

INSPECTION REPORT

OVINGHAM MIDDLE SCHOOL

Prudhoe

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122341

Headteacher: Mrs Mary Hopkins

Lead inspector: David Bate

Dates of inspection: 8th – 10th March 2004

Inspection number: 264832

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle Deemed Secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 to 13 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll;	379
School address:	Ovingham Prudhoe Northumberland
Postcode:	NE42 6DE
Telephone number:	01661 833215
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Appropriate authority:	Local Education Authority
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs Marion Brown
Date of previous inspection:	19 th October 1998

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

Ovingham Middle School is a co-educational school for pupils aged 9 to 13 years, serving a predominantly rural area of south Northumberland. It has 379 pupils on roll and is about the same size as other middle schools across the country. Pupils are drawn mainly from socially advantaged families and the number of pupils who are entitled to free school meals is below the national average. There is a relatively high level of pupil mobility into and out of the school. The school is popular with parents, and some pupils come from out of area. Pupils are from predominantly White British backgrounds with only a very small number of pupils from other ethnic groups. The number of pupils for whom English is not their first language is extremely low. The attainment on entry of pupils is generally above average. The number of pupils with special educational needs is below the national average, as is the number of pupils with statements of special educational need.

The school has gained and been re-awarded Investors in People status. It has a Healthy Schools award and has gained the British Council International School Award for its work and links with schools in France, Italy, Germany, Romania and South Africa. It is an active member of the Prudhoe partnership of schools and the Transforming North Network Learning Community.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
1545	David Bate	<i>Lead inspector</i>	
9189	John Horwood	<i>Lay inspector</i>	
10316	Norman Bertram	<i>Team inspector</i>	Geography; History.
30596	Jack Brown	<i>Team inspector</i>	Information and communication technology.
30294	David Gower	<i>Team inspector</i>	Science.
27416	Tom Howard	<i>Team inspector</i>	Mathematics.
4451	Roger Howarth	<i>Team inspector</i>	Citizenship; Religious Education.
31963	Malcolm Padmore	<i>Team inspector</i>	English; Design and Technology.
30888	Godeleive Walsh-Nelissen	<i>Team inspector</i>	French.
8744	Russell Whiteley	<i>Team inspector</i>	Art; Music.
20192	Terence McDermott	<i>Team inspector</i>	Physical Education.

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Ovingham Middle School is a very effective school that provides its pupils with a very good quality education. Pupils consistently attain very high standards and make good progress. The quality of teaching and learning is very good. The school has made good progress since its last inspection and provides very good value for money.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The standards of attainment at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 are very high.
- There are high levels of very good quality teaching.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher is very good and she is very well supported by other very good key staff.
- Pupils attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good and relationships between pupils and with staff are excellent.
- The provision for pupils' social, moral, spiritual and cultural development is very good.
- Very good opportunities are provided for enrichment and extra-curricular activities.
- The school's procedures for promoting good relationships and dealing with all forms of harassment are excellent.
- The school meets the needs of all pupils extremely well.
- There is an excellent induction programme for pupils, through a very effective pastoral system, which ensures very good care throughout the school.
- Expectations are high in all aspects of school life.
- The management of citizenship and French are unsatisfactory.
- The governors annual report to parents and the school prospectus do not include all statutory requirements.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with standards that are **above** national expectations. In 2003, the percentage of pupils attaining National Curriculum Level 4 or above at the end of Year 6 in English was well above the national average. It was above average in mathematics and in line with the average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 or above was above average in English and well above average in both mathematics and science. The average points scored by pupils were well above average in all three subjects. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2 in first school, these pupils' achievement was in line with similar schools in all three subjects. This represented a dip in achievement from previous years, which the school had predicted based on their internal assessments. The trend of improvement, however, is in line with the national trend. Targets for the current year and for 2005 are very high.

Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 with standards that are also well above expectations for the age group, based on standardised tests and other data, this represents good achievement and progress across their four years in the school.

The overall standard of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books is good in Years 5 to 8; it is very good in English, mathematics, science and information and communication technology (ICT). Pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress in almost all subjects. With the exception of science, where there are some differences, boys and girls achieve equally well across all subjects. The achievement of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) is good and pupils identified as being gifted and talented achieve very well in most subjects.

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	A	A	C
Mathematics	A	A	A	C
Science	A	A	A	C

*Key: A - well above average; B – above average; C – average; D – below average; E – well below average
Similar schools are those whose pupils attained similarly at the end of Year 2.*

Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Behaviour is very good throughout the school and there have been no exclusions in the last year. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education provided by the school is very good. The quality of teaching is very good. The quality of curriculum provision is good, with very good opportunities for enrichment and extra-curricular activities. The quality of assessment is good. The quality of provision for pupils with SEN is good. Pupils' welfare, health and safety are very well looked after. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. Excellent opportunities are provided for pupils to develop their multi-cultural understanding through very well-developed international links.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The leadership and management of the school are very good. The work of the governing body is good overall and it is supportive of the school. The leadership and management of the headteacher are very good, as are the support and contribution of other key staff. The leadership and management of subjects and departments is good overall with some areas where it is very good, however, the leadership and management of the citizenship and French departments are unsatisfactory.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Overall, parents are very pleased with the school. Parents are particularly pleased with the arrangements to help children settle in; that their children are expected to work hard; that they are encouraged to become mature; and that good teaching helps them make good progress. There were concerns about the lack of consultation with them; the guidance on how to help with homework; the information on progress; and the fact they felt uncomfortable about approaching school. Pupils were very supportive of the school but did identify some poor behaviour and bullying, which were well dealt with.

