

INSPECTION REPORT

Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia

Netherwitton, nr Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122390

Headteacher: Simon Dalby-Ball

Lead inspector: Noreen Buckingham

Dates of inspection: 12th – 14th January 2004

Inspection number: 258959

Inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Non-maintained special
Age range of pupils:	7-16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	43

School address:	Netherwitton Morpeth Northumberland
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr T C Middleton

Date of previous inspection:	May 1998
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CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia is a school, which caters for pupils with specific learning difficulties, namely dyslexia and associated learning difficulties. It admits pupils from a very wide geographical region and consequently some pupils board at the school during the week. There are 43 pupils on roll of whom only 7 are girls. Currently there are 18 boarders none of whom are girls. The centre admits boys and girls from the age of 7 through to 16 years and at the moment there are only 4 pupils in Years 3 to 6. The majority are referred by their Local Education Authority but about a quarter of pupils are privately funded. 37 pupils have statements of special educational needs. Only one pupil is from a minority ethnic background. Pupils' attainment on entry to the school is below what would normally be expected for pupils of their age because of their learning difficulties.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
16722	Noreen Buckingham	Lead inspector	Mathematics
			Religious education
			Humanities
19443	Nancy Walker	Lay inspector	
17323	Dave Smith	Team inspector	Science
			Rural studies
			Physical education
23549	Helen Eadington	Team inspector	English
			Art and design
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19386	Trevor Watts	Team inspector	Information and communication technology
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REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT	4
PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS	
STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS	7
Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities	
QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL	9
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT	13
PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES	15
SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 AND 4	
PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS	25

PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Nunnykirk Centre for Dyslexia is a school, which is effective in providing a good standard of education for its pupils. It successfully meets its' aims of tackling pupils' specific learning difficulties and building their self-confidence. Relationships across the school are very good resulting in a very positive ethos in which their personal development is emphasised so that they mature into confident young people. Teaching overall is good and as a result pupils achieve well in many areas of the curriculum. The special English sessions are particularly effective in meeting pupils' specific literacy needs. The curriculum is good and pupils are given opportunities to participate in a good range of activities. The school is well led and both the management and governance of the school are satisfactory. The school provides good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The provision to meet pupils' specific learning difficulties is good.
- The development of pupils' confidence and self- esteem is excellent and is supported by good opportunities for personal and social development.
- Relationships across the school between adults and pupils are very good and this helps to create a very positive ethos in which pupils learn well.
- The rural studies course offers very good opportunities for curriculum enhancement.
- Regular homework enhances the curriculum and has a positive impact on pupils' learning across the school including external accreditation.
- Parents are kept well informed about their child's progress and as a result they have very positive views about the school.
- Residential provision is good and offers a range of opportunities for curriculum enrichment.
- Insufficient regular monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school by the headteacher, governors and key staff.
- Statutory requirements regarding the marking of registers are not met.
- Inconsistent use of information and communication technology (ICT) in subjects of the curriculum.
- A lack of specialist accommodation for art and physical education restricts some aspects of the curriculum.

There has been a satisfactory level of improvement since the school was inspected in 1998. Additional courses have been added to the curriculum, which increase opportunities for external accreditation. The appointment of a deputy headteacher has been crucial to the overall management of the school; a school council has been set up to give pupils a voice in what they would like to see developed although currently in discussion with inspectors some pupils feel their views are not always given consideration. The school has been awarded a School Achievement Award twice and has been awarded an Eco-School Bronze award. Initiatives involving dietary changes, for example, fish oil and a wheat free diet, have been introduced following appropriate consultation and with parental permission. Some outside areas have been improved giving younger pupils in particular better play facilities.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	personal and social education
Year 6	Good	Good
Year 9	Good	Good
Year 11	Good	Good

In a special school such as this, standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not national standards. The good teaching, good understanding of pupils' particular needs and good assessment procedures are the main reasons why pupils' achievements are good overall. Many pupils leave the school with a good range of externally accredited awards, which demonstrates the good progress they have made since entering the school. **Pupils achieve well** in a wide choice of activities, for example, sports, photography and rural studies. Targets in pupils' individual education plans for English and mathematics are very well focused and support their achievements in these subjects very well. Pupils know these targets and so they are able to recognise their own achievements and this supports their personal development. Achievement in science and information and communication technology is more variable mainly because assessment is not used sufficiently well enough to focus sharply on pupils' individual needs. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good overall.** Pupils are interested in their lessons, they work hard and relationships across the school are very good. They make excellent progress in developing confidence and improving their self-esteem. Pupils' personal and social development is supported very well through formal and informal day-to-day routines and via the responsibilities pupils undertake. Staff are good role models for pupils and lead by example, which again helps pupils to develop a good understanding of social expectations.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is good as is the quality of teaching.

Teachers think about what will interest pupils as well as meeting the demands of external examination criteria. They use resources well and encourage pupils to work hard giving them many opportunities to succeed. As a result pupils respond well and enjoy learning. Teachers are committed to enabling pupils to make the most progress they can and most have a good understanding of the needs of pupils with dyslexia. The good curriculum is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities, such as rural studies, photography and sport. Some aspects of the curriculum could be improved, for example ICT. Day pupils can participate in the evening activities offered to boarders. The school has few links with other schools and colleges and recognises that this is an area for development.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Overall the leadership and management of the school are satisfactory. The leadership of the school is effective and the management and governance are satisfactory. The headteacher and governors have a very clear vision for the way ahead for the school and have successfully gained planning permission for new buildings giving them, amongst other things, the opportunity to develop post 16 provision which is strongly supported by parents. The headteacher is very well supported by an able deputy, and they have very distinct responsibilities. While some monitoring of teaching and aspects of the curriculum is undertaken, it is neither sufficiently formalised nor rigorous enough to highlight the most important areas for improvement. Governors are very supportive of the school but much of their time has been spent in dealing with changing the school's status from a non-maintained school to a company limited by guarantee giving the school more opportunities to raise funds for the new building. The charitable status of the school means that it is managed in line with Charity Commission guidelines. Now this change has been successfully completed governors have the opportunity to become more actively involved in the monitoring process to ensure the continued success of the school. The management of the residential provision is good and pupils are relaxed and well cared for. Statutory requirements in regard to the marking of registers are not met in that they are only marked once a day in the morning.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Parents have very positive views of the school and are overwhelmingly supportive of everything it offers. Their children are happy to come to school and they see big improvements in their children's confidence and self esteem. Pupils like coming to school and this is evident in their very positive attitudes towards the school and their learning in general. Whilst a school council has been

organised, some pupils feel that their views are not always considered in that some of their requests have not been granted.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Develop more rigorous monitoring and evaluation systems of the school's work, including the residential provision, by the headteacher, governors and subject managers.
- Ensure that ICT is used more consistently to support all subjects.
- Facilities for art and physical education need to be improved.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- ensure that registers are marked every morning and afternoon.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Pupils' achievements are good overall. Most pupils gain a number of General Certificate in Secondary Examinations (GCSE), which demonstrates good progress over time. All pupils have the opportunity to gain some form of externally accredited awards by the time they leave school.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils achieve well in most subjects of the curriculum, except science and ICT where achievement is sometimes only satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Targets on pupils' individual education plans support pupils' achievements in English and mathematics very well.
- Whole school targets have been set to raise pupils' achievements and to encourage more inclusion in options.

