

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **MORPETH COLLINGWOOD SCHOOL**

Morpeth

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122389

Headteacher: Cynthia Hetherington

Lead inspector: Dr D Alan Dobbins

Dates of inspection: 1<sup>st</sup> - 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2004

Inspection number: 259054

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: Moderate learning difficulties  
Age range of pupils: 4 - 16  
Gender of pupils: Mixed  
Number on roll: 106

School address: Stobhillgate  
Morpeth  
Northumberland

Postcode: NE61 2HA

Telephone number: (01670) 516 374  
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Appropriate authority: The governing body  
Name of chair of governors: Mr J Rudd

Date of previous inspection: September 1998

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Collingwood School is part of the provision of the Northumberland Local Education Authority for pupils with moderate and severe learning difficulties although, increasingly, it is admitting more pupils with autistic spectrum disorders. It deals with pupils from 5 to 17 years of age. It serves a large rural community that includes much of the western region of Northumberland. One hundred and six pupils attend the school, seventy-three are boys and thirty-three are girls. All, except one, are white British. There are no traveller children and no one is learning English as an additional language. The agreed number of places is one hundred and twenty. Because of their learning difficulties, the attainment of pupils is below that expected for their age. All pupils have statements of special educational need. Healthy School status was gained in 2000, Investor in People status re-affirmed in 2002 and schools achievement awards gained from the Department for Education and Science for each of the last three years. The school is part of the Young Enterprise project.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
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10781	Bob Thompson	Team inspector	Science Design and technology French
12594	Marina Jeavons	Team inspector	Art and design Citizenship Geography History
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## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**Collingwood is a very good school.** The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher inspires staff and pupils to do their best. In many subjects, pupils are making very good progress in their learning because teaching is very good and many lessons take place in specialist rooms, with a wide range of very good resources. The school provides very good value for money.

#### The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The excellent leadership and management of the headteacher, the deputy headteacher and assistant headteachers who are fully supported by a staff team of very competent and committed professionals.
- The excellent procedures for developing the skills and expertise of all staff are making an important contribution to the continuing improvement of the school.
- Most lessons are taught by staff who have a very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and of the pupils, in specialist teaching rooms that are very well resourced.
- The system for recording and evaluating pupils' achievements is excellent, especially in English, mathematics and for the development of personal and social skills.
- The personal and social skills of pupils develop very well because the planned programme is complemented by the caring and trusting relationships staff have with pupils.
- The very good attitudes pupils have to their work and their commitment to doing their best.
- The very wide range of relevant awards through which pupils demonstrate the extent of their learning.

**Very good improvement** has been made since the last inspection. All the key issues identified then have been met in full. Information gained on pupils' learning is used very well to help in teaching all pupils, as well as those aged 14 to 16 years. Teachers' knowledge of information and communication technology and religious education has improved considerably. Resources for teaching science, information and communication technology and music are very much better.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED\*

\*Pupils achievement is judged for the years that reflect best the organisation structure of the school, and not at the end of all the key stages.

Pupils' achievement at the end of:	in relation to individual targets in:	
	Subjects of the curriculum	Personal and social education
Year 2	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 6	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 9	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>
Year 11	<b>Very good</b>	<b>Very good</b>

*Inspectors make judgements in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor.*

**Overall, pupils' achievement is very good.** This applies to all pupils, notwithstanding the cause or complexity of their special needs and over all the years. Pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and their self-confidence and self-esteem, and this makes them confident learners. More pupils take more national awards than is the case for those in many equivalent schools. In English and mathematics, they achieve better standards as they move through the school, so that in Years 10 and 11 they are doing very well. Achievement is very good over all the years in science, art and design, design and technology and information and communications technology and good in geography, history and religious education. In physical education, pupils improve as they move through the school and achievement is very good from Year 6 onward. In French and music, too few lessons were seen to judge achievement.

**Pupils' personal qualities, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good, overall.** Pupils' attitudes to their work and their behaviour are very good and all staff are excellent role models. Both add additional support to the planned programme, so that the progress pupils make in all aspects of their personal and social development is very good. Attendance is satisfactory, and slightly higher than the national average for equivalent schools.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The quality of education is very good. The quality of teaching is very good and results in very good quality learning.** Teaching and learning have made good improvement since the last inspection, especially in the lessons for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Most lessons are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject in very good accommodation with very good resources available. They set high standards for behaviour and learning. The teaching assistants are deployed very well and make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning. Teachers' very good planning and pupils' very good behaviour and attitudes to their work means that learning occurs over the full duration of lessons. Especially in English and mathematics, but increasingly so in the other subjects, the excellent procedures for recognising the progress pupils are making help in planning lessons so that they are relevant to pupils and allow all of them unrestricted access to all lesson tasks. **The curriculum is very good.** It is planned, organised and evaluated very well and helps prepare pupils very well for life after school. The new specialist rooms for art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology, music and science have helped broaden learning in these subjects, which has allowed more nationally accredited awards to be taken by Year 11 pupils. **The quality of care, guidance and support is very good.** The school is a calm and ordered environment. Pupils contribute to this by helping set rules through the School Council. **The partnership with parents is good.** Parents are always welcome in the school and are kept well informed of their children's progress. **The links with the community are very good.**

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**The leadership and management are excellent.** The headteacher has a very clear vision for the school, which is in line with national trends and includes a greater responsibility for the provision of special needs education in the north-east region. She and the staff are well capable of making a considerable contribution to this broader remit. The headteacher sets the highest of standards. She is helping staff achieve the same standards by furthering their skills, experience and competencies through the excellent procedures for professional development. Teachers, teaching assistants and all other staff routinely achieve very high standards in their work as individuals and when they work together as teams. **Governance is good.** Governors have a good knowledge of the work of the school and provide good support to the headteacher and senior managers. Statutory requirements are met. Finances are managed very well.

## **PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL**

**The views of parents are good.** Parents are very appreciative of the work of the school. Pupils say they like school, especially their teachers and teaching assistants. They know they benefit from school because they work hard in their lessons and in meeting the targets in their individual education plans.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

**The most important thing to do to continue to improve** is to continue checking the work of the school and keep using this information to identify priorities for the improvement plan.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS**

### **STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS**

The attainment of pupils is lower than is the case for most pupils of equivalent age in mainstream schools. However, **when pupils special educational needs are taken into account they achieve very well and are making very good progress in most of the subjects.**

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The standards pupils achieve have improved since the last inspection.
- The better standards pupils achieve in English and mathematics in Years 10 and 11 are the cumulative result of very good teaching and learning over the previous years.
- The very good effort pupils have made at their learning over their time at school is shown by the grades they gain over a wide range of relevant national and local awards.
- All pupils achieve and progress equally, irrespective of the cause or level of their special educational needs.
- Pupils are prepared very well for life after school.

#### **Commentary**

1. At the last inspection, pupils up to Year 9 achieved well in most of the subjects. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 achieved satisfactorily in most subjects. Now, the very good achievement by pupils in all the years represents good improvement for those up to Year 9 and very good improvement for those in Years 10 and 11. Achievement in information and communication technology was judged satisfactory last time. Now, pupils achieve very well and this represents very good improvement. Pupils trust and respect staff and have very good relationships with them. This, and the very good quality of teaching and learning in the planned lessons, helps them make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills.
2. Pupils of all capabilities achieve well in all the elements of English and mathematics up to Year 9. Those in Years 10 and 11 achieve very well in both subjects. In these subjects, proportionately more pupils gain pass grades on the certificate of achievement than do those in most equivalent schools. The better standards are achieved in Years 10 and 11 because targets for literacy and numeracy are set precisely and were regularly evaluated and changed over all of the previous years. Also, precise teaching results in effective learning for all pupils and the adding of value to their achievement in Years 10 and 11. When they leave school, pupils use their skills well in dealing successfully with the demands of day-to-day living. For example, they complete application forms, read newspapers and magazines, successfully purchase goods and tell time.
3. More pupils gain pass and better grades on national awards than is the case for pupils in most other equivalent schools. The effort pupils have made in their learning over their time at school, for most subjects, can be shown through success on a relevant award. Most pupils take the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement. The best pupils gain Level 3. For some pupils it involves taking ASDAN units of accreditation, Young Enterprise units or units of the scheme of the Northumberland local authority. The range of awards is much broader than at the time of the last inspection, in part because the new specialist facilities allow pupils to learn parts of subjects that were restricted to them before. When they leave school, the results they gain on accredited awards provide a good reflection of the standards they have achieved in their learning and are good statement of their capabilities for admission officers of local colleges and prospective employers.
4. Through careful planning, and especially the excellent use of teaching assistants, all pupils make equivalent progress in all subjects. Teachers and their assistants know their pupils very well. The procedures for assessing the progress pupils make, especially in English,

mathematics and personal, social and health education, but increasingly so in the other subjects, provide detailed information on what pupils know, understand and can do. The targets in individual education plans also help. Teachers use all this information very well in planning lessons so that all pupils, irrespective of the cause or level of their special educational needs, gain full access to all lesson tasks. For some pupils, this may require the use of British Sign Language, for others the use of a specialist approach to teaching such as the treatment for communicationally challenged children (TEACCH) or special equipment such as radio microphones. Staff routinely use a range of techniques and approaches very well in the same lesson to ensure all pupils are able to fully commit themselves to their learning. This careful approach to teaching results in all pupils making very good progress, irrespective of their gender or the complexity of their special educational needs.