In all areas of concern raised by parents and pupils, the inspection team found that the school's performance was at least satisfactory, although the governing body could do more to consult with parents.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

The most important things this very good school should do to improve further are:

- to ensure that the leadership and management of the citizenship and French departments become as effective as that of all other departments in the school, in order to improve provision and raise standards further;
- to ensure that the governing body meets its statutory obligations in respect of the information contained in its annual report to parents and the school prospectus.

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are well above national averages. Standards achieved by pupils when they leave the school at the end of Year 8 are well above expectations. Pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 are well above national averages.
- Standards achieved by pupils when they leave the school at the end of Year 8 are well above expectations.
- Pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress.
- Pupils with SEN make good progress and those identified as being gifted and talented achieve very well.
- In science, boys, even though they achieve well above the national average, do not achieve as well as girls.
- Standards achieved by the end of Year 8 by the most able pupils in French are not high enough.

Commentary

1. Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with standards that are above national expectations. In 2003, the percentage of pupils attaining National Curriculum Level 4 or above at the end of Year 6 in English was well above the national average. It was above average in mathematics and in line with the average in science. The proportion of pupils attaining Level 5 or above was above average in English and well above average in both mathematics and science. The average points scored by pupils were well above average in all three subjects. In relation to their prior attainment at the end of Year 2 in first school, these pupils' achievement was in line with similar schools in all three subjects. This represented a dip in achievement from previous years, which the school had predicted based on their internal assessments. The trend of improvement, however, is in line with the national trend. Targets for the current year and for 2005 are very high and, if reached, will ensure pupils are achieving highly against their prior attainment.

2. Pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8 with standards that are well above expectations for the age group, this represents good achievement and progress across their four years in the school. The school, in partnership with the local high school, tracks its pupils to the end of Year 9 tests and GCSE. Its former pupils achieve highly at both stages of their education.

3. The overall standard of work seen in lessons and in pupils' books is good in Years 5 to 8; it is very good in English, mathematics, science and ICT. Pupils achieve well in lessons and make good progress in all subjects except citizenship, French and religious education where pupils' achievement and progress is satisfactory. With the exception of science, where there are some differences, boys and girls achieve equally well across all subjects.

4. The achievement of pupils with SEN is good and pupils identified as being gifted and talented achieve very well in most subjects, but in French they are not consistently challenged highly enough.

Standards in national tests at the end of Year 6 – average point scores in 2003

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	28.4 (29.6)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	28.4 (29.5)	26.8 (26.7)
science	30.0 (31.2)	28.6 (28.3)

There were 97 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

5. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good and relationships are excellent. Attendance and punctuality are very good. Behaviour is very good throughout the school. There have been no exclusions in the last year. The spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school's promotion of values has resulted in a harmonious community with excellent relationships.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour ensure a good learning environment.
- Because absence and lateness figures are low, pupils have maximum opportunities to learn during the day.
- The many international links developed by the school make a significant contribution to the pupils' multi-cultural development.

Commentary

6. Pupils are happy in the school and they attend willingly and with enthusiasm to learn. Attendance rates have been consistently high and are well above the national average, with very little unauthorised absence. The school has very good systems in place to monitor and encourage improved attendance. Parents of pupils who do not arrive at school are contacted as soon as possible and always on the first day of absence.

7. Although some parents and pupils had identified that there is some bad behaviour, none was seen during the inspection and it is clear that the school's behaviour and anti-bullying procedures are very effective. Expectations of behaviour are very high and any reduction in standards is dealt with quickly and well. These high standards are reflected in the fact that no pupils have been excluded in recent years. In most lessons seen, the behaviour was very good and pupils showed very good attitudes and a clear desire to learn.

8. A significant strength of the school is the excellent relationships that exist both between adults and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. Within lessons, for example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, where each group has a table leader, pupils are very keen to help each other in a caring and understanding way. Around the school, house captains and their assistants support other pupils, as well as helping teachers with their supervision duties. All groups are treated equally and there is no evidence of any racial or gender issues.

9. Pupils take a great interest in all aspects of the school by taking an active part in lessons – most of which are designed to include a great deal of participation by the pupils – and by supporting the extra-curricular activities after school. Positions of house captain are keenly sought after and those chosen are elected to the posts. All pupils are encouraged to increase their interest in the school by making suggestions for the school improvement plan.

10. All aspects of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development are very good. Spiritual development is well supported through the assemblies and tutor periods, where there is a thought for the day and time for reflection, as well as within the religious education lessons. Through their

demeanour and attitude, staff are good role models for the moral development of the pupils, and the personal, social, and health education (PSHE) programme, as well as some subjects, provide opportunities for pupils to discuss moral issues. Pupils demonstrate their understanding of moral issues by the way they actively support fund raising for charity. Social development results naturally from the opportunities available within the school day to interact with both adults and other pupils in a calm and harmonious environment. Within lessons, the excellent relationships enable all pupils to develop skills of speaking and taking turns. To support cultural and multi-cultural development, there is a wide range of school visits as well as visitors into the school. The subject matter of subjects such as history, geography, religious education, art and music ensures that pupils develop an awareness and understanding of other cultures and other lives. The school has built up excellent international links which are of great benefit to the pupils – these include, for example, visitors from Japan, links with South Africa and Romania, as well as pupils exchanging letters with French children – and to demonstrate its success the school received an International Award from the British Council.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.2	School data	0.1
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

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

There were no exclusions in the last year.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is **very good**.