Commentary

1 Pupils achieve well because of the good teaching and the good understanding teachers have of the pupils' particular difficulties. Teachers want pupils to succeed and endeavour to maximise the opportunities provided which include those offered by residential staff. The use of interesting resources and specific subject vocabulary combine to support pupils' understanding of topics and underpin pupils' achievements. Their achievements in many areas of the curriculum are recognised and celebrated, for example, swimming, trampolining, photography and mechanics. Because most pupils come to the centre lacking in confidence staff see it as very important that pupils' skills in all areas are as fully developed as possible and are recognised as worthwhile achievements. The curriculum has a good balance of academic and practical elements so that pupils can experience success. Special English classes and reading sessions are particularly helpful to pupils and support their achievements in other subjects. Pupils' achievements in externally accredited examinations include Entry Level in English and physical education and GCSE success in mathematics, science, rural studies, ICT, geography, art, home economics and resistant materials. Achievements in science and ICT for pupils in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory mainly because assessment is not used consistently to identify pupils' individual needs and tasks are not always sufficiently challenging. Because ICT is not used consistently across the curriculum pupils do not have enough opportunities to use and develop their skills and in science when pupils work is not marked they are not fully aware of how to improve and build on previous work.

2 The school gives very close attention to assessing pupils' progress against the targets on their individual education plans in English and mathematics. Assessment is used very well in these subjects and the information is used to identify strengths and weaknesses and to build on what pupils know and can do. The subject managers track pupils' progress thoroughly so that they gain a very good and detailed understanding of pupils' needs and how best to organise the next steps in their learning. Pupils are given good feedback about how well they are doing and in which aspects of their learning they need further support. An example of this is in the Maths Club when pupils can work on their weaker areas and receive individual support. Similarly in English the negative attitudes pupils usually bring to the school when they arrive change as they begin to achieve success because of the carefully structured programmes of work as a result of a range of assessments.

3 The school has set appropriate targets to raise the level of pupils' achievements in GCSE overall. Pupils' achievements are low on entry to the centre often because of the lack of understanding in their previous schools of their specific difficulties and how to deal with them. By the time they are ready to leave most pupils have achieved some form of external accreditation, which helps them gain a place in college, work or further training. Currently the school has relatively few links with other schools and colleges mainly due to the fact that pupils' have experienced failure but it

recognises that this is an area for development. Within the school, targets have been set to encourage pupils to participate in a wide range of activities with the aim of improving confidence and self-esteem, attributes often absent because of experiences of failure in previous schools, and which is good achievement for these pupils.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities are very high. This is a similar picture to that found when the school was last inspected and it remains a very strong feature of the school and one about which parents are particularly pleased. Pupils' behaviour and their social and moral development are very good and the spiritual and cultural development is good. The attendance of pupils is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils grow in confidence and self-esteem and make excellent progress.
- Pupils have very good attitudes towards school and their learning.
- Pupils behave very well and there are very high levels of mutual respect and so relationships are very good.
- Principles that enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong and the responsibilities of living in a community are very well promoted by the school.
- Residential provision boosts pupils' very good personal development.

Commentary

4 From the first day of admission, the calm and caring ethos of the school quickly puts pupils at ease. There is a high level of mutual understanding amongst pupils and staff and so pupils quickly grow in confidence and self-esteem. This is a very noticeable feature of the school, bearing in mind that many pupils come here feeling inferior and unable to achieve. Parents are exceptionally pleased with this aspect of the school's work.

5 Pupils are keen to attend and achieve high levels of attendance and punctuality. They are clearly happy on arrival each day and enjoy each other's company. They settle quickly to routines and to their work. The vast majority listen carefully and concentrate hard throughout lessons and do their best. Homework is set for virtually every lesson and meets with no disgruntlement from pupils and this supports their learning very well. Pupils play a full part in other activities such as caring for the school's farm animals, and again this is without any reluctance.

6 Staff have high expectations of behaviour. They lead by good example and are kind and sensitive. They nearly always use praise to encourage good behaviour in lessons rather than reprimand and courtesy is recognised and rewarded. As a result, pupils are very well behaved and polite to each other and especially to adults resulting in very good relationships throughout the school. The vast majority never fail to stand back and let others through doorways, to show respect as appropriate, to wait their turn, and to say 'please', 'thank you', and other courtesies. They are not rowdy or intimidating in any way and they are a credit to the school, their parents, and themselves. There are only minor lapses in adherence to school rules and the school has had no cause to exclude any pupil in recent years.

7 Pupils are treated with fairness and justice and so they understand the difference between right and wrong. All pupils play an active role in caring for the school's farm animals on a daily basis and this is particularly instrumental in helping pupils to understand the needs of others and their role in a community.

8 The pupils thoroughly enjoy their opportunity to board at the school where very good relationships are very effectively promoted. They make very good progress in their ability to live and thrive in a community. The pupils carry out their tasks, such as table monitor, very thoroughly and with a very good sense of responsibility. Mealtimes are very positive social occasions where the

pupils enjoy very good quality food and clearly enjoy each other's company. They talk enthusiastically about their activities and also discuss aspects of their schooling such as their timetable for the day. The start to the day is calm and purposeful and the pupils are prepared very well for their time in school. There is no evidence of bullying and the older pupils are very good role models for the younger pupils.

Attendance

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (93.4%)2002/2003

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.2%	School data	0.4%
National data	9.1%	National data	4.0%

The table gives the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Exclusions

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	41	0	0
Black or Black British – Caribbean	1	0	0

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

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is good. The consistently good teaching together with a good understanding of the pupils' particular difficulties and the very good relationships, help pupils to learn well in a climate of mutual respect and understanding. The curriculum is good and is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular activities.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is good. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' achievements are also good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most teachers have a good understanding of the needs of dyslexic pupils and plan lessons, which enable them to learn systematically.
- Teachers use a good range of activities and resources.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- Regular homework makes a significant contribution to pupils' progress.
- ICT is not consistently used in all subjects of the curriculum.
- There are no systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school.
- Assessment information is used very well to set individual targets.

Commentary

9 Teachers almost always use appropriate teaching strategies, which enable pupils with dyslexia to make progress. They understand the pupils' difficulties and know how these affect their

learning and this has a significant impact on pupils' achievement and progress and on their personal development. Because teachers recognise pupils' have a limited concentration span and difficulties with short-term memory, most lessons are delivered in short sections and include a varied range of activities. Pupils benefit from having frequent opportunities to revisit and reinforce their earlier learning. However, occasionally, when the teacher does not fully understand the pupils' needs and the activities fail to capture their interest, the pace of the lesson is slow and little progress is made.