5. Pupils mature and learn to take responsibilities very well over the duration of their time at school. The caring and supportive ethos that permeates throughout all aspects of the school makes a significant contribution to this. In Years 10 and 11, the focus of the curriculum is preparing pupils as well as possible for the next stage of their education and the world of work. Work in lessons in personal, social and health education is supported very well by the very good work experience programme and the close links with a number of local colleges. The opportunities some pupils have to take lessons in mainstream schools also helps. Each contributes to the very good progress pupils make in their personal and social skills. By the end of their time at school, pupils are sufficiently confident and assured to be successful in their college placement and when they take up work. They have been prepared very well for life after school.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities**

Pupils' attitudes to learning are **very good**, they behave **very well**. Attendance is **satisfactory**. Provision for developing pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural awareness is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good way that pupils respond to the high expectations for behaviour and learning of teachers and teaching assistants.
- The very good relationships pupils have with staff, which makes them confident learners and helps develop their self-confidence and maturity as they move through the school.
- The caring ethos and the good range of opportunities, within and outside of the school, form a very good base from which to learn right from wrong and values, such as trust, friendship and respect.
- Some opportunities to promote independence, especially for the older pupils, are missed.

### **Commentary**

6. Pupils like school and say it's 'a good school'. At the beginning of the day, they settle very quickly into their lessons. Teachers and teaching assistants expect them to behave very well and pay due regard to their learning. Pupils recognise this and fully accept their responsibilities as learners. They take pride in working hard and in doing their best. Routinely, they listen very well to their teachers and teaching assistants. The quality of their learning benefits from this.
7. The great majority of pupils behave very well, in lessons and throughout the day. Pupils are polite and well mannered. There have been no permanent exclusions in recent years and only a small number of fixed term exclusions. A small minority, made up mostly of the younger pupils, have complex special needs that make it difficult for them to fully attend to their work all of the time. With the skilled support of the teacher and teaching assistants, they learn to behave well enough for their learning not to be seriously disrupted.
8. Pupils quickly form very good relationships with staff and with each other. They enjoy each other's company and, in lessons, are quick to help each other. The respect and trust they have for staff shows when they have an issue that is bothering them. For example, in lessons they

are quick to ask for help when they need it. Discussions with staff, especially over break and lunchtimes, are routine events. As a result, pupils feel comfortable at school and display an increasing self-confidence and self-belief as they move through the years.

9. Most attend regularly. The overall figure for attendance is similar to that of most equivalent schools.

**Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)**

Authorised absence	
School data	10.1%

Unauthorised absence	
School data	0.2%

10. The caring ethos and lessons in many subjects, but especially religious education, art and design, geography, history, personal, social and health education and physical education, provide a rich background for promoting personal and social development. The provision for spiritual development is good. Teachers receive and value pupils' ideas and encourage them to develop feelings of self worth. They provide good opportunities for pupils to appreciate the world around them. For example, in a lesson in art and design where pupils were discussing how artists represent thoughts there was an air of quiet concentration as they tried to put their own thoughts into their work. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and pupils learn about the celebrations and beliefs of other faiths, although assemblies offer very little time for quiet reflection.
11. Pupils know what is right and wrong. Their very good behaviour is a reflection of this. They discuss and agree class rules with the teachers. They are aware that their behaviour can affect the feelings and the learning of others. This, and the good application of the reward system for appropriate behaviour and effort, encourages good and better behaviour. Pupils' understanding of good citizenship is developed well by regular fund-raising activities for charities, both local and national. All adults are excellent role models who interact with pupils in consistent and fair ways. Pupils learn from this and as they move through the school learn to show appropriate social responses in many different situations. Also, they gain in social awareness from making visits, for example to the residential homes of old folks to serve biscuits on Valentines Day and to invite residents to the Harvest and Christmas activities at the school.
12. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to learn about and appreciate their own culture and those of others. In lessons in history, pupils examine the changing nature of their own cultures, as well as that of other societies in the past such as the Romans, Ancient Greeks and Egyptians. In lessons in geography, they compare life in different countries with that of their own and in art and design they consider the work and the backgrounds of great artists. The library is stocked with a good range of books and materials that reflect the different cultures of Britain today.
13. Pupils have some opportunities to take responsibilities, such as being representatives on the School Council, to run errands and to take part in daily routines. However, some opportunities are missed to encourage pupils to become independent in public social settings. For example, canteen arrangements at lunchtimes are not sufficiently age-appropriate for the oldest pupils and so they are not experiencing making choices. The breakfast club provides very good care for pupils but limits the development of independence skills because pupils do very little for themselves. Everything is prepared for them, including the bread being toasted and buttered.

**QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL**

The quality of education is **very good**. Pupils are able to take a wider range of accredited awards to reflect the quality of their learning over their time at school than was the case at the last inspection,

mostly because of improvements in the accommodation. Teaching and learning have made good improvement since the last inspection.

## Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching is **very good**, and results in learning also being of **very good quality**. The excellent assessment procedures in English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology and for personal and social development help make lesson planning very effective. Pupils work hard to present their work neatly and consistently try to do their best. Teaching, especially for the oldest pupils is, much better than at the last inspection.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Most lessons are taught by teachers with very good specialist knowledge of the subject in very good accommodation.
- The excellent work of the teaching assistants, who make a significant contribution to the very good standards pupils achieve.
- The very good behaviour and the very good attitude pupils have to their learning.
- The very effective way in which resources to support teaching and learning are used, including information and communication technology.
- The increasing impact homework is making on the quality of pupils' learning.

## Commentary

14. Teachers teach subjects, mostly, in which they have had specialist training in very good or excellent specialist rooms. Their expectations for learning are very high. Lessons consistently challenge pupils as learners because lesson tasks match very well with pupils' needs and capabilities. Because of this learning is relevant to each pupil. Lessons are planned very carefully to ensure that the wide range of resources, including the library, are used very effectively in promoting learning for all pupils, notwithstanding the cause or level of special needs. Increasingly, teachers are needing to deal with pupils who are entering school with additional special needs, including autistic spectrum disorders. They and the teaching assistants have broadened their expertise through training, for example in treatment and education of communicational challenged children (TEACCH) procedures and by learning British Sign Language, to make sure that all pupils have equal access to lesson tasks. Teaching assistants are very talented and highly trained. They know their pupils very well and have excellent relationships with them. This knowledge, and the very effective way in which teachers use their skills is helping them make an excellent contribution to pupils' learning.
15. Pupils know that their lessons will be organised and purposeful and will result in new learning. They behave very well and enjoy working very hard to do their best. Their attitudes to learning are very good, and because lessons are planned carefully, learning takes place over the full duration. Rarely is there a need to remind pupils of their responsibilities as learners.
16. Information and communication technology is being used increasingly well to support teaching and learning. Computers are seen as an important resource for teachers so much so that 20 per cent of the subject's annual allowance is required to be spent on E-equipment. All teachers have completed the national training programme, as have some teaching assistants. They use computers confidently to support their teaching for greatest effect. In many lessons, pupils spend part of their time using computers or other equipment such as digital video cameras. For example, in English they use word processing and publishing programs to present information. In mathematics, they practise the skills of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division. In art and design, they use paint programs especially to create symmetric designs. Internet access is readily available and pupils are practised at gaining information in all the subjects.

17. In English, mathematics, science and in personal and social development, excellent assessment procedures contribute to making teaching and learning very effective. Information on what pupils know, understand and can do is recorded very well and is used very well in planning lessons. Pupils' attainment is assessed against 'P' levels or National Curriculum levels for the attainment targets. The school also uses the PIVAT assessment criteria to record the value added achievement of pupils. This is used very well in identifying targets for pupils and in recognising the progress they are making. The use of assessment in the other subjects, to record progress and help in lesson planning, is catching up quickly. For example, the database for information and communication technology now extends over two years.
18. Homework is set three times each week and is recorded in the homework diary. The procedures are well established and are working increasingly well in supporting learning, especially in English and mathematics as more parents are becoming fully involved in helping their children at home.

### **Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons**

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 (2%)	33 (55%)	22 (36%)	4 (7%)	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.*

### **The curriculum**

The curriculum is **very good** over all the years. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Resources to support teaching and learning are **good**. The accommodation is **very good**, much better than at the time of the last inspection and poses few limitations on what can be taught.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good planning, organisation and procedures for checking the relevance and meaning of the curriculum and for ensuring that all pupils have equal access to all curricular activities.
- The new specialist teaching rooms act to broaden the curriculum and increase the range of accredited awards that are taken by pupils in Years 10 and 11.
- The innovative use of local facilities and the expertise of visiting staff benefit pupils' learning by extending and enriching their experiences.
- The very good programme for personal and social development helps prepare pupils very well for life after school.
- The number, specialist skills and knowledge of teachers and teaching assistants match very well with the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

19. The curriculum is carefully monitored, evaluated and managed. It closely reflects the National Curriculum for pupils from Years 1 to 9 and, for pupils in Years 10 and 11, is designed to prepare them fully for life after school. It is regularly modified to meet the changing special needs of incoming pupils. The focus is always to make learning experiences relevant to pupils and to provide equal access for all pupils to all parts of the curriculum. This is being achieved in a number of ways. For example, the length of lessons was recently shortened to match better pupils' capability to attend fully over the duration of lessons. Assessment information is used to set pupils in Years 7 to 11 into equivalent capability groups for English and mathematics. In these classes, learning is more effective because the recommendations of the national strategies work better when the range of capabilities in the class is reduced. The additional needs of the incoming pupils are being catered for by extending the skills and experience of staff. For example, three teaching assistants have gained a vocational qualification in speech

and language. Also, teachers have been trained in the use of TEACCH procedures, in using radio microphones and augmentative language systems such as Makaton and picture exchange (PECs) procedures. Resources to support teaching and learning are very good for most of the subjects and have been built up to match with the needs of all pupils. Each is contributing in their own way to providing equal access to all curricular activities for all pupils.