Teaching and learning

Teaching and learning are both **very good**. Lessons are well planned and very well managed so that pupils learn with confidence. Teachers generally make good use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers have very good subject knowledge which enables them to provide consistently stimulating and challenging lessons.
- Teachers have high expectations and maintain a brisk pace of learning.
- Working relationships are very good, leading to pupils having the confidence to join in discussions.
- Pupils contribute fully to the high quality of lessons.
- Teachers make good use of ICT to make lessons interesting and to give the insights that makes learning easier and more rapid.
- Teachers do not make good use of day-to-day assessment in some subject areas.
- The teaching of gifted and talented pupils is unsatisfactory in French.

Commentary

11. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. Ninety per cent of lessons were judged to be at least good. Forty per cent of lessons were very good with a further 10 per cent being excellent. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed. This represents a significant improvement in the quality of teaching from the last inspection.

12. Teaching is stimulating and consistently challenging. Teachers use their very good subject knowledge and their very good understanding of how pupils learn to prepare carefully planned lessons that have a variety of learning tasks, pace and frequent checks of progress and understanding. In science, for example, a very high level of lesson planning ensures that pupils of all abilities are presented with work that is matched to their different needs. This ensures that all pupils are fully involved in their learning and so make very good progress. Teachers use a variety of methods that meet the learning styles and needs of all pupils, therefore stimulating interest and placing high expectations on pupils to maintain a high rate of learning. Pupils respond well to these demands and grow in confidence and independence in an environment where the working relationships are very good. All teachers very successfully use introductions and plenary sessions to introduce objectives, review previous work and reinforce learning. In the very few lessons deemed to be less than good, it was usually due to the pace being slower and pupils not being required to do more demanding tasks. Consistently high quality teaching was observed in mathematics, science, art and music.

13. The teaching of pupils with SEN is very good and they are well supported in the classroom, usually by an additional qualified teacher, and in consequence they achieve well. The teaching of gifted and talented pupils is good overall but is unsatisfactory in French where these pupils are not appropriately challenged.

14. Pupils contribute fully to the high quality of lessons. Their very good attitudes to their studies enable them to acquire a wide range of learning skills, to extend their knowledge and understanding and, ultimately, to make good progress and achieve well. Their behaviour, concentration and effort are very good. They are able to work independently but, when required to work in groups, they collaborate well and willingly take on new ideas and approaches that are not their own.

15. A good feature of teaching across the school is the widespread use of ICT to make lessons more interesting and to help pupils visualise difficult concepts. This not only makes understanding easier but also keeps up a brisk pace of learning.

16. Assessment of pupils' progress over an extended period of time is good, but not all departments make good use of day-to-day assessment to set individual learning targets. Assessment is used very effectively in mathematics and science to track pupils' progress and to set learning targets. These departments are also developing good programmes of pupils' self-assessment, which are motivating pupils to achieve well by improving on their individual areas of weakness.

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 69 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
5 (7.3%)	29 (42%)	28 (40.6%)	7 (10.1%)	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 quality of the curriculum school provides by the school is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school provides excellent opportunities for all pupils to benefit from the curriculum on offer.
- Very good curriculum links have been established with the local high school for English, science and mathematics, and they are helping to raise standards.
- Very good opportunities are provided in sport, music and other activities beyond timetabled lessons for pupils to enrich their learning.
- Excellent developments in multicultural education have increased pupils' understanding of the world.
- Some elements of the citizenship course requirements are not clearly identified in Years 7 and 8.

Commentary

17. The curriculum is good overall and statutory requirements are fully met. However, some elements of the citizenship course requirements are not clearly identified in Years 7 and 8. All pupils are able to fully participate in the curriculum on offer. The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enhanced by a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Regular meetings and co-ordination with the high school provide a smooth transition at the end of Year 8.

18. In addition to the usual subjects, French is taught in Years 5 and 6 to all pupils. The linked arrangements for design and technology and art provide good opportunities for pupils to develop their skills. Good curriculum links with the high school in English, science and mathematics aid the smooth transition of pupils and ensure continuity in their learning. The school is the major user of the county's peripatetic music service, the benefits of which are demonstrated in the high quality music in the school.

19. The management of the curriculum is very good providing continuation of learning between the different stages of education. Provision of extra teaching time has allowed the school to use qualified teachers to support the learning of pupils with SEN. The reorganisation of teaching groups is constantly under review to provide the most effective learning situation for pupils. Provision for pupils with SEN is good.

20. Gifted and talented pupils are generally well supported within the curriculum and by participation in extra-curricular activities. For example, the jazz club, where talented musicians demonstrate their skills in a relaxed atmosphere. Mathematics pupils are entered for the mathematics challenge. There are numerous sporting activities and the high achievement of some pupils in physical education is supported by arrangements for specialist coaching outside of school hours.

21. Very good extra-curricular provision contributes significantly to pupils' personal development. Residential events take place for all pupils and regular visits to theatres and museums provide further enrichment. A wide range of clubs, team activities, revision groups and special events takes place. For example, the visit from a group of Kathakali dancers made a considerable contribution to pupils' cultural experience. The development of a strong multicultural element in the curriculum has been an effective response to the issues raised at the last inspection.

22. Overall accommodation is satisfactory. The issue raised in the previous inspection report regarding accommodation still remains but there is no evidence of any adverse affect on teaching, except in physical education where the small indoor space limits the development of specific skills.

Music practice rooms are not sufficiently sound proofed and noise permeates adjoining rooms. The science laboratory is small but teachers and pupils overcome this well.