10 Resources, many produced by the teachers, are introduced well and help to extend pupils' understanding, and maintain their interest and effort. In most lessons teachers use effective questioning, and their expertise and lively approach, coupled with the judicious use of time-targets, drive lessons along at a brisk pace so that little time is wasted. Pupils are treated with warmth and respect, which promote their self-esteem, and confidence and relationships between adults and pupils are very good.

11 Regular homework is an established aspect of the centre's provision and has a positive impact on pupils' learning, including their preparation for, and achievement in, externally accredited work. The small minority of girls at the school are fully included in all the activities in lessons. Pupils with additional difficulties are effectively supported by learning support staff, which usually enables them to take a full part in activities.

12 ICT is used well in presenting the final outcomes of drafting and redrafting and for course work for accreditation in, for example, English and geography. However, it is not consistently used in all subjects of the curriculum, and opportunities for supporting learning with resources, such as laptops, are sometimes missed, for instance, in science lessons.

13 Assessment procedures are good overall and very good for English and mathematics. Teachers make very good use of baseline and ongoing assessment information, when they identify pupils' individual learning targets and plan and modify lessons. Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly and they are usually given clear guidance on how to improve their work. In English and mathematics lessons pupils have their individual written targets to remind them of what is expected. Consequently, they are able to recognise their own progress and are proud of their achievements.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 56 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
0	4 (7%)	32 (57%)	19 (34%)	1 (2%)	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.

The curriculum

The school has a good curriculum, which focuses well on the particular needs of the pupils. It provides very good opportunities for enrichment through extra-curricular provision. The quality of the accommodation and resources are satisfactory overall but the outdoor facilities are good and used very well.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is a good focus on developing pupils' English skills, as the key to their dyslexia.
- The school provides courses that are interesting, practical and which motivate pupils.
- Activities outside the normal school day complement the main activities very well.
- Residential provision very effectively extends learning opportunities.
- The planning for some subjects is not well coordinated through the school.
- The number and experience of staff meets the needs of the pupils well.
- The standard of accommodation is variable from good to unsatisfactory.

Commentary

14 The school gives very good emphasis in terms of time to lessons that focus on pupils' principal learning difficulty. These English lessons include literacy and separate reading sessions, as well as all aspects of writing and reading in other lessons, including in computing lessons. The school is particularly successful in meeting this aim.

15 Building on the strengths of teachers, the centre provides several new and unusual courses, which motivate pupils to want to learn. These subjects are practical, often with a good academic element, including, for example, rural studies, photography (including digital photography), expressive arts and childcare. The school has also embraced ideas aimed at improving pupils' thinking skills, including a wheat-free diet, free fruit each day, and the principles of "accelerated learning", or "Brain Gym" – access to a drink of water at any time, and various simple in-class exercises. The school maintains a broad and relevant curriculum, with all subjects except a modern foreign language being offered and teachers emphasise particularly motivating topics, such as the graphics work in ICT, or the woodwork and cooking in design and technology.

16 The provision for out-of-school learning is very good because of the range and frequency of the activities that are offered. These include a selection of lunchtime clubs and after-school activities such as trampolining, basketball and yoga; visits to a bowling alley, ice rink, theatre and art gallery. Some of these activities are weekly, and others are occasional "treats" or related to specific lessons. Some, such as football, sailing and canoeing are seasonal. All are popular with pupils. Whilst all pupils are invited to attend the evening activities, in practice, it is very difficult for pupils who are not boarders to take advantage of them because of difficulties in getting home afterwards.

17 In some subjects, such as computing and personal and social education, there is not enough liaison between staff throughout the school to make sure that the long-term plans of what is to be taught lead seamlessly from one year to the next. Thus, topics may be repeated and so pupils' learning is not as good and broad as it might otherwise be. However, the majority subjects have been well thought out and very well planned allowing skills and knowledge to be built up progressively as pupils move through the centre. The curriculum overall is well adapted to meet the needs of the pupils.

18 The residential provision very effectively extends the learning opportunities provided for the pupils in the school. The pupils have very good support for their homework and this makes a valuable contribution to the good progress that they make in their learning. The pupils have access to the ICT facilities during the evening and make very good use of this opportunity to extend their learning. The pupils have a very good choice of activities and these are appropriate both to their age and interests. The pupils keenly discuss their activities and display exceptional confidence when discussing and selecting their activities. Sessions on the golf driving range are very popular and the pupils also particularly enjoy the maintenance and use of the school karts. They are keenly involved in their food technology, senior woodwork and photography activities. The care of the animals is a central aspect of the pupils' time in residence. The older pupils very effectively help to train the younger pupils into the essential routines of animal husbandry. Some pupils follow their interests beyond the school's provision, for example, by joining and competing as a member of an athletics or football club. Other very good use of community facilities includes the offer of special activities such as visits to the cinema and these contribute to the pupils' very good social development.

19 Although the accommodation is satisfactory overall, some classrooms are small, as are some of the specialist rooms, such as science and art. However, newly passed plans will do much to improve the situation when the new building is completed. Indoor accommodation for physical education is unsuitable for some activities but good use is made of community facilities for some lessons, such as the weekly swimming sessions. The outdoor facilities, such as the playing fields, the farming area and the out-buildings, are particularly good, and are invaluable in supporting the wider aspects of pupils' learning.

20 Teaching staff is well qualified and experienced in the main. Staff undertake appropriate training to help in the teaching of pupils with dyslexia, as well as in particular subjects. There are satisfactory resources in most subjects, but new purchases of equipment, materials and software are not well monitored to see how effective they are in improving pupils' achievements. The school makes good and successful efforts to ensure that all pupils have equal access to all subjects, regardless of the degree of their learning difficulties, or whether they are girls or boys. The provision for the pupils with the greatest needs is good, well targeted and well organised, ensuring that these pupils have the most appropriate education available. Many subjects offer courses to GCSE level in Years 10 and 11. Pupils can also take other courses that are approved by outside agencies, such as the CLAIT course in computing skills. These act as a good motivation for pupils, and, being well structured, they aid pupils' long-term learning.

Care, guidance and support

Pupils continue to be satisfactorily cared for and receive good guidance and support but some of the school's procedures lack rigour. Currently the way the school seeks the views of pupils and acts on them is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school maintains a calm and orderly environment.
- There are very good and trusting relationships existing between pupils and adults in the centre.
- Well informed and experienced staff provide good support and guidance throughout the school.
- Child protection arrangements are good, including first aid provision.
- Residential provision provides a homely environment but pupils do not have access to an independent listener.
- Risk assessment overall should be more rigorous.

Commentary

21 The school provides a very calm environment where relationships are very good and staff take a keen interest in each and every pupil. As a result, pupils come to school willingly, safe in the knowledge that they are valued and can seek and receive help without fear of humiliation.

22 All members of staff have a good understanding of dyslexia and are skilled and sensitive in supporting pupils' learning in lessons. They are patient and move pupils on in small, manageable steps according to each pupil's own ability. This is particularly beneficial in helping pupils to gain in confidence and self-esteem and in turn helps pupils to reach their personal potential.