20. The splendid new specialist facilities in art and design, design and technology, information and communication technology and science have contributed to the greater range of learning experiences in these subjects than was the case at the last inspection. The curriculum is very much broader because of this. This means that pupils now take more nationally accredited awards than they could at the time of the last inspection. Now, they are able to demonstrate the extent of their learning over a wider range of awards than is the case for pupils in most equivalent schools. They take the general certificate in secondary education (GCSE), certificate of achievement, Northumberland Units of Accreditation, Trident, ASDAN and Young Enterprise awards. They leave school recompensed for the efforts they have made in their learning by gaining an award in almost all of the subjects they study.
21. A very wide range of innovative and exciting activities enhance the curriculum, motivate pupils in their learning and promote their personal and social skills. Local amenities, including the leisure centre and places of interest like the Roman Wall, the Discovery and Beamish Museums and local theatres and art galleries are used regularly and in a planned way to link areas of learning. Visits from sports coaches, musicians, artists, dancers, storytellers, business people, personnel from the local Royal Air Force station and sailors and officers from HMS Collingwood are a feature of the curriculum, and add considerably to it. Pupils have worked with the local fire service and, as a result, some are now fire wardens for the school. Participation in sports is very good and helped by the residential trips to Voss and Kielder, teach pupils new skills and develop team building and the full involvement of pupils in competition with other schools. The very youngest pupils benefit from an emphasis on an 'outdoor curriculum', which encourages co-operation and negotiation. 'Global Theme Week' requires every class to choose a country to study in detail. Then, through the Internet and 'pen pals scheme' they initiate contact with pupils in the country. In part this, and the links established through taking part in the Comenius and Socrates projects, has contributed to the school gaining the International Award for extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of issues important in global citizenship.
22. The planned provision for promoting personal, social and health education, including sex education, drug misuse, careers and aspects of citizenship is very good and is supported very well throughout all the school day. Great emphasis is given to learning to live together and pupils are provided with opportunities to take responsibility and show initiative, including being members of the School Council. Representing your class on the Council provides good opportunities to be involved in debate and discussion, leading to decisions that are taken to the headteacher to initiate change to a rule or procedure or to gain extra equipment. The very good relationships between staff and pupils result in all pupils feeling confident; sufficiently so to be able to approach staff with a concern or a worry that they may have or to seek advice on an issue that is bothering them. Careers education is very good. The Connexions adviser attends all transitional reviews and provides continuing support until the pupil leaves school. Pupils are made aware of the range of opportunities beyond school, especially through attending 'taster' courses at local colleges, running their own business through the Young Enterprise Scheme and by a three week work experience placement organised through Trident when they are in Year 11. The preparation of pupils for life after school is very good and characterised by thorough organisation and very detailed planning.
23. The caring, supportive ethos is a planned result of the headteacher's orientation to the work of the school and is seen as an important aim. In part, this is reflected in the school being the first special school in the local authority to gain the Healthy School Award.
24. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and teaching assistants match very well with the demands of the curriculum and the special educational needs of pupils. More lessons

are taught by teachers with specialist knowledge of the subjects than is the case in many equivalent schools. Specialist training extends over a wide range of subjects. These include; English, mathematics, science, information and communication technology, art and design, design and technology, geography, history and physical education. Teaching assistants are very well qualified. Many are taking specialist training, for example in dealing with pupils with speech and language difficulties to high national vocational levels.

25. Pupils' very good learning in the subjects is demonstrated over a wide range of relevant awards, the very good development of personal and social skills and the very good introduction to the world of work link together to prepare pupils very well for life after school.

### Care, guidance and support

26. Provision for pupils' care, welfare, health and safety is **very good**. Pupils have **very good** access to the support and guidance they need as they progress through the school. It is better than at the last inspection because staff meet the learning and personal and social requirements of pupils with increasingly complex special educational needs. Older pupils, especially, have **good** opportunities to contribute to the school's procedures.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils learn in a safe and secure environment that is calm and ordered.
- The procedures for monitoring the achievement of pupils and their personal and social development are excellent in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and in information and communication technology.
- The good opportunities pupils have to show initiative and take responsibility are helping them become mature and responsible.
- The very good links with schools and colleges, career advice and the work experience placements, especially, help prepare pupils very well for life after school.
- The very good knowledge staff have of the pupils and the very good relationships they have with them provides a powerful base from which to offer advice and counselling.
- The very effective provision for pupils with additional special educational needs.

### Commentary

27. Pupils are able to work in a safe and secure environment. Day-to-day management ensures that the school is calm, ordered and very well organised. Pupils know where they need to be and who they are able to go to if they are unsure. Risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits, journeys and for the lessons that need them. Pupils join in with the health and safety governor when he tours the school, and they write a report on the parts of the school that they see as a risk. For example, they identified the absence of a hose at a fire point, which was reported in written form to the headteacher. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Staff training has, in the past, been given by social services. Medication is kept locked in the medical room and is administered very carefully by the teaching assistant in charge.
28. The procedures for recognising the gains pupils are making are excellent in English, mathematics, personal, social and health education and in information and communication technology. In these subjects, assessment makes an important contribution to the progress pupils are making. Because information is available over an extended period of three years, the comprehensive information gained on the progress pupils are making is being used to write realistic targets for learning. These are included in individual education plans and are known by teachers and teaching assistants, by the pupils themselves and also by many parents. Targets help in lesson planning and in recognising the gains pupils are making. Information is computer based and can be presented as success rates against pupils' targets and against 'P' and National Curriculum levels. Also, the progress of individual pupils can be tracked over subjects to judge if they are doing equivalently well in each. This is helpful information that is also

incorporated into lesson planning. The progress of different groups of pupils, for example boys and girls, or those with different causes for their learning difficulties can also be determined. In English and mathematics, assessment information is very effectively used to set pupils into groups of equivalent capability. This is also contributing to making teaching and learning more effective. Assessment in the other subjects is quickly catching up.

29. Pupils have many opportunities to show initiative and to take responsibility. Besides taking part in risk assessment, day-to-day pupils return registers to the office and take responsibility in lessons for getting out and returning resources and artefacts. For example, in lessons in art and design and information and communication technology, the older pupils are given responsibility for interpreting a task in the way that they want, such as completing a portrait in the style of Van Goch or a presentation that includes text and graphics. Pupils know the concept of democracy because the School Council is well established. Two pupils from each year are elected, usually one boy and one girl. They take the views of their classmates to the Council, present them and where possible these views are acted upon. For example, pupils wanted the library re-furbished. This has been done and the library is now a very good resource for gaining the skills of investigative learning. There are quiet areas to read and research in and books can be borrowed and returned just as is the case for a local library. These, and other opportunities are helping pupils become increasingly mature and responsible, but some are missed. For example, pupils are given too little responsibility in the procedures at lunchtimes and when they have breakfast in the morning.
30. The very good links with a number of local schools and colleges, some through the Morpeth Partnership of Schools, benefit pupils by giving them a feeling for what is available after school. They give pupils an insight into the world of work and support their transfer to courses in the colleges. Fore example, the three-week work experience placement in Year 11 makes a very important contribution to preparing pupils for the adult world. Through Trident and Connexions, every pupil in Year 11 is placed in some form of work. The placements are well organised and thoroughly researched. From discussions with pupils and employers and an analysis of evidence accumulated from previous placements, it is obvious that pupils enjoy their work experience and gain considerably from it. For example, on the visit to a pupil placed with a roofing contractor, the boy proclaimed the experience to be 'excellent' and was excited about the possibility of turning the placement into a permanent job.
31. Staff know the pupils very well and have established very good relationships. This helps them when they offer advice and guidance, but also in understanding the issues, which pupils have to deal with. The planned procedures for giving advice, support and counselling work very well and gain from the respect and trust that pupils have for staff. The transitional annual review for pupils aged 14 years is conducted very well. All the relevant people attend it from school and from outside agencies that have been linked to the pupil. It results in a detailed plan for each pupil that guides learning over the next year. The annual reviews are also very well organised. Statutory requirements are met. Parents attend most annual reviews. They play a full part in deciding on any action and in forming new targets. Routinely, over each day staff add to the planned provision for advice and guidance by speaking with pupils, encouraging them and importantly, sharing their successes.
32. The specialist support to meet the learning and personal and social requirements of pupils with additional special needs is very good. Pupils with hearing impairment gain good support from the advisor for the hearing impaired and especially good support from the teaching assistant with British Sign Language who accompanies the pupil with profound hearing loss for most of each day. Pupils with speech and language difficulties gain very good specialist support and advice from speech and language therapists and for the youngest pupils, from a teaching assistant who has gained a national vocational qualification in speech and language. Pupils who have difficulty in controlling their behaviour at all times benefit from the consistent application of the strategies for supporting good behaviour and from targets for behaviour that are written in their individual education plans. Pupils with autism are increasingly being taught through the specialist teaching approaches such as TEACCH. All contribute to ensuring that pupils with

additional special needs gain unrestricted access to the curriculum and make equivalent progress to the others.

### **Partnership with parents, other schools and the community**

The partnership with parents is **good** and the links with other schools and the community are **very good**. There are more of these than at the last inspection.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The positive feeling parents have for the school and their very good relationships with staff provides effective support for the learning of many pupils.
- The good information provided to parents on the progress their children make is helpful, but a few indicate that they gain too little information on how they can help with homework.
- The school's expansive outlook, which has forged productive links with many local schools and colleges, other institutions such as the fire-service, Royal Air Force and the Royal Navy and, through the Commenius and Socrates projects, very good links with European schools.