23. Teachers are well matched to the needs of the curriculum. Most subjects are taught by class teachers in Years 5 and 6, and specialist teachers are used in Years 7 and 8. The technician for ICT provides very good support and helps pupils during lessons. There is no technical support for science, design and technology and art subjects and teachers have to prepare and maintain materials and equipment in time they might otherwise use for lesson preparation and curriculum development.

Care, guidance and support

The school takes very good care of its pupils. The provision of support, advice and guidance based on monitoring is very good. Systems to involve pupils through seeking, valuing and acting on their views are very good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school has very good pastoral systems to ensure that pupils are well cared for.
- Health and safety is a priority within the school but, whilst all procedures provided by the local education authority are followed, there is not a governors' approved policy explaining the responsibilities and arrangements.
- The arrangements for settling pupils into the school in Year 5 are excellent.
- Pupils are actively involved in and consulted about school affairs.

Commentary

24. The school has very good procedures for child protection and ensures that all staff are aware of requirements. The school works well with external agencies when necessary. A strong feature of the school is the way it follows up absence to ensure the safety and welfare of the pupils. If a pupil fails to arrive at school and notification is not received, the school telephones parents early in the day to confirm the pupil's safety; every effort is made to contact parents.

25. The school follows LEA's health and safety procedures and carries out termly inspections, and recently had a successful independent inspection. Whilst there are records to show that the school decided to adopt the LEA policy, the arrangements have not been formalised by the governing body. The school has very good medical provision, with three administrative staff and all teachers trained in first aid, as well as having regular visits from the school nurse.

26. The school has a very well structured pastoral system, where tutors and year leaders know the pupils well and have good information about their academic progress and personal development to enable them to give well-informed guidance. Year leaders are available to talk to and support pupils during breaks, at lunchtime and after school. For the older pupils, individual mentoring is provided when needed. The pastoral system has excellent links to the three feeder first schools to ensure a smooth transition when pupils join the school.

27. An unusual feature of the school is the very good opportunities that exist for pupils to take an active part in the school organisation. Although there is not a school council, there are opportunities to become house captains and 'buddies' (assistants). All pupils contribute on a class basis each year to school improvement planning; the process ensures that the school knows their views and contributes to their personal development.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

The school has good links with parents and the community. There are very good links with other schools.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The school works very well with its partner schools, ensuring a smooth transition for the pupils.
- Parents receive very good information about the progress of their children.
- The school has developed useful links with the community which contribute to and support the curriculum.
- Parents feel that they are not consulted enough and that governors are not always prepared to listen to them.

Commentary

28. Parents have high expectations of the school and hence are very demanding. They are generally very pleased with the school but have concerns in some areas where practice does not reach their expectations. The major concerns are about the lack of formal consultation and that they feel uncomfortable in raising concerns because they think they will not always be listened to, especially by the governors. The inspection team confirmed that this is an area that should be improved. Other areas of concerns were the lack of information to enable them to help with homework, and the amount and quality of information they received about their children's progress. Whilst on these issues the school may not meet the high expectations of parents, the inspection team found both to be considerably better than in most schools.

29. The information on progress comprises a very good report each year, at Easter, supplemented by two parents' evenings during the year. Parents also receive an informative prospectus, the governors' annual report for the school and weekly newsletters. Whilst both the prospectus and governors' report are informative, they do not contain all the information that is required to meet statutory requirements. Information on curriculum content has improved in recent years and course guides are provided for some subjects. Attendance at parents' evenings is good and attendance at the governors' annual meeting is better than in many schools. The school uses a planner for pupils to allow parents to monitor their work and to communicate with the school, and these are well used. The school has a strong and active parent teacher association which raises funds and holds social functions. During the school day, a number of parents provide direct support, for example, by helping in the library.

30. The school has very good links with its feeder first schools and with the high school. The Prudhoe partnership is very strong, with all the schools working together and continuing to develop effective liaison right across the pyramid. There are very good curriculum links and transition arrangements. As nearly all the pupils transfer to the same high school, there are only limited links with other high schools. Beyond the local area the school is a member of the Transforming North Network which involves 34 schools in England and Pretoria – one of the school's well-established international links.

31. The school demonstrates its commitment to working with the community by having a community links co-ordinator within the school who liaises very well with local organisations. The school premises are used well by the local community, considering its rural location and competition from other facilities. Many visitors from the community, including local churches, come into the school to support the curriculum and take part in assemblies.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management overall, including the leadership and management of the headteacher are very good. The governance of the school is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The leadership and management provided by the headteacher are very good.
- Leadership at all other levels of the school is very good overall.
- The commitment to providing for pupils' individual needs and promoting equality of opportunity is excellent.
- The professional development programme is excellent.
- The school gives very good value for money.
- The leadership and management of French and citizenship are unsatisfactory.
- Statutory requirements are not met in relation to omissions in the annual report to parents and the school prospectus.

Commentary

32. The overall governance of the school is good. Governors are involved effectively through active sub-committee structures and regular departmental monitoring visits to school, and in strategic and development planning for school improvement. They provide strong support for the headteacher and staff. They hold the management to account and make robust decisions about spending and budgetary control. They carry out diligently their duties in relation to performance management. However, two minor statutory requirements are not met in relation to omissions in the annual report to parents and the school prospectus. They also do not ensure that school policy fully supports the good practice that takes place, for example, in relation to health and safety issues.

33. The leadership provided by the headteacher is very good. She sets a very clear and unambiguous vision and direction for the school. She is very well supported by the senior leadership team, other key staff and all other staff in working towards the realisation of the vision and direction. Leadership of the curriculum is good overall, with the exception of citizenship where leadership is unsatisfactory. The commitment to providing for pupils' individual needs and promoting equality of opportunity is excellent. The school's leadership, including curriculum leaders, have created many very effective teams and there is a corporate ethos and desire to succeed. Leaders throughout the school provide very good role models for other staff and pupils. Leadership by the special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) is good. The co-ordination of the gifted and talented programme is very good.