23 Weaknesses in the school's child protection arrangements found when the school was last inspected have been addressed. Staff have received training in this aspect and the school's policy document and staff handbook give clear guidance to staff in identifying signs of abuse and recording and reporting responsibilities. There is a high level of first aid knowledge amongst staff and all medication is securely stored and administration records are strictly maintained. The very harmonious atmosphere that exists throughout the school ensures pupils are free from any form of physical or emotional abuse. Regular site inspections are carried out and so equipment and premises are adequately maintained. However, there is a lack of rigour about such inspections and so general daily routines involving pupils have not been adequately assessed to highlight potential risks. When the school was last inspected, weaknesses were found in the school's recording of pupil attendance and most of these weaknesses remain.

24 A homely environment is well established in the residential provision and the pupils personalise their own areas as they settle into their rooms. The pupils have private access to a telephone and have regular contact with their parents. Members of staff know the pupils very well, their views are taken into account on an informal basis and during a weekly meeting. However the pupils do not have the opportunity to talk to an independent listener and this is an important safeguard for pupils and staff in a boarding school.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school's partnership with parents has improved even further on the positive picture found when the school was last inspected and is now very good and a strength of the school. As a result, parents are kept very well informed of their child's progress and can celebrate in their success. There are good links with the surrounding community and satisfactory links with other schools and colleges.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Parents hold the school in extremely high regard.
- Very good and regular information is provided for parents.
- Good community links have been established but links with other schools and colleges are few.
- Parents are given little information about the curriculum content so are not able to support pupils' learning at home.

Commentary

25 Parents are extremely satisfied with what the school does for their children. They are particularly pleased with the tremendous patience and kindness staff show to their children and with the very noticeable improvement in their confidence and self-esteem and in time their reading and writing skills. They appreciate the training days organised for them so that they can learn about aspects of dyslexia and how they can help their children at home.

26 Information for parents is of a very high quality. The school provides end of term reports as well as very detailed and high quality end of year reports for each subject and so parents are fully versed about their child's progress. There are regular telephone calls between home and school and parents clearly feel comfortable in approaching the school with any worries. Termly newsletters are of a particularly high quality and make delightful reading and enable parents to smile and join in the experiences and successes of their children. Nevertheless, there is little information in advance on what pupils will learn and experience and so parents are unable to enhance the work of the school as much as they might.

27 The school uses the local and wider community well to provide a greater variety of experience for pupils and enhance their social awareness and skills. Examples include, regular visits to a sports and leisure facility in Morpeth, the opportunity to join a local Harriers club, involvement in a 'beach tidy' at Druridge Bay, and pupils have experienced survival techniques through a visit to Todburn woods at Longhorsley. However, largely because of travelling distance, there are few links with other schools and colleges and so older pupils have little experience of possible opportunities for further education when they leave Nunnykirk at the end of Year 11.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The overall leadership and management of the school is satisfactory. The leadership of the school by the headteacher is good and the management and governance are satisfactory. There are no significant barriers to learning that adversely affect achievement.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher and governors have a clear vision for the future development of the school.
- The headteacher and deputy headteacher work well as a team and lead the school effectively.
- Day-to-day administration and budget control are effective.
- The monitoring and evaluation of the work of the school is underdeveloped.
- The school gives all pupils the opportunity to be included in activities.
- The residential provision is well managed by the housemaster and his team.

Commentary

28 The headteacher and the governing body have a clear vision for the future development of the school having spent a great deal of time changing from a non-maintained status to a company limited by guarantee. The school also has charitable status, which means that funds must be managed in line with the Charity Commission guidelines. They have also worked very hard to obtain planning permission for new buildings, which are at the heart of their long term strategic plan for the future development of the school, including post 16 provision. The governors are very supportive of the school and attend special events but do not regularly make any visits which focus on a particular aspect of the schools' development which would give them a better insight into the work of the school. However the expertise of individual members of the governors is used well, for example, finance and educational psychology.

29 The school is well led by the headteacher and key staff. The headteacher and deputy head work well together each having quite distinct responsibilities which cover most areas of the school's management. Both have a teaching commitment and have proved themselves to be effective classroom practitioners, which gives them a good insight to how pupils are working. Daily staff meetings keep staff informed and involved in what is happening in the centre and staff have a shared commitment to the future development of the centre. Similarly regular meetings between the headteacher and residential manager means that each is kept informed about activities.

30 Monitoring and evaluating the work of the school by the headteacher, subject leaders and governors are underdeveloped. Self-evaluation procedures are not well established and although performance management identifies staff training needs, an overview of other aspects of the work of the school is lacking. Some subject leaders, for example in English, have undertaken some monitoring of their subject but it is not well established. The lack of systematic procedures for monitoring the quality of teaching throughout the school restricts the identification of priorities for development. This in turn limits the effectiveness of the whole school development planning.

31 The housemaster has significant responsibility and accountability for the management of the residential provision. He responds to this challenge well and leads by example. The staff and pupils respond well to his consistent management as he ensures that the systems and procedures are effective, well established and fully understood by the pupils. The housemaster is a good role model for the other staff and the pupils and this makes a valuable contribution to the feeling of security that the pupils have in the residential provision.

32 The headteacher and staff are keen for all pupils to be involved in all activities the school has to offer. Day pupils have the opportunity to stay for residential evening activities and although the number of girls at the school is small compared to boys, they have the same opportunities in terms of activities and responsibilities.

Financial information

Financial information for the year August 2002/2003

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	808,827	Balance from previous year	£139,356
Total expenditure	631,270	Balance carried forward to the next	177,557
Expenditure per pupil (day)	11,925		
(residential)	20,010		

33 Effective administration allows the school to run smoothly on a daily basis. The headteacher sets the budget and is supported by the school secretary and the finance governor, which means that the budget is monitored very effectively. Day to day routines are secure, financial planning is clear and accounting systems are well managed. The school always looks for ways to

secure value for money whether this is for daily supplies or larger items of expenditure. There is a clear view that cheapest is not always the best. School fees compare well with schools in similar situations. The surplus being carried forward is in readiness for the new buildings and resources which will be needed.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3 AND 4

ENGLISH

Provision in English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils make good progress in all aspects of literacy and consequently improve their confidence and self-esteem.
- Teachers have a good understanding of their pupils' needs and usually plan lessons well.
- Special English lessons and daily reading sessions make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
- Pupils experience a very good range of literature.
- Pupils in Key Stage 4 succeed in nationally accredited courses.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- The co-ordinator has insufficient opportunities for monitoring teaching.

Commentary

34 The provision is good because teaching is good overall and never less than satisfactory. Consequently pupils achieve well and make good, and sometimes very good, progress in speaking and listening, reading and writing. This increases their confidence and self-esteem very effectively.