### **Commentary**

33. Although no formal procedures exist to survey parents for their opinions, the headteacher is aware of parents' strong feelings for the school. Through parents meetings and regular telephone calls they are able to let the headteacher and the senior managers know about their feelings on the work of the school. These are very positive. More parents hold the school in very high regard than was the case at the time of the last inspection. They are very appreciative of the progress their children are making in their learning and in becoming increasingly mature and responsible. Parents feel comfortable in approaching the school with questions and are welcomed at any time. An increasing number, but not all, help their children learn by supporting them in completing their homework. Some parents regularly read with their children at home and support learning in the lessons by sending items to help with specific projects.
34. Annual review reports, supplemented by individual summary reports, half-termly evaluation of individual education plans, as well as the end of year report keep parents well informed of their child's progress. Regular telephone calls also help by giving information on children's attitudes and behaviour. Nevertheless, parents are given too little information on what is being taught in lessons or on the purpose of visits outside of school and of visitors to the school. A small number wish for guidance on how they can help their children with their homework.
35. The headteacher is confident of the quality of the provision and has a vision of the school being inextricably linked to educational provision within the north-east region, as well as being a visible and fully integrated part of the local community. She is enthusiastic about establishing local, regional and international links. These links benefit pupils by broadening and enriching their learning experiences. The school is active in the Morpeth Partnership of Schools; the links with local schools and colleges are very good. The older pupils, especially, gain much from visiting local colleges and it is no surprise that many enrol on college courses after they have left school. The links with the local community are considerable and also extend and enrich pupils' learning experiences. For example, Year 11 pupils are able to choose from a wide range of work experience placements. The link with the local fire service is well established. Firemen are regularly in school. They help pupils by highlighting the need for caution in some situations and provide enjoyment by allowing pupils to sit in the fire tender and watch how equipment operates.
36. Members of the Royal Air Force based at the local station visit to talk about their lives and staff of the naval vessel that is also named after Admiral Collingwood visit when the ship is docked nearby. Pupils enjoy these visits very much.

37. Staff have taken part in European Commission initiatives more so than is the case for most equivalent schools. Teachers and teaching assistants have visited a number of European countries to learn about, for example Dialogue Centres as a system for including all pupils in a local area into mainstream schools even when they have special educational needs. Visitors from European countries have been welcomed to the school. Staff have gained from this. Their vision of what is possible in an inclusive education system is sharper because of their European links. The links with Europe benefit pupils directly because they are finding it easy to set up Internet connections with schools in different European countries, for example for Global Theme Week.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

The leadership and management of the school are **excellent**. The headteacher is committed, energetic and knows about all aspects of the work of the school. She receives excellent support from the deputy headteacher, the assistant headteachers and all staff. Governance is **good**. Since the completion of the new accommodation, there are no serious barriers to raising achievement.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The headteacher and deputy headteacher inspire staff to do their best, and they operate procedures that allow them to routinely achieve this.
- The headteacher's vision for the direction of the school is clear, relevant and matches with national trends.
- The excellent day-to-day management realises optimum opportunities for pupils to learn.
- The excellent procedures for ensuring the continuing professional development of staff.
- The new and refurbished accommodation including excellent facilities for information and communication technology.
- The excellent planning for future improvement.
- The good knowledge governors have of the work of the school and the good support they provide to the headteacher and senior managers.
- The very good way in which the school's money is used.

### **Commentary**

#### **Leadership**

38. The headteacher is committed to fully meeting the needs of pupils by ensuring provision of very high quality. She leads a formidable team of senior managers. The deputy headteacher provides excellent support that complements the strengths of the headteacher very well. The assistant headteachers support the headteacher and deputy headteacher very well. Collectively, they set very high standards, inspire, motivate and maintain conditions so that staff and pupils are regularly able to achieve their best. The headteacher is an excellent role model for staff and pupils alike. She leads and manages a very powerful and united staff team.
39. The headteacher has a very clear vision for the future of the school. Her vision statement outlines developments that include a regional role, through the local partnership of schools so that the expertise of staff can be distributed with greater effect. It is based on sound logic and embraces national initiatives, such as the concept of inclusion. In part, it has been formed through the good use of made of European Community initiatives, which have resulted in visits to support centres with similar ideals in different European countries. The leadership and management acumen of the headteacher, the very good quality of teachers and teaching assistants, and now the very good range of specialist facilities, contribute to making Collingwood an ideal hub for disseminating expertise, knowledge and skills to schools and pupils alike within the Morpeth Partnership of Schools and the north - east region.

#### **Management**

40. Excellent management has resulted in the day-to-day procedures that ensure all the work of the school operates effectively to provide a learning environment that is stimulating for pupils, and in which they feel safe and valued. There are many strengths. Pupils respect and trust staff and they know that they are going to gain from their lessons and from the discussions they have with staff. Because of this they work hard, behave very well and the school is calm, ordered and well organised. Policy and planning documents are, generally, very good. Teachers have fully accepted their responsibilities for co-ordinating subjects and the leadership and management of each subject benefits from this.
41. Staff have been helped by the considerable commitment of the headteacher to increasing their effectiveness through performance management procedures. This is made real through excellent procedures, for example for monitoring the quality of teaching and learning and for checking the planning for lessons. Outcomes for staff are linked to the developmental priorities for the school and to their own professional interests. It is no coincidence that the quality of teaching and learning has made good improvement since the last inspection because teachers and teaching assistants have taken part in relevant opportunities to improve the skills and knowledge important in their work. Individual training plans are created for all staff. Annually, measurable targets are identified and effective monitoring judges whether they have been achieved. These include common targets for all teachers and sometimes teaching assistants that have resulted, for example in training in the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, New Opportunities Fund (NoF) training to further computer skills and the use of computers, training in supporting teaching and learning and in the Key Stage 3 literacy strategy. They also include targets for individuals, such as headteacher training for the assistant headteacher and continued training in British Sign Language so that a teaching assistant can provide better support for a profoundly deaf pupil. Termly meetings evaluate the effect of any in-service training, or any other action taken to meet the targets. All information relating to training and its usefulness is collated in the professional development portfolios of all staff, which provide a detailed account of all training and qualifications that staff have gained since they joined the school.
42. Inspectors agree with the positive comments in the report of the visit by HMI (March 2002) on the management of teachers' professional development and those made when Investor in People Status was recently re-affirmed (November 2002). The excellent procedure for ensuring the relevant continuing professional development of staff has contributed to improving the achievement of pupils in the subjects since the last inspection, which has contributed to granting of the School Achievement Award by the DfES for the last three years.

#### **Example of outstanding practice**

**Excellent procedures for increasing the effectiveness of staff are making an important contribution to the continual development of the school.**

The link between performance management procedures and training opportunities for staff is excellent. It makes a considerable contribution to the ongoing improvement of the provision because the range of expertise and the competencies of staff are growing to meet the changing requirements of the curriculum and the more complex special educational needs of pupils. Personal targets are agreed annually for all staff and the training requirements identified. Firstly, these are to meet the priorities of the improvement plan, then to support growth in areas of professional interests. This might involve training for all staff, for example in using computers to make teaching and learning more effective or be for teachers preparing a senior managers post or teaching assistants who are increasing their skills in dealing with pupils with speech and language difficulties. Taking part in further training is accepted as part of the culture of the school. Staff want to be involved in training, expect to be involved in training and the headteacher is excellent at providing meaningful training that fits with the needs of the school. The benefit to the quality of the provision is considerable and continuous.

43. Procedures for inducting new staff work well. They help staff learn about the school and their role so that they quickly become efficient at their work.
44. The accommodation has improved significantly since the last inspection. Considerable expenditure has addressed the difficulties the accommodation placed on the easy presentation

of a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum very well. The excellent teaching room for information and communication technology, the very good rooms for design and technology, science, art and design and textiles and the refurbishing and upgrading of existing classrooms, has resulted in spacious and attractive accommodation. For most subjects, resources are good. They link well with the attainment levels of pupils and their learning needs. The commitment to using computers to provide greater support for teaching and learning is made very clear to co-ordinators. Teachers, through, for example using CD-ROMs are beginning to strengthen teaching and learning by being able to present information in a way not available to them before.

45. Planning for further improvement is excellent. The database that is being accumulated on the progress of pupils, the information gained on staff through the performance management procedures and the audit of subjects against national requirements and pupils' needs, all contribute to identifying priorities for development; these are clearly included in the plan for improvement. This is a very detailed and precise document that is housed within more global priorities that span a three-year time scale. The improvement plan is unusual because the priorities are not costed. One reason for this is that the priorities are agreed before the school knows the next annual budget. This has not compromised improvement because most of the priorities are fully funded.
46. It is testament to the excellence of the management that some nine years ago at the time of the first inspection, much of the provision was judged to be satisfactory. At the second inspection, much was judged to be good. At this inspection, most of the provision is very good or excellent. Confident and committed leadership has contributed substantially to the continued improvement, which is recognised by the awards gained by the school. These include the School Achievement Award for the last three years and the International Award for working with European partner schools and gaining the Healthy Schools Award.
47. Governance is good. Governors offer a wide range of experience and wisdom to the headteacher and the school. They include sufficient parent governors and co-opted members. Governors are led well by an experienced chairperson, who has provided much valuable personal and professional support to fellow governors and to the headteacher. Statutory requirements are met. Governors delight in gaining a good knowledge of the quality of the provision from visiting the school and in meetings listening to formal presentations by the headteacher, senior managers and other staff. They fully embrace their role as 'critical friend' to the school.
48. Financial controls and administration are very good. The school finances are well managed by the governing body, head teacher, senior management team and administrative officer. Expenditure is carefully monitored and spending is closely linked to educational objectives identified in the improvement plan. The systems for evaluating the effectiveness of the provision are very good. The administration officer runs an efficient office and has produced a policy and guidelines handbook for staff to follow. A computer based integrated financial management package is beginning to be used to operate the accounts. This should maintain the high standards that have been set for financial accountability. Governors are clear about the principles of best value and ensure the school gets best value for money in its purchases. The high carried forward figure of £82,501.00 is earmarked for expenditure agreed in the improvement plan.

***Financial information for the year 2002 to 2003***

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	785,594
Total Expenditure	784,938
Expenditure per pupil	7,267

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	81,845
Balance carried forward	82,501

**PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS**

## SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 3 AND 4

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **very good**. It is very much better than at the time of the last inspection. The attractive new library is being used very well to encourage pupils to learn to find out for themselves.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Lessons are carefully planned, teaching assistants work very effectively and resources, such as the library and computers, are used well.
- The good selection of teaching strategies results in all pupils irrespective of their age, or the cause or complexity of their special needs, making equivalent progress.
- The procedures for assessing the progress pupils make are excellent and give teachers an accurate knowledge of pupils' capabilities in English.
- The very good leadership and management provide very well organised provision.

