leading small groups and this allows more time on activity and leads to improved standards. In the majority of lessons, teachers circulate well to extend the more able and to help those pupils finding the activity difficult. Teachers do not consistently reinforce key words and phrases in ways that improve literacy, but pupils have developed a very good understanding of the principles of health and fitness.
77. The head of department provides clear educational direction and good leadership for the subject. Means for assessing pupils' progress in Years 7 and 8 are good but are not yet activity specific or shared with the pupils. Schemes and units of work do not identify specific tasks to help pupils gain confidence and independence in analysing and evaluating their work and that of others. The two teachers involved in the sports co-ordinator programme are interested in using the link to establish an effective means for assessing pupils' attainment on entry and to track pupils' progress.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education and citizenship is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The Christian ethos of the school promotes citizenship and personal development very well.
- As a result of good teaching, standards are higher than expected.
- Tutorials, religious education and personal, social and health education lessons afford good provision for the teaching of citizenship.
- The very good extra-curricular activities strengthen pupils' understanding of citizenship and support personal development.
- There is no scheme of work that draws together the three strands of the National Curriculum with the aspects covered by subjects.

Commentary

78. Because of the way citizenship and personal, social and health education are taught it is not possible to report them separately. Citizenship is taught in tutorial lessons in Year 7 and in religious education and personal, social and health education lessons in Year 8. The Christian ethos of the school creates a very good foundation on which to build the citizenship programme and the school assemblies promote both moral and spiritual awareness. A weekly theme is planned and that of justice was explored during the week of the inspection. This good overall provision, linked with good teaching, increases pupils' knowledge and understanding so they reach above average standards and achieve well for their age.
79. Most pupils appreciate the purpose of learning about citizenship and its relevance to their everyday lives. They have a good capacity for working co-operatively and transferring knowledge from previous experiences to develop further understanding. Pupils in Year 7 listened well and respected the views of others when they were planning the development of a new community. Pupils respond well to small group tasks where they work together and pool their ideas. This combination was particularly successful in an excellent Year 8 lesson in which the teacher got pupils to categorise criminal and non-criminal offences and the effects of those crimes by using an interesting range of group activities. Representatives on the year and school councils are enthusiastic about their achievements and the opportunities they are given to influence developments in the new school.
80. The citizenship co-ordinator has been in post for four weeks and has successfully overseen the present planning. He provides a very enthusiastic role model and has a clear vision for future developments. Teachers are not yet sufficiently confident and aware of highlighting aspects of citizenship in other subject areas. There is no scheme of work that draws together coverage in both lessons and enrichment activities and relates these to the three strands of the National Curriculum.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

Inspection judgement

Grade

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The overall effectiveness of the school | 3 |
| How inclusive the school is | 1 |
| How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection | 8 |
| Value for money provided by the school | 3 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----------|
| Overall standards achieved | 3 |
| Pupils' achievement | 3 |

| | |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities | 2 |
| Attendance | 3 |
| Attitudes | 2 |
| Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions | 2 |
| Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development | 3 |

| | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The quality of education provided by the school | 3 |
| The quality of teaching | 3 |
| How well pupils learn | 3 |
| The quality of assessment | 4 |
| How well the curriculum meets pupils needs | 3 |
| Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities | 2 |
| Accommodation and resources | 2 |
| Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety | 2 |
| Support, advice and guidance for pupils | 3 |
| How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views | 2 |
| The effectiveness of the school's links with parents | 2 |
| The quality of the school's links with the community | 3 |
| The school's links with other schools and colleges | 3 |

| | |
|----------------------------------------------------|----------|
| The leadership and management of the school | 3 |
| The governance of the school | 4 |
| The leadership of the headteacher | 4 |
| The leadership of other key staff | 3 |
| The effectiveness of management | 2 |

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7).