35 A major strength in English lies in the opportunities pupils are given to improve their speaking skills. Their confidence is effectively promoted by the many well-managed class discussions and by the school's focus on using the correct subject vocabulary in all curriculum areas. In the best lessons teachers engage pupils in lively discussions about interesting topics which encourage them to formulate and justify their opinions. Drama and role play are also used well to enable all pupils to participate orally in different situations. Pupils needing additional help are well supported by a speech and language therapist.

36 Pupils make good progress in reading. The majority enter the school with negative attitudes towards books and reading generally. However, their carefully structured individual programmes and frequent opportunities to reinforce what they learn, enable them to develop a growing sight vocabulary and to use an increasing range of phonic skills to make sense of texts. Pupils' understanding and enjoyment of books is effectively underpinned by hearing them read very expressively by their teachers. Pupils are introduced to a very good range of texts including poetry, and classics such as 'The Wind in the Willows', 'Of Mice and Men' and 'Great Expectations'. They also study Shakespearean plays in their work for accreditation and through visits from a theatre group.

37 When they enter the school many pupils have significant problems with coordination and their writing skills are very limited. When they do write they frequently use a mixture of poorly formed print and cursive script and have little knowledge or understanding of spelling. However, the very well focussed work they are given on handwriting, spelling, punctuation and writing for different purposes enables most pupils to improve their confidence and ability to put their ideas on paper. Pupils of all ages routinely use ICT to organise their work and to present their final versions after drafting and redrafting their writing.

38 Special English lessons and daily reading sessions are particularly helpful in focussing pupils on their individual learning targets. Because they all know their targets and are given very good help and support, they understand when they are making good progress and are proud of their own achievements. This promotes their personal development very well.

39 Teaching is usually good or very good because teachers plan lessons thoroughly and understand the pupils' difficulties and how these affect their learning. As a result, lessons have a good range of activities and resources are used, which are very well matched to the pupils' needs. Good questioning strategies and time targets are used effectively to keep lessons moving at a brisk pace, without placing pupils under undue pressure, and they are given many opportunities to revisit and reinforce what they have learned. Regular homework tasks and the constructive feedback given to pupils on both their oral and written work, also contribute well to their progress. Occasionally, when activities do not capture the pupils' interest or go on for too long, the lesson pace slows and they begin to lose focus.

40 Pupils have good opportunities for gaining nationally accredited recognition for their work and most are keen to do as well as they can. Pupils who are doing GCSE achieve very well and recent results indicate that by Key Stage 4 standards in English are significantly above those expected nationally for pupils with severe dyslexia. Assessment procedures are very thorough and the information gained is very well used in identifying individual learning targets and monitoring pupils' progress.

41 The subject is well led and managed. The co-ordinator has a good understanding of the needs of dyslexic pupils, and there are regular department meetings to review the centre's provision. However, there are insufficient opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching across the school and this limits opportunities for identifying priorities for development, and for sharing her own expertise and that of other specialist staff with colleagues. Provision for English is enhanced by trips to the theatre and by visits from a story teller.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

42 Literacy skills are systematically developed across all areas of the curriculum. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to reinforce and extend their speaking, reading and writing, particularly in expressive arts, geography, history, design and technology, mathematics, science and religious education. This has a very positive effect on pupils' achievements and their self-confidence.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching and learning are good and as a result pupils achieve well.
- The good relationships between adults and pupils.
- Homework and the Maths Club support learning well.
- Assessment is used well to inform the next stage of learning.
- The subject is well managed and organised.

Commentary

43 Teaching is consistently good and means that pupils are given every opportunity to succeed and achieve as well as they can. The teacher has secure subject knowledge and uses a variety of strategies both to interest pupils and help them learn. This is especially relevant when learning tables and doing simple multiplication, even the youngest pupils in Years 3 to 6 are keen to learn the "finger" and "bridge" methods to work out simple sums and this boosts their confidence because they are successful. A multi-sensory approach works well with pupils with their particular difficulties. When learning is made fun they achieve well and make progress. The youngest pupils are given a good grounding in basic skills which is built on in following years. Clear, detailed records identify strengths and weaknesses and pupils are given good guidance about how to improve. End of module tests enable pupils to know how well they are achieving and this motivates them to continue to work hard and also means that work is matched to individual abilities. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 work,

for example, through money, time and measure, to solving algebraic problems, area, percentages and interpreting pie-chart information. They cover a good quantity of work well. Older pupils work towards external accreditation and use ICT to present some aspects of their work.

44 Pupils learn in a positive classroom atmosphere because of the very good relationships between themselves and adults. They respond well to the humour and general chivvying by the teacher and work hard. The way all adults, but especially the teacher, are able to intervene quietly and effectively shows how well they know pupils' individual abilities. Lessons generally follow a similar routine of a recap of previous work, boardwork examples, copying examples to refer to and then independent work. The teacher and teaching assistant circulate marking work and ensuring pupils have understood what they have to do. This works well.

45 Homework is a regular feature of the mathematics provision and supports learning effectively. Boarders have set prep times in which to do their homework under supervision. The twice weekly Maths Club enables pupils to work with the teacher in a more informal way and at their own pace on areas of their work they want to practice or receive extra help. It is particularly useful to pupils prior to an examination when they can revisit topics they find the most difficult and can talk to the teacher in a relaxed atmosphere. During the inspection a good number of Years 10 and 11 pupils worked hard throughout the lunchtime even though some of them had already had a mathematics lesson that morning.

46 Assessment procedures are well embedded into the organisation of the subject and the information is used to set targets in pupils individual education plans which are reviewed six monthly. Young pupils working at their IEP targets demonstrates that work is matched well to individual needs and marking identifies the level of help given and any aspects of the work pupils have found difficult. In lessons, question and answer sessions allows the teacher to assess the level of pupils' current understanding of a particular topic.

47 The subject is managed well and the co-ordinator works with the support assistants to ensure they are clear about their role and know what is happening in lessons. Analysis of work shows that pupils build on prior learning which develops their skills and enables pupils to work towards externally accredited examinations with some confidence.

Mathematics across the curriculum

48 Mathematics is used well across the curriculum, for example in science, food technology, design and technology, geography and in rural studies. They use graphs, charts and tables to record data for a geographical study of a river. Pupils weigh ingredients in food technology and to measure materials in design and technology. In rural studies pupils work out profit and loss.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The pupils in Years 10 and 11 make good progress in their learning and achieve well.
- All pupils make good progress when involved in practical work.
- Some of the pupils' work in Key Stage 3 is not marked.

Commentary

49 The quality of teaching and learning for the pupils in Years 10 and 11 is consistently good. The pupils are challenged to work hard and as a result they make good progress in their learning and achieve well. The GCSE examination results in science are good. The current Year 10 and 11 pupils are very focussed on their external accreditation and are making good progress. The start of the lessons is stimulating and all of the pupils answer questions accurately, for example, about the care of the environment. They know the chemical formulae for a good range of gases and

understand that excesses of methane contribute to the greenhouse effect. Local and global data is used effectively to demonstrate changes in the climate and the pupils make good progress in their numeracy skills as they confidently interpret the data. The appropriate use of scientific terms is a strength of the teaching and the pupils confidently use the correct language, for example, when describing the transfer of heat by convection and radiation. They are also able to correctly label the parts of an eye and the major organs of the body.