#### Commentary

*Eleven lessons were observed in English throughout the school. The co-ordinator, teachers and pupils were interviewed. The quality of completed work was analysed. The targets for literacy in individual education plans were looked at.*

49. All pupils in Years 1 to 9 achieve well in speaking and listening, reading and writing. The cumulative effect of very good teaching over many years realises better achievement for pupils in Years 10 and 11. They achieve very well in all aspects of English. All pupils leave school with an award in English. The best in the subject gain good grades on the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement and other pupils take ASDAN units of accreditation. All pupils gain at least the Bronze Award, most gain the Silver Award and a small number, the Silver Challenge.
50. The quality of teaching is very good. Lessons are planned carefully, include the very good use of the recommendations of the National Strategy for Literacy and are enjoyed by pupils. The very good teamwork between teachers and their teaching assistants is a characteristic of lessons, as is the good selection of different strategies for teaching. For example, teachers provide pupils with many opportunities to practise their communication skills. For most pupils, this involves speaking and listening, but for an increasing number of entering pupils it includes using augmentative strategies, such as signing and the use of pictures and symbols. Careful attention by teachers and the teaching assistants, especially those who have a qualification in speech and language and the very good support of the speech therapist, results in pupils gaining confidence in expressing their ideas, through the use of a growing vocabulary, as they move through the school. By the time they leave school, most pupils speak clearly and listen intently. They speak appropriately well in a number of different situations, for example in discussion at lunchtimes, during playtime among themselves, when they present information in lessons and when they are on work experience placements. Reading, writing and spelling develop equivalently well because the attention to detail in the teaching is supported by the effective use of resources, such as the library and computers. By the time they reach Year 10, pupils are practised at using computers to draft and redraft to improve presentation. All pupils, when they leave school understand the use of punctuation and can spell most of the frequently used words. The best readers do so fluently with good intonation. The new library is used well in teaching pupils the skills of investigative learning. They search through the library to recover the book they want and take information from the book according to their needs. Their skills in English are sufficiently developed to provide good support for their learning on the courses they enrol onto in college.

51. Information provided by the excellent assessment procedures and by the targets for literacy in pupils' individual education plans is used very well to make all lesson tasks relevant to each pupil, irrespective of their capability. The progress of pupils over their years at school is well presented as 'P' levels and levels of the National Curriculum and through the PIVATS procedures. Clear profiles show the gains pupils make over their time at school and the gains made by different classes and different groups of pupils. This information is used very well in lesson planning, in writing targets for learning and in setting the older pupils into classes of like capability. In most classes, marking is generally of very good quality and is helpful to learning, but not in all. Teachers are becoming increasingly experienced at judging the capability of their pupils against 'P' and National Curriculum levels.
52. The very well organised provision is the result of very good leadership and management. The joint co-ordinators, one for primary aged pupils and one for secondary aged pupils, have worked diligently to audit the schemes of work and collaborate with staff to produce a suitably challenging curriculum. All teachers and teaching assistants are very familiar with the recommendations of the National Literacy Strategy and the Key Stage 3 strategy because of the good training opportunities afforded them. The changing educational needs of pupils attending the school are being met by extending teachers' range of skills and competencies through targeted in-service training. Most recently, this has resulted in 3 teaching assistants gaining a vocational qualification in speech and language to better deal with the increasingly complex communication requirements of entering pupils. It also includes another teaching assistant learning British Sign Language to meet the needs of a profoundly deaf pupil.

### **Language and literacy across the curriculum**

53. Language and literacy are promoted well in the other subjects through many incidental and planned opportunities. All classes provide good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen, and staff ensure pupils have suitable opportunities to read and write in subjects other than English. They are aware of the good effect this has on progress in the subjects and have developed a good range of reading books, which focus on relevant topics that can be used in class reading sessions, especially in history, geography and religious education.

### **French**

54. Pupils in Year 7 to 11 are taught French. Too few lessons were seen in French to make a firm judgement on the achievement of pupils or on the progress they are making. The QCA scheme of work provides a framework for teaching and learning that is modified to meet the learning needs of these pupils. From planning documents and discussions with the teacher and pupils, lessons provide good opportunities for pupils to speak and listen in French. Pupils are unable to demonstrate the extent of their learning in French by taking a relevant award.

### **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Teachers plan very well, are confident of their knowledge of the subject and know their pupils very well.
- Pupils enjoy mathematical activities. Their positive attitudes and very good behaviour contributes to the very good quality of their learning.
- Excellent procedures for assessing pupils' progress are used very well in helping plan lessons and in setting pupils to classes of like capability.
- Accreditation opportunities at Key Stage 4 are very good.

- The subject is well led and managed and has made very good improvement since the last inspection.

## Commentary

*Eight lessons were seen in mathematics covering all four key stages. The co-ordinator, teachers and pupils were interviewed. The quality of completed work was analysed. The targets for literacy in individual education plans were looked at. The use of mathematics in the other subjects was noted.*

55. Achievement for all pupils in Years 1 to 9 is good. All pupils achieve very well in Years 10 and 11 because of the value added to their learning by very good teaching over their earlier years.
56. The quality of teaching is very good. Teachers plan very well and routinely incorporate the recommendations of the national strategy into lessons. The very good training opportunities provided for teachers and their teaching assistants have resulted in them having a very good knowledge of the subject and teaching with confidence and enthusiasm. They know their pupils very well, including the targets for numeracy in their individual education plans. Together these contribute to lesson tasks, matching with the needs and capabilities of pupils very well. As a result, all pupils are challenged as learners. They enjoy this and work very hard at their learning. Lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives. Pupils are immediately engaged as they walk through the classroom door with fun and active mental starters, for example, "What's 2 x 5?" or "How many pennies in a pound?" Group work is well organised. The end of lessons is used well to check on progress and celebrate achievement. Teachers take care to build on previous learning and to relate mathematics to everyday things, such as shopping for bargains in a supermarket, weighing ingredients to make a gingerbread man or working out the value added tax on a new car. Teaching assistants are deployed very well and make a consistent and valuable contribution to pupils' learning. They model appropriate behaviour, record progress and make timely interventions to keep pupils on task. Weekly homework extends and consolidates learning.
57. Pupils' very positive attitudes to learning make an important contribution to the very good standards they achieve. They behave very well, are interested in their work and are pleased when they have done well. They take great care and pride in presenting their work and in showing this to visitors. Older pupils work independently using computers and calculators. They are confident enough in their knowledge to discuss their methods and solutions with others or actively to seek alternative solutions to a problem.
58. Excellent procedures for assessing the progress of pupils and for record keeping provide information on pupils' progress. This is used very well, for example to set pupils in Years 7 to 9 to groups of equivalent capability and to identify the appropriate national award that pupils will take in Year 11. This helps teaching and learning be more effective as work, resources, strategies, pace and expectations are more easily matched to pupils' individual needs. The key issue from the last inspection concerning the quality and range of accreditation in mathematics has been dealt with. The range of awards now available to pupils in Years 10 and 11 is sufficient to fully match with their requirements. They include the GCSE, the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement and ASDAN units of accreditation.
59. The marking, annotating and moderating of pupils' work is not consistently of high quality. In the classes where this is done best, pupils' work is always dated, numeracy targets from the individual education plans are displayed inside the front cover of pupils' folders, work is consistently marked in an evaluative way and includes suggestions for improvement. It is annotated to give details of progress. This is in addition to the very constructive verbal feedback that pupils gain in an ongoing way in lessons and, for the youngest pupils the very good use of the digital camera in demonstrating progress. Priorities for further developing the subject rightly include developing marking so that all teachers operate at the same high level.

60. The subject is well led and managed by an enthusiastic co-ordinator. The range, quality and use of resources are very good. Computers are increasingly being used well to promote learning as the software base is extending. Plans are in hand for the co-ordinator to monitor teaching and learning. This is a good development. The better quality of teaching and learning, improved resources, especially the use of computers and more accreditation opportunities for pupils in Years 10 and 11, have contributed to the very good improvement made since the last inspection.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

61. Numeracy skills are consolidated well in other areas of the curriculum. For example, pupils count in French, weigh and measure in design and technology, and check their pulse rates in physical education. However, planning to reinforce numeracy skills does not feature in subject policies. There is scope for increasing the progress pupils are making in mathematics through using deliberately planned opportunities in the lessons in other subjects to apply and reinforce their learning in mathematics.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **very good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The careful planning for teaching, the very good deployment of teaching assistants and the effective use of a wide range of very good, relevant resources ensure that all pupils make equivalent progress.
- The planning documents provide an excellent guide for teaching and learning.
- The very good procedures for assessing learning and the way in which this information is used to improve the effectiveness of teaching and learning.
- The very good leadership and management of the subject.

#### **Commentary**

*Five lessons were seen in science. The co-ordinator, teachers and pupils were interviewed. The quality of completed work was analysed and the new science laboratory was looked at.*

62. Pupils' achievement and the progress they are making are good over all years. All pupils leave school with an accredited award that reflects the effort they have made and the quality of their learning, over their time at school. Most pupils gain good grades on the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement, a minority gains Northumberland units of accreditation.
63. The quality of teaching is very good. The new science laboratory allows all parts of the subject to be taught without restriction and makes an important contribution to the very good improvement in the provision since the last inspection. Teachers and their teaching assistants know the pupils very well. The very good system for assessing pupils' learning provides detailed information on what pupils know, understand and can do. This information is recorded according to the PIVATs model and is used very well to judge progress and to help in planning lessons. Teachers do this carefully, to make sure that pupils of all capabilities are fully included in the lessons, as they work on activities that successfully motivate them to learn. Most lessons include regular opportunities for pupils to be active in their learning by conducting experiments. They enjoy this and learn not only about the topic they are investigating but also about experimentation as a way of discovering new information. Over the time of the inspection, the youngest pupils investigated seeds and bulbs, the oldest pupils measured the water retention capabilities of a range of babies' nappies. Pupils in Year 8 investigated 'light'. They searched the science laboratory and the rest of the school to find 'transparent', 'opaque' and 'translucent' light. Different groups used digital cameras to record their findings, then printed the pictures and used these to report to the others in the class.