34. The management of the school by the headteacher is very good and she has been very successful in establishing an excellent ethos that encourages teachers to teach well and all pupils to achieve highly and make good progress in both their academic and personal development. There are very good management systems in place which fully support teachers and pupils. The quality assurance and school self-evaluation processes are well established and are very effective. The school gathers and analyses a wide range of performance and assessment data that directly influences teachers, teaching methods and pupils' performance. The management of most curriculum areas is at least good, with the exception of French and citizenship where it is unsatisfactory. Management generally supports teachers well and helps pupils to achieve very well. The school performance management systems are well established, with very good links to the excellent professional development programme.

35. Financial controls, in which governors are involved, are effective. Financial planning is rigorous and linked directly to the school improvement plan, a significant improvement since the last inspection. The school has well-developed plans for using the current budget carry-over. The bursar has an excellent day-to-day grasp of the school's finances and budgetary control. The school monitors its performance effectively in accordance with the principles of best value and gives very good value for money.

Financial information for the year April 2002 to March 2003

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	976,106.00
Total expenditure	937,398.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,078.00

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	64,553.00
Balance carried forward to the next	103,261.00

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN AREAS OF LEARNING, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 and 3

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

English

The provision for English is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8.
- Pupils' attitudes to their learning are very good.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- Leadership and management of the subject is good.
- Assessment procedures are good and are used well to identify potential weaknesses in provision.
- Good opportunities are provided for using ICT for research and the presentation of work.
- There is good liaison with the schools in the local partnership.

Commentary

36. The results of the 2003 national tests for Year 6 pupils were well above average. Standards have been this high in most recent years. Current standards in Year 6 are also well above average. This represents good achievement and progress from their attainment on entry in Year 5.

37. Year 6 pupils listen very well to their teachers and to their peers when, for example, they hold a class discussion about mobile phone use. They make thoughtful and extended contributions that cover a very good range of points. They listened most attentively in Year 5 when, for example, they were asked to summarise information in a video about modern Egypt. In both years they confidently and very effectively present their work to the whole class. Year 6 pupils read a very good variety of challenging books. They are fluent and confident readers who use a very good range of strategies to arrive at meaning in texts. Their research skills are well advanced and they can search efficiently for information in textbooks. The standard of writing is very good. Pupils write in a range of styles, making good use of the support structures supplied by teachers to develop stories, book reviews and other forms of writing that feature the skilful use of lively and interesting vocabulary.

38. By the end of Year 8, pupils are attaining well above average standards in the range of work they cover in English. This again represents continued good achievement and progress. They listen with great interest to the teacher's expressive reading of extracts from the text and offer considered responses that engage the listener well. The reading matter they are interested in is wide and offers good challenge. They are very confident readers. Their written work is of a very high standard. They can work with a wide range of writing forms.

39. In all years, pupils with SEN achieve very well and make very good progress, as do those identified as being gifted and talented.

40. Teaching is consistently good across the age groups, with many very good features. Teachers plan well for all pupils, offering work that challenges the gifted and talented as well as those with SEN. As a consequence, all pupils make good progress and achieve high standards. Classes are well managed and, as a consequence no time is lost dealing with disruption. Teachers

teach to a clear structure that closely follows the nationally recommended guidelines. Clear introductions set out what is to be covered in the lesson; pupils undertake varied, interesting and challenging activities; and the positive final review at the end of the lesson leaves pupils with a sense of achievement. Teachers make very good use of pair and group discussion. As a result, pupils share the gains in learning they have made and learn to become confident speakers. Assessment and marking are very good and give pupils a good idea of how well they are doing and what they must do to improve. Teachers provide good opportunities for pupils to use ICT for research and the presentation of work.

41. Pupils have very good attitudes to their learning. They work hard and concentrate well. They present their work carefully and to a high quality. Their behaviour is very good and ensures lessons proceed with no disruption. Their relationships with each other and with teachers are very good.

42. Leadership and management of both age groups are good. The curriculum leaders monitor effectively the work of teachers and the progress of the pupils. The teachers concerned have a clear view of the strengths and weaknesses of the subject and have developed an action plan to include these. There is good liaison with the schools in the local partnership. Improvement since the last inspection has been significant.

French

Provision in French is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use French consistently in all lessons.
- Pupils have positive attitudes to their learning and respect each other. Relationships between staff and pupils are good.
- Pupils, especially boys, participate enthusiastically in Years 7 and 8 in oral dramatic performances in French.
- The lack of long-term planning, including the introduction of a detailed scheme of work, is unsatisfactory.
- A narrow range of teaching styles and lack of use of ICT for language learning do not promote independent learning.
- Assessment data is not used effectively to inform planning.
- The most able pupils are not challenged sufficiently to attain higher standards.

Commentary

43. From September 2003 French has been re-introduced into Years 5 and 6. At the time of the inspection, after only a term and a half, many pupils work at Level 1 of the Key Stage 3 National Curriculum; this is well above expectations and represents very good achievement and progress.

44. In the past three years, staff changes have adversely affected the continuity of French teaching in Years 7 and 8. Standards in these years are, however, satisfactory. Overall, pupils achieve in line with national expectations. Higher attaining pupils make unsatisfactory progress because they lack opportunities to excel. The progress made by average pupils and those with SEN is good, especially in oral exercises. Pupils speak confidently and with good accents about given topics. In general boys and girls achieve equally well.