50 Pupils of all ages in the school respond well to opportunities to learn through their involvement in investigative work. The teaching provides a good model for the pupils in the safe handling of scientific equipment and materials and consequently the pupils show respect for the resources. The pupils are taught very effectively to work in pairs and share equipment. In Years 3 to 6 pupils begin to understand about what makes a balanced diet and learn about food groups and the types of food in each group. Pupils in year 7 are taught well to use a microscope and they quickly learn the names and functions of the major parts of the equipment. The good use of questions helps the pupils to recall that plants are made up of cells and they also know what shape the cells are. A good range of material is provided for observation and the pupils are curious about what they see on the slides and are keen to find out more about the structures of materials. A skilled demonstration of how to correctly connect a three-pin plug, prompted the Year 10 pupils to effectively develop the knowledge and skills required to fit the plug safely. The resources and accommodation for the teaching of science are only adequate. However, a wealth of opportunities are provided in the rural studies curriculum to boost the pupils' opportunities to be involved in practical work. The Year 11 pupils make very good progress in their understanding of a fair test as they investigate the relative yields of different varieties of potatoes. Also, the pupils confidently carry out experiments to investigate the acidity and alkalinity of different soils.

51 The pupils' progress in Years 10 and 11 is assessed with reference to the requirements of their GCSE course and, as a result, they are aware of how to improve their work. However, some of the pupils' work, particularly in Years 7 to 9, is not marked. This limits the assessment of pupils' work and contributes to weaknesses in their progress. For example, in their previous work, the pupils have estimated the amount of electricity used by different appliances and this work is not marked. Consequently, the pupils do not know which answers are right or wrong and this limits the progress in their learning. However, pupils' learning in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory, overall

Rural studies

Provision in rural studies is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The facilities and opportunities for practical work are very good.
- The external accreditation opportunities for the pupils in Years 10 and 11 are very good.
- The pupils make very good progress in their personal development.

Commentary

52 All of the pupils have the opportunity to be fully involved with the busy and stimulating rural studies programme in the school. They rapidly change into appropriate clothing at the start of lessons and no time is wasted as they quickly become involved in their activities. The youngest pupils in Years 3 to 6 are involved in identifying birds and can name blue-tit, great-tit and nuthatch. They share binoculars and record their findings. The pupils in Years 7 to 9 are effectively taught the basics of the care and management of the school's animals and plants. The pupils thoroughly enjoy their involvement in this subject and see it as a central and essential part of their life in the school. The pupils take a full and active part in the maintenance of the facilities for example the repair of the stock housing and fencing. Practical work is an essential part of the GCSE course for the pupils in Years 10 and 11. They are taught very well to handle the stock in a confident and safe manner. There is a wealth of photographs that show the pupils are fully involved in a very good range of practical activities such as strimming the grass. The pupils gain the knowledge and skills to carry out these activities very well, as part of the assessment process in their GCSE studies.

53 The teacher of the pupils in Years 10 and 11 has a very good knowledge of the practical and theoretical aspects of rural studies. The quality of teaching and learning is consistently very good and, as a result, the pupils achieve very well in their rural science and agriculture GCSE. They share the very high expectations of the teacher and take great pride in their work. A very informative video is used as an excellent prompt to extend the pupils' understanding of the advantages of using artificial insemination in the commercial breeding of turkeys. The discussion is very well managed and the pupils approach the topic and very challenging questions in a most mature manner. The pupils make frequent references to their GCSE course and are motivated to do their very best. Their course work is a credit to the hard work and commitment of the pupils and the teacher. They have completed a very good project that evaluates the variety of potato that crops best in controlled conditions. Their investigation has very good links with the science and mathematics curriculum and helps to promote their learning in these subjects. The pupils have been very effectively encouraged to present their findings in a very high quality topic. Their very high quality topic includes the very good use of ICT to present their work and also represent their data in a range of graphs.

54 The older pupils play an important and responsible role when training the younger pupils into the routines of animal and crop care. The school develops very effective teamwork and the pupils work very well in pairs and groups. The pupils talk enthusiastically about their chores and are very clear that they need to carry out their tasks whatever the weather. The pupils are taught very well to accept responsibility and this makes an excellent contribution to the very good ethos of the school. Pupils are quick to notice any changes in the stock and their very positive attitude to the school is fostered by their involvement in this subject.

55 Pupils are taught to observe and to help care for the animals and birds in the locality. This is an important aspect of their personal development and they have a good understanding of the need to care for the environment as worthwhile citizens of the future. Sensitive teaching and very good relationships ensures that the pupils understand the need to process the animals and plants on a commercial basis. The management of their projects includes very good training in budget management and this prepares the pupils very well for their life after school.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils' progress is at least satisfactory throughout the school, and good in Years 10 and 11.
- Pupils learn a good range of skills in discrete ICT lessons.
- There is no monitoring of how the subject is used across the curriculum and there is inconsistent use of ICT across the curriculum.

56 No lessons were seen with pupils in Year 6 or below so it is not possible to make reliable judgements about achievement. In a mathematics lesson pupils were using an age appropriate programme mostly independently to support basic computation skills. Older pupils make good progress because the lessons are well planned, and taught by a teacher with good knowledge of the subject. The teacher builds up positive relationships with pupils, and motivates them to try hard in developing their skills. Year 10 and 11 pupils learn through a GCSE course, and this adds greater motivation to their learning, with many pupils successfully gaining their certificate. In Year 9 the pace in the lesson varies but pupils settle well to tasks and concentrate well. The lesson is well planned with activities well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are increasing their skills using "Paint" and following guidance from the teacher, complete a poster for a Keep Fit Club. The curriculum is not as well structured as it could be but pupils' do build up their skills in organised sequences.

57 Lessons in the computer suite allow pupils to gain good skills in different aspects of computing, such as word processing, graphic art, and working with spreadsheets. Some of these skills are used well in other subjects, especially in art and design, digital art and photography,

geography, mathematics and to a lesser extent, general word processing in English. However, teachers are inconsistent in how much and how often they use computers in lessons, for example, in history, science or design and technology and opportunities are missed to enhance pupils' learning of the various subjects, and to develop and broaden their computing skills.

58 The leadership has increased the resources well in recent years, and they are now satisfactory. However, the effectiveness of the increased resources on pupils' learning has not been monitored or evaluated. Electronic whiteboards to aid teaching and learning are not available, although the school expects to buy some when the proposed new buildings are completed and the Internet is only accessed with difficulty because of problems with the telephones which is beyond the school's control. The school has laptops for pupils, but these were not seen to be used regularly. Standards have been maintained since the previous inspection but there is still no formal way of assessing how well pupils are achieving or monitoring how ICT is used across the curriculum.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

59 In subjects such as mathematics, geography and rural studies ICT is used to present modules very well and demonstrates pupils' abilities. However ICT is not used regularly in most subjects.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision in geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum is well organised.
- The teacher has good subject knowledge and uses it well in lessons.
- Pupils have opportunities for external accreditation.