64. Planning documents are exemplary. The scheme of work provides excellent guidance for teaching and learning. It is a mix of QCA units for pupils between Years 1 to 6, school developed units based closely on the Key Stage 3 Programme of Study for pupils in Years 7 to 9 and the syllabus of the certificate of achievement for pupils in Years 10 and 11. It works well and helps ensure that most learning is sequential and based firmly on prior learning. Resources are very good and support teaching and learning well over the full range of the subject for pupils with many significantly different special educational needs. Computers are helping satisfactorily, but the imminent installation of a whiteboard will provide a considerable boost to teaching and learning because the growing number of CD-ROMs will then be able to be viewed simultaneously by all in the class.
65. Leadership and management are very good. Learning is very well organised. Pupils are set targets, accurate assessment is made, and very good performance data is recorded, which is analysed for individual pupils against their targets, and by groups of pupils, for example by gender, age, capability and special educational need.

## **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY**

Provision in information and communication technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The new ICT room provides excellent opportunities for learning because of the high quality of equipment and because each pupil is able to work at their own workstation.
- The very good specialist knowledge of the teacher and of the teaching assistants and the very good procedures for recognising the progress pupils are making.
- The range of relevant national awards that allow all pupils to demonstrate the extent of their learning over their time at school.
- The very good leadership and management.
- Weekly support, for half a day from the Northumberland Computer Support Service.
- The confident way in which teachers and pupils use computers to help learning across the curriculum.

### **Commentary**

*Six lessons in information and communication technology were seen, but many other lessons included the use of information and communication technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and their completed and on-going work analysed.*

66. Throughout the school achievement and progress are very good.
67. Since the last inspection, the provision for ICT has been considerably advantaged by the building of a very spacious and welcoming computer suite. It is very much better than at the time of the last inspection. The computer suite is an excellent base for teaching and learning with very high specification hardware, including Internet access from each of the sixteen workstations. Pupils from Year 5 onwards have discrete lessons in ICT. Learning in these lessons is supported very well by computer use in the lessons in other subjects. In most lessons, one or a small number of pupils spend time learning through computer use, including using the Internet.
68. The quality of teaching in the discrete lessons is very good. The teacher has considerable specialist knowledge and gains very good support from the very competent teaching assistants. Collectively, they inspire pupils to the very high standards they routinely achieve in their learning. Pupils are excited about their learning and line up outside the computer suite long before the lesson begins in order to spend as much time learning to use new technologies as is possible. They quickly move to their places, log on to their own file system and wait their instructions. The introductions to lessons are short. The teacher outlines the objectives of the lesson quickly and clearly so that pupils can spend the maximum amount of time at their workstations, being active

in their learning. The assessment procedures are very good. They provide the teacher with a detailed knowledge of the capabilities of pupils and this information is used very well to target teaching, by creating tasks that are relevant to each pupil.

69. All pupils in Year 11 take a relevant national award that demonstrates the extent of their learning. The best, in the subject work at Level 4 of the National Curriculum. They gain good grades, for example Level 3, of the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement. They use word-processing, publishing and spreadsheet programs very well and copy pictures and text to files for editing and re-sizing. They are adept at using specific programs such as Paint to create presentations that are innovative and of very good quality. Others take ASDAN units of accreditation and gain either the Bronze or Silver award.
70. The expectations of the co-ordinator are very high. He sets very high standards for his own work and for learning and behaviour. He leads and manages the subject very well and provides very good support to teachers in using computers to support learning in their subjects. The curriculum is very well organised. It is developed from QCA guidelines and is supported very well by assessment procedures that recognise what pupils know and can do against 'P' and National Curriculum levels. This information is fed into a database and is presented as graphs, reflecting progress against the levels and pupils' targets for learning. It provides a very good base from which to judge the progress of individual pupils or of different groups of pupils, over their time at school.
71. Very good use is made of a technician from the Northumberland Computer Support Service, who is at the school for a half day per week to maintain equipment and to advise teachers and the co-ordinator of new equipment and software that may be of interest to them. As a consequence, rarely is equipment unavailable because of faults and the co-ordinator is always up to date with new initiatives and new hardware and software, as it becomes available. Being able to count on using the equipment at all times is helping planning and is contributing to the very good progress pupils are making.

### **Information and communication technology across the curriculum**

72. Planning to use computers to support teaching and learning in subjects is good. Teachers and pupils are practised and confident at using the Internet to gain information and use CD-ROMS well for new learning. The standards pupils achieve in English, mathematics and history, especially, benefit from the very good use they make of programs, for example to improve spelling and the four basic tasks of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division and from searching the Internet. In all the subjects, pupils are able to present their final work through word-processing, often supported by pictures and graphs. All teachers and many teaching assistants have completed the national training programme. The ongoing commitment of the headteacher to making teaching and learning more effective through the use of new technologies is clear from the requirement for co-ordinators to spend 20 per cent of their annual subject allowance on electronic resources.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography, history and religious education**

#### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The good subject knowledge of teachers helps make lessons interesting and learning relevant.

- The good use made of visits to local places to make classroom learning real for pupils and topics easier to understand.
- The increasing use made of computers and other electronic devices such as digital cameras, videotapes and CD-ROMs, help make learning exciting and record experiences very well.
- The current assessment procedures provide too little help in recognising the small steps pupils are making in their learning, for planning lessons or for judging the effectiveness of the provision.

## Commentary

*Two lessons were seen in geography. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and their completed work analysed.*

73. Pupils study geography up to Year 9. The achievement and progress they are making are good.
74. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers have a good knowledge of the full range of the subject and are good at making topics relevant to pupils. They do this by relating learning to places that pupils are familiar with, to weather conditions that they know about and by 'showing' pupils places and the life styles of other people through the good use of video-tapes. Using these approaches realises good quality learning. For example, the youngest pupils investigate their own environment and study transport. Older pupils build on this knowledge and, by Year 6, compare their own way of life to that of people living in a village in India and one in Egypt. By the end of Year 9, they have learned about coastal erosion and about why rivers change direction and slow down and speed up. By this time, they have learned about climate and explain the weather, using appropriate technical language, and by using symbols, such as those for rain, cloud, sun and temperature. They have a good understanding of how climate, landscape and natural features affect population size and can cause changes in population density. In a Year 9 lesson on this topic, pupils showed a good understanding of why some regions were densely populated and others sparsely populated because of the good questioning technique of the teacher.
75. The regular use teachers make of field trips to locations in the community, provides tangible support for classroom learning by making it more real for pupils and because of this, better understood by them. For example, pupils in Years 1 to 6 gain from taking part in a cross-curricular programme of weekly field trips, which include visits to Plessey Woods, the River Wansbeck, Druridge Bay and Whitehouse Farm. All the visits link closely to the geography topic that is being learned, for example the effect of the wind and sea on the erosion of Druridge Bay. Pupils are able to tell why erosion occurs and can visualise the scale of the problem much better because they have seen the effect for themselves. Similarly, pupils in Years 7 to 9 gain a good understanding of topics in human geography, through studying transport. Learning is made relevant to them through visiting Newcastle Airport, a journey on the North to South Shields ferry and rail journey into Newcastle. They use maps and detailed plans to learn how land may have been selected for commercial purposes. Then they visit local shops, the town centre of Morpeth, Newcastle for in-town shopping and the Metro Centre for out-of-town shopping. They take field trips to local castles to see how settlements can be formed and visit the source and the mouth of the River Wansbeck as part of the study of rivers.
76. The subject is led and managed well by a curriculum co-ordinator with good subject knowledge. Resources are satisfactory, some being held centrally and some in individual classrooms. The increasing use of computers to support teaching and learning is making the subject exciting for pupils and learning more effective. For example, seeing how villagers on a different continent live through CD-ROMS is a far more powerful learning experience for pupils than being told how they live, or reading about it in a book. Also, creating a video record of a visit is a powerful stimulus to reinforce learning on return to the classroom.

77. The assessment and recording procedures are being formalised according to the model that is now well established for English and mathematics. This is a good development and will provide accurate information on pupils' progress and help judge the effectiveness of the provision.

## History

Provision in history is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good subject knowledge of the main teacher, and of the pupils, and effective use of the excellent range of resources, help make learning relevant.
- The good use of field visits to make classroom learning better understood.
- The way in which planning documents and the scheme of work, which reflect National Curriculum requirements, have been adapted to match the capabilities of pupils.
- The emerging use of 'P' levels and targets for learning to assess the gains pupils are making in the essential elements of the subject.