45. Overall, the quality of teaching and learning is good in Years 5 and 6 and pupils enjoy their lessons and respond well to the challenge. These pupils are totally involved and work very well in large groups. The combination of an English lesson followed by a French lesson, incorporating the same theme, is enhancing not only their literacy skills but also their ability to learn another language earlier.

46. Teaching is satisfactory in Years 7 and 8. Teachers' subject knowledge is good and they use French consistently in all lessons. Individual lessons are well planned within topic areas but are not sufficiently integrated into a detailed, long-term scheme of work. Homework is set in Years 7 and 8 but, for the most part, it is a continuation of the lesson and does not provide chances for higher attaining pupils to shine. Teaching styles in Years 7 and 8 are limited and lessons are mostly teacher led. Pupils do not have enough opportunities to communicate with each other in realistic situations. There is no evidence of ICT being used in lessons; this inhibits the development of independent learning.

47. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good. They concentrate well and work hard. Pupils, especially boys, participate enthusiastically in oral dramatic performances in Years 7 and 8.

48. Leadership of the subject is satisfactory but the management is unsatisfactory. There is no detailed scheme of work or long-term planning. Assessment data is not used effectively to inform planning and the subject manager does not monitor the teaching of others or the overall provision. The take-up of in-service training is good. Statutory requirements for reporting to parents are met.

49. Improvement since the last inspection has been satisfactory. Oral skills and group work have improved considerably, but standards and progress for the most able are unsatisfactory. There is little evidence of progress in the use of ICT. Correspondence links with France and Italy and trips abroad continue to encourage the development of language skills.

MATHEMATICS

Provision for mathematics is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Teaching is very good overall and provides pupils with a good variety of learning experiences.
- Pupils are achieving very well and are reaching the highest standards possible.
- In 2003, results in Year 6 tests were well above average.
- Management of the department is very good, providing pupils with very high quality learning experiences.
- Assessment of pupils' work is good and incorporates opportunities for pupils to assess their own work.

Commentary

46. In 2003, results in Year 6 tests were well above average despite a dip in the consistently high standards of previous years. This represented satisfactory achievement by these pupils. Results were similar to those in English, better than those in science and were in line with results of similar schools. Results at the end of Year 9 of those pupils who progressed to the local high school were well above average and reflected the very good progress pupils had made to Year 8 in this school.

47. Achievement by the current Year 6 and Year 8 pupils is very good. Pupils are reaching and often exceeding their targets. Standards in Year 6 and Year 8 are well above those expected nationally. The quality of work in pupils' books reflects the high standards, as pupils take care with presentation. Most pupils work accurately and with pride in what they do. By Year 8, pupils are confident when handling algebra and are able to understand and plot graphs in four quadrants accurately, when solving simultaneous equations. However, the quality of graphic work of some of

the lowest-attaining pupils lacks accuracy. Pupils' interest and enthusiasm for their work contribute significantly to the high standards. Those with SEN and those gifted in mathematics make very good progress. The highest-attaining pupils reach levels usually expected of pupils in Year 9. There is no difference in the achievement of boys and girls.

48. Teaching is very good in all years, with some examples where it is excellent. The national strategy for teaching mathematics is used well, with well-planned lessons following the three-part model. Work provided is challenging and well matched to the differing abilities of pupils. The high-quality use of ICT equipment improves the impact of teaching significantly. Teachers plan their lessons well, with consideration for the differing learning styles of pupils. Assessment is good and all pupils understand how well they are doing and what they need to do to improve. They take an active role in assessing their own work as they develop independent learning skills.

49. Leadership of the subject is good. The subject co-ordinator works co-operatively with other teachers of mathematics to provide high quality teaching and a rich variety of learning styles for pupils. Very good management of the subject has provided programmes of study which offer challenging, high quality learning opportunities for pupils. The curriculum leader and senior managers effectively monitor the work of teachers and the progress of pupils. The development of ICT as a teaching tool by all teachers is very good and has enriched the learning. In-house-developed software has promoted variety and pace in pupils' learning. Close liaison with other schools in the 'partnership' has led to very effective transfer arrangements into the high school where pupils continue to do well.

50. Improvement since the last inspection is very good. The issue of under-achievement by high-attaining pupils has been successfully resolved. Improved standards, the use of ICT and the development of more effective teaching styles have further improved provision.

Mathematics across the curriculum

51. The teaching of mathematics across the curriculum is well developed and opportunities are taken to improve pupils' skills whenever possible. In mathematics lessons, most pupils' numeracy skills are well above those expected for their age. This supports their learning well in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' numeracy skills are developed well in Year 5 during registration periods, when they practise mental arithmetic in their special books. In science, pupils develop skills using a variety of mixed units when measuring and estimating ratios. Generally, graphic skills are strong and pupils produce much accurate work. Geography lessons provide opportunities for developing scales, co-ordinates and many statistical techniques. Pupils' accuracy and measuring skills are enhanced during their work in art and design and technology lessons.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The curriculum co-ordinator provides outstanding leadership and very good management of the subject.
- Lessons are very well planned and the use of assessment information is very good.
- There is a high proportion of very good and excellent teaching.
- Pupils are well motivated, they enjoy lessons and achieve very good standards.
- The department has not investigated why boys do not achieve as well as girls.