60 Although no lessons were seen in Years 3 to 6 analysis of work shows that the curriculum is appropriate and pupils are achieving well. They study an appropriate range of topics, such as the major countries of the world, river systems and the Water Cycle. Their interest is gained by identifying different flags, finding capital cities and learning about currencies.

61 The teacher has very good relationships with pupils and lessons are tinged with humour, which older pupils appreciate and respond to positively. Pupils in Year 9 discuss the reasons for the growth in population and are given statistics about population growth between 1804 and 2004 and why the population may go up and down in different parts of the world. They can discuss possible reasons for this and come up with some interesting answers, for example, disease, famine, better medical care, more food and better hygiene and increased knowledge about family planning. In Year 10 pupils learn about Eco systems and appropriate technical language is introduced, such as, xerophytic vegetation. Because of the teachers' good subject knowledge and very good relationship with pupils, they feel comfortable about asking for explanations and their knowledge and understanding of the topic improves. This is part of their GCSE course and the teacher has high expectations of the pupils. The teacher uses questions well to extend pupils' thinking and most pupils can contribute. The brisk pace to lessons maintains pupils' motivation and there is a good mix of verbal and written work. Homework is used effectively to complete work and is given regularly.

62 Older pupils preparing for examinations are given good support and most gain an award. Pupils can work towards a full GCSE course or a short course is available for some pupils. To support this aim there is a well organised curriculum which is a very detailed and comprehensive document identifying geographical skills, field work and areas where ICT could be used to present projects.

History

Provision in history is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is good overall with some very good features and pupils learn well.
- The teachers have very secure subject knowledge, which supports pupils' achievements.
- Resources are used well to maintain pupils' interest and enhance the curriculum.
- The curriculum is well organised.

Commentary

63 The teachers' enthusiastic and lively approach to the subject gains pupils' attention and they listen well and work hard. The very good relationships between the teacher and pupils means that the pupils are willing to contribute and show a high level of interest. She has high expectations of the pupils and challenges their views encouraging them to discuss their opinions. Good questioning encourages pupils to think about and analyse the information which extends their understanding and consequently they learn well. The teacher ensures that all pupils are involved and participate in discussions and most respond well. Their views are valued and as a result they behave well and show continued interest in the lesson.

64 Resources are used effectively to bring aspects of history to life, such as the issues surrounding World War One and World War Two. Video clippings are used to illustrate the evacuation of Dunkirk and documents and maps of the time help pupils gain some understanding of the events leading up to the evacuation. Pupils learn the importance about supporting judgements with primary and secondary sources of evidence. In another lesson a video clip about Kaiser Wilhelm helped pupils to gain an insight into his relationship with Great Britain and events leading to World War One. Pupils in Year 10 watch a very powerful video about the bombing of Hiroshima and they show a high level of understanding of right and wrong and responsibilities. The teacher's good questioning provokes pupils to think about the moral dilemmas facing people in these situations. Her very secure subject knowledge is used well to develop their interest and enthusiasm in the subject. The topics support pupils' moral and cultural development. The youngest pupils in Years 3 to 6 are beginning to learn about Viking Mythology and following sensitive questioning from the teacher they begin to be able to distinguish between factual evidence and mythology.

65 The curriculum is well organised with a detailed well thought out scheme of work. A good range of interesting and relevant topics has been chosen for study and pupils are now able to gain some external accreditation for their work. The curriculum is enhanced by visits to places of historical significance, such as Eden Camp, Alnwick Castle and Bede's Museum.

Religious education

Provision in religious education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A good range of teaching strategies is used to motivate pupils and maintain their attention.
- The teacher has good subject knowledge.
- Chosen topics are interesting and age - appropriate and support pupils' personal development.

Commentary

66 The good subject knowledge of the teacher enables her to make most lessons interesting using a range of strategies and resources. When learning about the life of a monk, pupils in Year 7 take part in role- play and dress up in monks' habits and discuss the important vows of chastity, poverty and obedience and what they might mean. Good use of a Gregorian style chant along with

lighted candles sets the mood and maintains pupils interest and they learn well enjoying the opportunity to wear different clothes. Older pupils watch video clips to illustrate the beliefs of Martin Luther King and although this lesson is mostly guided by information from the teacher opportunities for discussion are given and pupils respond to teachers' questions. However some pupils remained passive and didn't gain the most from this lesson but the video content did keep their attention. In Year 10 pupils are introduced to abstract concepts, for example, "The existence of God" and "The meaning of life". This lesson is well planned and handled very sensitively and pupils respond in a very mature manner and they ask whether there is life after death. This enables the teacher to introduce some of the thoughts of Freud, Marx, Einstein, Ghandi and Martin Luther King and encourages pupils to contribute their opinions about these theories which results in interesting discussions. Good probing questions enables pupils to respond with their own thoughts, for example, "A belief in God gives you hope" and "Religion gives you guidelines for living your life".

67 Pupils in Years 3 to 6 learn about the story of Joseph and his brothers and are asked to think about how they might feel if they were Joseph. The teacher pauses at intervals while reading the story to find out their opinions about Josephs' brothers thoughts and feelings after they sold him. Good relationships within the class means that pupils are encouraged to talk about their feelings in a secure environment and this supports their personal development.

68 The topics within the curriculum are made interesting for pupils by the variety of teaching styles used by the teacher and by her secure subject knowledge. The curriculum increases pupils knowledge and understanding of other religions as well as Christianity and it is taught in a sensitive but well-informed way.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

69 No lessons in design and technology were seen during the inspection, and there were too few examples of pupils' work and records to make a judgement about their achievements. However, from discussions with pupils and staff, as well as some samples of work, it is clear that pupils learn well-selected skills in home economics, woodwork and textiles. The lessons are generally of a very practical and relevant nature, but also include good aspects of safety, theory, design, and evaluation of the finished products. Pupils enjoy their learning and take pride in what they have done.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

70 Only one lesson of **music** was seen during the inspection and it is therefore not possible to make reliable judgements about the overall provision. In the lesson observed with Year 8 pupils the teaching was judged to be good. Pupils benefited from the teacher's subject expertise and her understanding of the needs of dyslexic pupils. This was reflected during the lesson in the short, well-focussed activities, which kept them interested, and in the frequent opportunities they were given for recalling and reinforcing their earlier learning. Clear reminders were given for following simple, large print notation and for maintaining a rhythm. The pupils persevered well with the challenging task of singing from a song sheet while simultaneously accompanying the words with keyboards and percussion instruments, and as a result of the teacher's effective guidance the group made good progress, particularly with the singing element. They identified the main instruments while listening to 'Sleigh Ride' by Delius and understood that music can create or reflect a mood.

71 The teacher's planning and records indicate that pupils in Years 3 to 9 experience music from a wide range of cultures and in varying styles. They also benefit from a weekly music club run by a non-specialist teacher. This provides opportunities for playing acoustic and electronic guitars, using information technology programmes to compose music, and for group singing.