### Commentary

*Two lessons were seen in history. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and their completed work analysed.*

78. Pupils study history from Year 1 to Year 9. Over these years, their achievements and the progress they make are good. The good quality provision recognised last time has been maintained.
79. The quality of teaching is good. Teachers use their subject knowledge, the very good knowledge they have of the pupils and the excellent range of artefacts and other resources, including computer based resources, well in making events from the past relevant to pupils. All teachers have been trained in Thinking Skills and in lessons, especially, they use these skills very well in questioning pupils, setting scenarios from the past so that pupils can make their own judgements. Through well-planned and thoughtful teaching, pupils in Years 1 and 2 begin the study of history by looking back at their own family and of Morpeth in earlier days. They learn about the reliability of evidence and realise that time goes back a long way and that life was different then. As they move through the school, they learn about the Ancient Egyptians and life in Victorian times. Learning continues to be relevant to pupils because their current world is used very well as basis for comparison. For example, in a lesson on Victorian times for Year 6 pupils, they handled kitchen artefacts of that era and learning was made meaningful for them when the teacher asked whether they would have liked to have lived then or now. By the end of Year 9, pupils have learned about the Roman Empire, the Blitz and the discovery of America by Christopher Columbus. By this time, the good quality of teaching has realised sufficient learning for pupils to have a good knowledge of the key skills of history, including those to do with chronology and of the quality of different types of evidence.
80. Good use is made of regular field trips to support classroom learning. For example, pupils visit Collingwood House, the birthplace of Admiral Lord Collingwood, whose name has been taken by the school, when they start to learn about famous people in the past. Pupils in Years 3 to 6 visit the Discovery Museum and the Toy Museum. Their classroom learning about the Anglo Saxons is understood better after a visit to Bedes World, where they take part in a programme of interactive activities. They visit the Hancock Museum when they study the Ancient Egyptians and enjoy acting out the roles of the Pharaoh and his subjects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 study the Normans and visit Morpeth, Warkworth and Dunstanburgh castles. They visit the Roman Wall as part of the study unit on Roman civilisation.

81. Leadership and management are good. The planning documents are good and have been adjusted from the QCA schemes of work to match the capabilities and needs of pupils very well. Assessment is closer to the excellent model, already well established for English and mathematics, than is the case for any other foundation subject. 'P' levels are used to report the attainment of pupils and to judge the progress they are making. Targets for learning are being set and will soon provide valuable information on the progress pupils are making that can be used for planning teaching and for judging the quality of the provision. Computers are beginning to be used well to bring topics from the past to pupils in ways, which they can understand.

## Religious education

Provision for religious education is **good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The curriculum has been developed to best meet the needs of pupils and provides a broad base for learning about the major religions and for understanding religious concepts, such as care, trust and friendship.
- The good quality of teaching promotes good factual learning about religions and a good understanding of religious concepts.
- Pupils' learning experiences are not supported well, either by visits of religious leaders from the local community or by visits to places of religious interest in the community.

### Commentary

*Four lessons were observed, samples of work were analysed and a meeting was held with the co-ordinator. No lessons were seen for pupils in Years 1 and 2, therefore, no judgement on the standards these pupils achieve or the progress they are making is possible.*

82. Pupils from Year 3 onward achieve well in religious education.
83. The curriculum is based on a careful interpretation of the QCA units of work, which have been judged to match pupils' learning needs better than the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus, that formed the basis for teaching and learning at the time of the last inspection. The planning documents are good and provide good guidance for teachers over all the years. By Year 6, pupils know about Jewish and Hindu celebrations and the important aspects of Christian belief. From Years 7 to 9, they increase their understanding of the Jewish and Christian faiths and extend their awareness of other faiths including Buddhism and Islam. Year 10 and 11 pupils examine religious concepts rather than specific faiths, such as care for other people, responsibility for the environment and the importance of respect, trust and friendships. All gain a good understanding of important festivals and celebrations in the major faiths, such as Harvest, Easter and Christmas in the Christian faith and Divali and the Chinese New Year. Too little use is made of visits to the school by the religious leaders of the local community and of visits to places of religious interest to extend pupils learning and to make it more real for them.
84. Teaching and learning are good overall and provide pupils with a good knowledge of the facts associated with religions and a good feeling for the concepts that underpin belief. For example, lessons for the younger pupils are well planned with well-chosen activities to interest and stimulate pupils. Pupils in Year 6 used their literacy skills well, as they thought of adjectives to describe Herod's attitude to the baby Jesus. They were also able to understand that their parents worry about them just as Joseph and Mary did when Jesus was lost in the temple. Pupils in Years 7,8 and 9 learn about the Muslim rituals associated with prayer and write their own blessing based on Hebrew prayers. In a lesson for pupils in Year 10, good quality questioning made pupils really think about the qualities Jesus showed in comparison with people they admire today. The clear expectations of the teacher, the good choice of independent work

and the confidence of pupils in asking questions, resulted in pupils gaining a good understanding of the significance of Jesus for Christians today.

85. Leadership is good. The recent review of the curriculum has benefited learning because it matches well with the needs and capabilities of pupils. Teaching and learning are supported by a good range of artefacts to help pupils appreciate the traditions associated with world faiths. An increasing use is being made of information and communication technology to enhance teaching. Lessons in religious education contribute well to pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development. The provision has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

## **CREATIVE, AESTHETIC AND PRACTICAL SUBJECTS**

### **Art and design**

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

#### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good attitudes pupils have to their learning, which makes them enjoy their lessons and work very hard to do their best.
- The wide-ranging curriculum provides opportunities to explore many different types of art and gives pupils in Years 10 and 11 excellent opportunities to demonstrate the extent of their learning and talent on a wide range of nationally accredited awards.
- The co-ordinator has very good subject knowledge and leads and manages the subject very well.

#### **Commentary**

*Two lessons in art and design were seen. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and their completed and on-going work analysed. The many displays throughout the school were looked at.*

86. Over all years, pupils achieve very well and make very good progress. The excellent wall displays throughout the school reflect pupils' very good achievement. At the last inspection, art and design was judged to be good, so this represents good improvement.
87. Pupils especially enjoy lessons in art and design because they are active in their learning over a very wide-ranging curriculum that involves them working with many different materials. Their attitudes to their work are very good. They work well together as they discuss and plan their projects. The very good relationships they have with the teachers and teaching assistants makes them confident learners who are prepared to experiment within the parameters of their task. The new teaching room helps because the work surfaces are large and allow work to be spread out, and work not completed to be safely stored until the next lesson. Pupils work very hard at their learning and routinely try to do their best.
88. Very good teaching ensures that, over their years at school, pupils gain a very wide experience of art and design. The youngest pupils use a range of materials to develop skills in cutting, sticking and handling equipment and tools. They use painting, printing, weaving and collage to depict stories. They fold, cut and stick very well to produce crocuses in a pot as part of the Spring Flowers Theme. Pupils in Year 6 investigate design and pattern in buildings. In Year 7, they discuss how artists use colour and objects to portray relationships and thoughts before producing very pleasing results in their own work. Over these years, they design and produce wall hangings in a variety of materials including batik work, printed textiles and silk paintings. Pupils in Years 10 and 11, as part of the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement, create their own excellent work in the style of Van Gogh using the Portrait of a Postman as an example. They also design and make containers following the approaches of well-known artists, such as Bernard Palissey. The specialist knowledge of the teachers, the very good facilities, the wide

range of resources and the specialist teaching room all contribute to the experiences pupils gain in art and design being greater than is the case for pupils in many other equivalent schools. The installation of a new kiln will increase the possibilities of work in three dimensions. Pupils' experience in art and design is helped by artists who visit the school to lead workshops and talk about their own work. For example, pupils in Year 10 gained much by being part of the recent project led by a visiting artist, which resulted in the completion of a colourful mural on one of the walls of the library.

89. Most of the pupils will take the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement, a small number will take Northumberland Units of Accreditation and all will gain an ASDAN award at either Bronze or Silver Level. Most take the certificate of achievement and a small number take ASDAN units of accreditation. The recent availability of the specialist teaching room means that the best in art and design are now able to follow the subject to full GCSE level. This is a good development.
90. Leadership and management are very good. The co-ordinator has very good specialist knowledge of art and design and plans the curriculum very well over all the years. The new specialist room and the resources have been built up well. The recent and growing use of computers to create artwork is a good development that links well with learning in information and communications technology.

### **Design and technology**

Provision for design and technology is **very good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The very good way in which skills, knowledge and understanding are developed and consolidated across the curriculum.
- The very good attitude pupils have for their work and their enjoyment of lessons.
- The detailed way in which lessons are planned, to ensure all pupils have equal access to all tasks and make the same very good progress.
- The very good way in which the co-ordinator has developed the subject, including using lessons in design and technology to support learning in other subjects.
- The procedures for assessing pupils' learning do not always recognise the small steps the youngest pupils are making.

### **Commentary**

*Five lessons were seen in design and technology. The co-ordinator was interviewed and pupils talked to. Their completed work was analysed.*

91. Pupils' achievement and the progress they are making are very good over all the years and over the full range of the subject. This is because very good planning and very good teaching provides regular opportunities for pupils to work with basic tools, equipment and components to make simple products using many materials. Pupils work carefully because of high expectations of staff. Pupils are clear as to what is expected of them. Teachers have very good specialist knowledge over the full range of the subject. They use this very well in planning lessons so that new skills and the underpinning knowledge and understanding are built on acquired skills. Literacy, numeracy and personal and social skills are reinforced very well in lessons.
92. Pupils are eager to work in the design and technology room. They act responsibly and feel mature. They enjoy being active in their learning. They especially enjoy making their own project from the design brief and explaining what they have done and why they did it that way to visitors. Their attitudes to learning are very good. They work very hard, with great precision at times, and pay due regard to all safety rules.