Commentary

52. Year 6 test results from 1999 to 2003 show that both boys and girls consistently attain high standards. They are at least in line with, and often better, than those in other schools where pupils' prior attainment is similar. The work seen in Years 7 and 8 was above the national average standard, indicating further good progress. Girls, in particular, achieve very well in comparison with girls nationally. However, although boys achieve better than boys nationally, the gap is smaller. This pattern has been consistent over the past five years. Pupils with SEN achieve well and make good progress throughout. The most able pupils achieve very well. Pupils are able to carry out investigations accurately and with care. They understand the requirements of a fair test and apply this knowledge to their work. They fully understand the need for safety and take part, with the teachers, in risk assessments prior to their experiments.

53. Teaching and learning are very good overall with some lessons being outstanding. Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and enables them to provide varied and stimulating lessons involving a range of imaginative activities, both in class and for homework. For example, the use of home-made viewing boxes in an experiment about light and colour was both novel and effective. Homework questions based on the format of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?* had clearly stimulated pupils' interest. The quality of planning is exceptional and teachers cater appropriately for the full ability range. A diversity of activities ensures that pace is never lacking and teachers take full advantage of opportunities to develop pupils' literacy, numeracy and thinking skills. Very good use is made of ICT to extend pupils' learning. For example, a 'virtual experiment' in a Year 8 lesson provided practice in numeracy skills.

54. Pupils were very well motivated and enthusiastic to learn. They work very hard, behave very well and concentrate well for extended periods. They work very responsibly in groups when setting up and carrying out investigations. They join in class discussions and offer their views confidently and thoughtfully. They present their work carefully and to a high standard.

55. The leadership of science is outstanding and management is very good. Groups of teachers work together to plan. They pool ideas and share the preparation of lesson materials, avoiding duplication of effort and overcoming, to some extent, the lack of a technician. The latter, however, is a distinct handicap. Marking includes diagnostic comments with clear criteria for making further progress. Very good use is made of assessment data to track pupils' progress. This both enables teachers to respond to each individual's learning needs and enhances corporate lesson-planning by indicating where schemes of work need to be improved. The quality of monitoring of teaching, provision and pupils' progress is excellent.

56. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good and the issues raised have been thoroughly and systematically addressed. The next step is for the difference in attainment between boys and girls to be investigated and overcome by further improving the achievement of boys.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Very good leadership focuses the department on good quality teaching and learning.
- Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6.
- Well-planned and interesting lessons ensure that all pupils learn at a good rate.
- Very good staff training and support ensure that non-specialist teachers have the confidence and skills to be very effective teachers of ICT.
- Very good working relationships give pupils confidence to enter into discussions.
- Teachers in other subject areas make good use of ICT to enhance learning.

- Work associated with spreadsheets does not allow pupils to reach the higher levels.

Commentary

57. Standards are well above average at the end of Year 6. This is a result of some very good teaching where lessons are well planned and teachers have high expectations of all pupils. All pupils, including those with SEN and the gifted and talented in Years 5 and 6, achieve well. The pace of learning in Years 7 and 8 is good, but some of the work does not allow more able pupils to reach the highest levels. This is particularly so where pupils carry out work on tables and mathematical spreadsheets. Nevertheless, standards are very good at the end of Year 8 as most pupils are already at the national average expected at the end of Year 9. These high standards have been confirmed by observations in lessons, analysis of pupils' portfolios and by talking to pupils. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Pupils are very confident and proficient in the use of database for research and information gathering. They are able to access the Internet safely and send e-mail communications. They demonstrate considerable skills in word-processing and desktop publishing in a wide range of situations. They are able to collect, collate and manipulate data. They use keyboards and word processing confidently to display and communicate information including very skilful PowerPoint presentations. Many pupils use computers very well to present their work in other subjects.

58. Teaching and learning are good overall with most of the very good teaching occurring in Years 5 and 6. This is an improvement from the previous inspection. Teachers generally have good subject knowledge, the results of extensive participation in professional development activities, and this enables them to provide stimulating and challenging lessons. All teachers plan their lessons well and mostly cater well for the range of abilities and competencies of the pupils, except in Years 7 and 8 where the most able are not consistently challenged highly enough. Lessons proceed at a good pace and generally include a range of activities designed to extend pupils' competent use of various hard and software packages. Assessment is used constructively to support pupils' day-to-day progress. Homework is used well to extend pupils' learning.

59. Pupils enjoy their learning, work hard, concentrate very well and make good progress. Their behaviour and attitudes are very good and very positive working relationships with teachers encourage pupils to join in discussions and try out their ideas without fear of failure. This builds their confidence and helps their development as independent learners.

60. Leadership of the department is very good. The co-ordinator has the vision to take the team forward and has focussed the department, through his own monitoring of provision, on high quality teaching and learning in order to raise standards. There is a very good spirit of teamwork and a collective effort to improve standards even further. He has been instrumental in providing high quality teacher training in ICT for specialist and non-specialist staff. This is fully reflected in the confidence and expertise shown by teachers in almost all subject areas in the school. Management of the department is very good. The co-ordinator does not currently teach any of the individual ICT classes and this inhibits his ability to be fully involved in curriculum development and develop schemes of work to extend the high-attaining pupils in Years 7 and 8. Improvement from the previous inspection is very good.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

61. There have been substantial improvements in this area since the previous inspection and ICT across the curriculum is now very good. Facilities and resources have been improved to a very good standard. Most teachers make very good use of electronic projectors to make their lessons interesting and learning easier. Pupils have whole-class access to a suite of computers and regularly use laptop computers in other classrooms. In consequence, they make good use of the skills they have gained in their separate ICT lessons. The investment in staff training and the provision of ICT equipment has produced a high quality learning environment where ICT is a major aid to learning across the curriculum.