Art and Design

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Teaching is consistently good.
- Pupils make good progress and achieve high standards.
- A wide range of media and techniques is introduced.
- Pupils have good accreditation opportunities.
- The space in the accommodation is limited.

Commentary

72 Although a proportion of pupils have difficulties with fine motor and coordination skills, and many initially lack confidence, pupils throughout the school make good progress and achieve very well. They investigate and use a wide variety of media and techniques to produce varied and individual work. Displays around the centre and pupils' stored work demonstrate their growing proficiency in using papier mache, water colours, acrylic and oil paints, pastels, charcoal, collage and glass painting. Pupils' work both from direct observation, as seen in their portraits and still life pieces, and from imagination as when they create masks and abstract patterns. They learn about the work of other artists such as Picasso and Van Gogh, and those from other cultures including Aboriginal and Maori art.

73 In Years 10 and 11 pupils also have good opportunities to explore the creative and practical aspects of photography, including the use of a digital camera and an information technology programme, and of processing their own pictures in the centre's dark room.

74 The quality of teaching is always good. The centre benefits from the co-ordinator's good subject knowledge and teachers' enthusiasm. Lessons are well planned, with very clear demonstrations and guidance. A strong emphasis is given to using subject vocabulary correctly. Pupils are taught the skills necessary to achieve specific results and are very well prepared for accreditation of their work. The standards achieved in GCSE work are very good. A significant proportion of pupils reach, and even exceed, the standards expected for pupils in mainstream schools. Space and storage facilities in the art and design accommodation are cramped and pupils would benefit from having more room, particularly for large-scale pieces of work. Art and design successfully supports learning in other areas of the curriculum including English, expressive arts, history, religious education and design and technology.

Physical Education

Provision in physical education is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- There is good coverage of all aspects of the national curriculum.
- The school provides a very good range of additional sporting activities.

Commentary

75 The curriculum is well planned and the different modules are displayed and, as a result, the pupils enthusiastically discuss their forthcoming activities. The pupils' progress is assessed and recorded at the end of each module and this provides a good basis for reporting and celebrating their achievements. The school's facilities are satisfactory, overall, but the hall, which is used for teaching the subject, is unsatisfactory with insufficient available space and limited storage. However, the school makes best use of this facility to provide activities such as trampoline and dance. The small group of younger pupils in Years 3 to 6 are taught well as they remember and carry out exercises to warm up effectively at the start of lessons. The teacher uses good-quality demonstrations to extend the pupils' knowledge and skills and, as a result, they connect a range of basic moves into a routine with growing confidence. The limitations of the accommodation means that the trampoline cannot remain assembled and, as a consequence, time is lost at the start and end of some lessons. However, the available time is used to develop the pupils' ability to perform a range of trampoline moves to a satisfactory standard. All pupils enjoy the opportunity to use the facilities in a local leisure centre. Teaching effectively reinforces the pupils' learning by the use of clear instructions and, as a result, they make good progress in the fluency and precision of their passing, in basketball. In a team situation, the teacher provides a good role model and the pupils compete fairly and in the right spirit. The pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieve well in their Entry Level Certificate. However, some of the pupils are capable of more challenging work and the co-ordinator is planning to provide the pupils with the opportunity to study a GCSE course in this subject.

76 The school places a high priority on the health and fitness of the pupils and this is very effectively extended by a clear focus on healthy eating. The school makes very good use of the available facilities to provide a stimulating range of sporting activities. They have very good outdoor facilities including a range of pitches and a floodlit area. The older pupils thoroughly enjoyed a recent football match against pupils from another school. Some of the pupils extend this interest to a very good level and play for a local team in their home area. The pupils make very good progress in their swimming skills and their achievements are recognised by the presentation of external awards. The celebration of achievement is an essential feature of the school's very good ethos. For example, the Year 11 pupils are very highly motivated to complete their Duke of Edinburgh Bronze Award and are particularly looking forward to their expedition. Other outdoor and adventurous activities, including sailing and orienteering, are provided. These opportunities help the pupils to make very good progress in their ability to cope with challenges, use their initiative and work in teams.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Provision in personal, social and health education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The school as a whole is very much tuned in to pupils' welfare in and out of lessons.
- Although the teaching overall is satisfactory, there are unsatisfactory elements to the teaching, especially in Years 7 to 9.
- The long term plan for what should be taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 is limited.

77 Pupils' overall personal, social and health development is a major positive aspect of the school's ethos. Teachers and other staff generally are very positive with pupils, look after them and their interests, and ensure their health and safety. They act as good role models for pupils, and build up very good positive relationships with them. Pupils undertake their responsibilities well and daily routines further emphasise the very good personal development. This very good attitude helps to overcome some of the weaknesses in the formal teaching programme, especially in Years 7 to 9. Throughout the school staff take every opportunity to develop pupils' personal and social skills and this is continued in the residential setting where pupils enjoy the social aspects of boarding and are good role models for the younger pupils.

78 No lessons were seen with the younger pupils, in Year 6 and below, but a scrutiny of their work indicates good, well-targeted teaching on a regular basis. This includes good aspects of citizenship, and pupils appear to be learning well. In Years 7 to 11 the teaching is satisfactory overall, but with some unsatisfactory elements. For example, in Years 7 to 9, teachers' knowledge of the subject is sometimes not well shown in the lessons, or the planning. Positive relationships with pupils are not always secure and this results in a lack of interest by some pupils. There are times when a minority of pupils are allowed to be passive throughout a class discussion, with little or no attempt by the teacher to involve them actively. However topics, for example, legal and illegal drugs, are very relevant to pupils' age and understanding and important issues are discussed. Topics cover smoking, glue sniffing as well as alcohol. The teacher encourages pupils to express their thoughts and most do contribute sensibly. The teacher questions pupils effectively using pupils responses as a means to extend their thinking. Little use is made of ICT to support learning, and the lessons do not support pupils' literacy skills well.

79 The plan of what is to be taught to pupils in Years 7 to 9 is limited. It does not include some major aspects such as sex education, and has not incorporated all elements of citizenship. However, new developments, such as a new Child Care GCSE course for older pupils broadens the curriculum and adds interest for pupils. Outside agencies, such as the police, have been invited to help with aspects such as drugs awareness. Assessment is ongoing in lessons and pupils responses give the teacher some knowledge of pupils' understanding.

80 Only one lesson was seen in citizenship and this was satisfactory. However, this is insufficient evidence to come to an overall conclusion about the provision for this subject.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
The overall effectiveness of the school	3
How inclusive the school is	3
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	4
Value for money provided by the school	3
Overall standards achieved	5
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	2
The quality of education provided by the school	3
The quality of teaching	3
How well pupils learn	3
The quality of assessment	3
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	3
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	4
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	4
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	3
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	4
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	4
The leadership and management of the school	4
The governance of the school	4
The leadership of the headteacher	3
The leadership of other key staff	4
The effectiveness of management	4

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