93. Very good teaching ensures that all pupils, irrespective of their learning needs or capabilities, complete work of sophistication and quality that, initially, surprises them and makes them very proud. Recently completed projects have included models, which move in different ways, on wheels or slides, levers, which move to illustrate forces, horses and carts and chariots, tepees and insects. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 complete design and making briefs in food technology, graphics, textiles and construction. In Years 10 and 11, their work is guided by the syllabus for the Entry Level Certificate of Achievement. It is testament to the quality of their learning and the organised and sequenced way in which skills are developed that most pupils gain good grades.
94. Leadership and management are very good and have developed the subject very well. Since the last inspection there has been good improvement. The new specialist teaching rooms are designed very well. With their opening, no significant barrier remains to limit pupils' achievement. Although more sophisticated equipment to support computer aided design and manufacturing, exists in some equivalent, schools. Apart from this, resources are very good and are now centrally stored, which makes their use very much easier and, therefore, more effective. The curriculum is carefully planned to support learning in the other subjects. Pupils in Years 1 to 9 link their learning in history, geography and science to lessons in design and technology by designing and making models that relate to learning in those subjects, such as chariots, tepees and insects. The skills of the oldest pupils are used in an innovative way. They have formed a Young Enterprise venture, called Kool Crafts', which designs and makes a quality range of cards for sale. One of the most recent and successful promotions, cards for Valentine's Day, sold very well. They used the Internet to research Valentine's Day and other skills in information and communications technology to design and make the cards.
95. The individual targets set for learning are assessed well. The information collected is analysed rigorously by gender, age groups and complexity of special educational needs, to judge the effectiveness of learning and to ensure that all pupils have uninterrupted access to work in the subject. Generally, this works well, but is not identifying in sufficient detail, the small steps made by the youngest pupils with the most complex special educational needs.

## Music

96. Too few lessons were seen in music to make a firm judgement. It has proved difficult to recruit a specialist teacher of music. Currently, a teacher from the Local Authority Music Service teaches pupils in Years 7, 8 and 9.
97. Despite the problematic situation facing the school, music is considered to be a fundamental element of the curriculum. In assemblies, and at other events throughout the year, pupils sing with gusto and enjoy it. Through an extensive programme of visits, music is making a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development. Recently, pupils have taken part in drumming workshops and a salsa-dancing workshop and have listened to the performance of a pipe band from Peru and an ensemble playing classical music. As a result of the enthusiasm shown by pupils for the drumming sessions, a street band has been formed and some specialist drums have been purchased to support this interest. The absence of a room dedicated to teaching music inhibits teaching and learning because electronic equipment such as speakers, amplifiers and synthesisers cannot be permanently installed and instruments such as keyboards and drums cannot be left out.

## Physical education

Provision in physical education is **very good**.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The very good subject expertise of the teacher brings high expectations, enthusiasm and rigour to teaching and learning.

- The curriculum is broad and balanced and enables pupils to experience many physical activities and sports.
- The positive attitudes pupils have means that they work very hard to improve their performance.
- The unsatisfactory accommodation, especially for pupils in Years 7 to 11, limits what they can be taught in the school.
- The very good leadership and management result in physical education being a visible and important element in the school's curriculum.

## Commentary

*Six lessons were seen in physical education. The co-ordinator was interviewed, pupils talked to and planning documents and the records of progress analysed.*

98. Pupils in Years 1 to 6 achieve well and make good progress. From Years 7 to 11 they achieve very well and make very good progress. This is because the very good teaching over many years has an increasing impact and results in better learning and better achievement and progress for the older pupils.
99. Teachers with specialist knowledge of the subject teach most lessons, especially those for pupils in Years 7 and beyond. They have very high expectations for learning and behaviour. Pupils are managed very well and demonstrations are very good. Sport development officers and instructors at the local leisure centre take some lessons, for example in cricket, golf, football, canoeing, sailing and swimming. They share with the teachers an enthusiasm for their sports. Teaching focuses on skill gains and not just on the experience of taking part. Consequently, teaching is detailed and precise and covers most of the important fundamentals of sports, for example getting the grip right when holding a cricket bat or golf club. The skill level of pupils benefits from this and they transfer their emerging skills very well when they play the sport. The regular attendance of staff on in-service courses, most recently for first aid, swimming, canoeing and gymnastics maintains their high level of expertise in many different sports.
100. Pupils experience a very broad range of activities in physical education, more so than is the case for pupils in many equivalent schools. The National Curriculum Programmes of Study are covered in full. These include the major games at appropriate times of the year, circuit training, dance, gymnastics, swimming and outdoor pursuits. The very good use of local facilities, such as the leisure centre, residential centres and sailing centres, broadens the curriculum even further. Gaining extra funds from, for example a lottery bid, the Northern Rock Foundation and the close relationship with the local sports disability officer, results in opportunities for pupils to take part in additional activities such as aerobics at the local gymnasium and horse-riding. Extra-curricular activities are limited by transport arrangements, nonetheless pupils are able to take part in canoe sessions at Morpeth Pool and the annual paddleability weekend. A residential visit to Voss in Norway to learn skiing and snowboarding is an annual event.
101. Pupils demonstrate the extent of their learning very well. Those in Years 10 and 11 gain units of accreditation and national awards for canoeing, sailing and swimming. Those who take part in the Voss Ski Venture, gain star awards for skiing and snow boarding. In the recent past, pupils have won inter-school cricket tournaments and local and national awards in swimming and do very well in the annual Northumberland Youth Games. Many pupils gain skill awards from the Castle Morpeth Council, for example for football. In inter-school sports, they regularly do well in Kwik cricket, swimming and athletics.
102. Pupils show a real appetite and enjoyment for physical education and this contributes to the standards they achieve. In lessons, they behave co-operatively and participate fully. They work hard to cope with a challenge, as individuals and as small groups. They dress appropriately for lessons and understand the importance of warming up and recovering from exercise. They observe the conventions of fair play, honest competition and good sporting behaviour. Older pupils are able to improve their skills and stamina through recording and evaluating their own

performance. Lessons in physical education make a very good contribution to personal, social and moral development.

103. The accommodation for pupils in Years 7 to 11 is unsatisfactory. The multi-purpose assembly hall serves as a gymnasium and is cluttered with equipment because of a lack of storage space. This limits what can be safely taught. The changing rooms and showers are too small for large groups of pupils. This does not encourage high standards in personal hygiene. Both contribute to limiting pupils' overall perception of the subject.
104. Physical education is a visible and buoyant element of the school's curriculum and is led very well by an enthusiastic and energetic co-ordinator. Assessment procedures are moving to be in line with the school-wide procedures. This is a good development that will provide a more accurate base from which to judge the progress pupils are making in the essential elements of the subject. Physical education has made very good improvement since the previous inspection.

## **PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The provision for personal and social development permeates all the work of the school and is supported very well by very good relationships between staff and pupils.
- The planned programme is broad and is supported very well by initiatives such as the School Council, the Young Enterprise project and the work experience placements.
- The progress pupils make is recorded very well and the information is used very well to plan lessons and to deal with issues, which concern individual pupils.

### **Commentary**

*Six lessons were seen in personal, social, health and citizenship education. Discussions were held with the co-ordinator and pupils about their work.*

105. Pupils' achievement in personal and social development and in their awareness of healthy living and the important concepts of citizenship are very good.
106. The gains pupils make in the lessons in personal, social and health education and citizenship are supported very well over all the school day, but especially during the lunchtime activities. The very good relationships between staff and pupils make a powerful base from which advice, guidance and encouragement are offered. Circle time, at the beginning of each day, is a good opportunity for pupils to say if they are troubled and for staff to promote self-esteem and self-confidence through re-calling pupils' successes in the past. In lessons and throughout the day, advice and support is carefully and freely given. Lessons in the other subjects help reinforce learning in the planned programme very well. For example, lessons in science provide additional information on sex, relationships and drugs. Lessons in geography focus on issues to do with the environment and lessons in physical education provide many opportunities for the development of social skills and to recognise the importance of healthy living.
107. The quality of teaching is very good and pupils make very good progress in developing their personal and social skills and in understanding issues to do with society, health and safety. The work experience programme provides especially good support for the planned programme. It is very well established and a large number of local placements are available to pupils in Year 11. Pupils are very well prepared for their placements because of the excellent relationships between the school and staff of the Trident and Connexions organisations. Pupils travel to their workplaces independently and the evaluations made by work place personnel show the great progress pupils make in their self-confidence and in the skills associated with the placement. For some, such as the pupil placed with a roofing contractor over the time of the inspection, it

confirms the type of work they want to be involved in when they leave school. Other initiatives are working well in supporting the planned programme. The School Council provides a small number of pupils with opportunities to be involved in debate and discussion that lead to decision making. The recent changes in the rules for borrowing books from the library came originally from the Council. The Young Enterprise project that involves the older pupils, provides an excellent opportunity for them to gain socially by working together and to understand issues of citizenship, important in operating a business for profit.

108. The very good assessment procedures provide information to judge the progress individual pupils are making against the targets set in their individual education plans and for judging the gains different groups of pupils are making. The targets in individual education plans are well written, known to teachers and teaching assistants and guide learning very well. They are precise enough to recognise when they have been achieved. They can be assessed against the PIVATs statements and, therefore, the effectiveness of the provision can be judged against a growing database that includes information from pupils in other equivalent schools. Leadership and management are very good. The resources to support teaching and learning are good. The number of CD-ROMs is growing and computers are beginning to increase the effectiveness of teaching and learning, although more CD-ROMS would help present the planned programme, for example by animating aspects of the growing body.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

<i>Inspection judgement</i>	<i>Grade</i>
<b>The overall effectiveness of the school</b>	<b>2</b>
How inclusive the school is	2
How the school's effectiveness has changed since its last inspection	2
Value for money provided by the school	2
<b>Overall standards achieved</b>	<b>2</b>
Pupils' achievement	2
<b>Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities</b>	<b>2</b>
Attendance	4
Attitudes	2
Behaviour, including the extent of exclusions	2
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	2
<b>The quality of education provided by the school</b>	<b>2</b>
The quality of teaching	2
How well pupils learn	2
The quality of assessment	2
How well the curriculum meets pupils needs	2
Enrichment of the curriculum, including out-of-school activities	2
Accommodation and resources	3
Pupils' care, welfare, health and safety	2
Support, advice and guidance for pupils	2
How well the school seeks and acts on pupils' views	2
The effectiveness of the school's links with parents	3
The quality of the school's links with the community	2
The school's links with other schools and colleges	2
<b>The leadership and management of the school</b>	<b>1</b>
The governance of the school	3
The leadership of the headteacher	1
The leadership of other key staff	1
The effectiveness of management	1

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