HUMANITIES

Geography

Provision for geography is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards are good at the end of Year 6 and very good at the end of Year 8.
- Pupils' motivation and concentration, in response to challenging tasks, is good.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good.
- Teaching and learning are good in improving achievement.
- Recording and tracking of progress is not well enough developed to influence long-term planning.

Commentary

62. Standards at the end of Year 6 are above those nationally expected showing good achievement and progress from entry levels in Year 5. Most use mapping confidently, being able to identify features and use map signs knowledgeably. They are aware of how a river changes during its course and know the technical vocabulary used to describe those changes. Higher-attaining pupils are aware of more detailed changes to cross-sections of the river and how rock types affect valley forms. Standards by the end of Year 8 are well above national expectations and achievement is very good. Pupils are able to describe, for example, the difference between less-developed and well-developed countries. The higher-attaining pupils can account for the differences and know how the population profiles of countries of different stages of development change. Whilst all use statistical graphs and charts, some compile them from original data. Pupils who have SEN make good progress in relation to their individual education plans. There is no significant difference between the achievement of boys and girls. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to compile statistical displays and all pupils confidently use the Internet to obtain contemporary facts and figures.

63. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good at all stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and enthusiasm that inspires high levels of motivation and concentration during lessons. There is a good rapport between teachers and pupils. Responses in question-and-answer sessions are willingly given in an atmosphere of trust and good humour. For example, a close examination of, and discussion on, photographs of Newcastle and China at the beginning of a lesson was a prelude to learning about population density. Pupils work well in groups and respond willingly to the different challenges given to them. For example, in a lesson on tea growing and processing in an Indian village, the group work extended activity from the classroom into the school yard. Teachers ensure that learning is taking place at regular intervals during the lessons before proceeding to the next point. Good use is made of ICT. Recording of progress over time, to ensure that all pupils are covering all aspects of the curriculum and to assist with long-term planning, is less well developed.

64. Leadership and management are satisfactory and all teachers are confident in what they are doing. Accommodation does not allow a permanent base for Years 7 and 8, which limits the use of the good resources available. Co-operation within the partnership of schools has increased and this underpins smooth transition to the next tier of the pupils' education. Good progress has been made since the last inspection, particularly in the use of ICT to support and enhance teaching and learning.

History

Provision in history is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Standards of attainment at the end of Years 6 and 8 are well above national expectations.
- Teaching and learning are very good and enthuse pupils to expand their knowledge and understanding.
- Relationships are very good and are the basis for much of the good work.
- Attitudes and behaviour are very good, which ensures high levels of motivation that underpins high standard of achievement.

Commentary

65. Standards at the end of Year 6 are well above those expected nationally. This represents good achievement and progress based on their entry levels in Year 5. The majority write short descriptive passages with confidence. They use simple evidence to find out about people of past ages such as the Egyptians and compare and contrast they way people lived then and now. By the time they leave the school at the end of Year 8 the vast majority are well above national expectations and have maintained their good levels of achievement and progress. From the use of more complex evidence, they explore the ways of life of people in Britain in the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. A Year 8 class, looking at contemporary accounts of working conditions, was able to analyse the reasons for changes in social conditions in the mines around the local areas in the 19th century. The more able were challenged in a withdrawal group to explore the reasons for the accident that happened to a local 11 year old who had been working underground for three years when he was gravely injured, and they came to understand why the blame lay in the laws that governed working conditions. They use their literacy skills to aid their presentations and their exploration of materials. All pupils achieve very well. There is no significant difference between boys and girls in attainment or achievement. Pupils with SEN make equal progress towards their set targets. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used very well to support and enhance teaching and learning throughout the school.

66. Teaching and learning are good and sometimes very good at all stages. The lesson objectives are clearly set and pupils work assiduously at whatever is set for them to do. They work co-operatively in groups from early in the school, so that by the time they leave they concentrate with ease and help one another. Teachers know the subject well, inspire the pupils with their enthusiasm and lead the lessons very skilfully. Pupils and teachers have very good relationships so that attitudes are never in question and good behaviour is the norm. Careful assessments are made throughout the lesson and progress is charted meticulously, so that future planning is closely related to individual progress.

67. Leadership and management of the subject are very good so that teachers are at all times confident of the quality of the curriculum provision and know that the resources are of good quality. The head of department is an excellent role model to teachers and pupils alike. The work of the department and the progress of the pupils is very well monitored at all times and assessment data is used well to support curriculum development and planning.

68. Substantial progress has been made since the last inspection. Co-operation within the school partnership is exemplary and means that the pupils can confidently proceed to the next level of their education.

Religious education

Provision for religious education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The pupils' good attitudes and application to their work support their learning.
- Work in this subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Assessment, recording and reporting procedures are not effective in helping to raise standards.

Commentary

69. An analysis of pupils' work and lessons observed shows that all pupils, including those with SEN, make satisfactory progress so that standards are in line with the expectations of the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus by the end of Year 6 and Year 8. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the key events associated with the life of Jesus, important celebrations in Judaism and the main practices and beliefs within the Hindu tradition are satisfactory and for some, more able pupils, are good. Achievement is satisfactory in all years but is sometimes good in Years 7 and 8 when the pupils are appropriately challenged by the lesson activities.

70. Teaching and learning are satisfactory in all years. Some good teaching was seen in Years 7 and 8 that had a clear focus on what pupils needed to know and understand about religion and religious beliefs and practices, which led to good learning and achievement. Lesson planning does not always identify how the differing abilities will be provided for, particularly in terms of set tasks and activities; the needs of gifted and talented pupils are not identified. The use of a local minister in lessons about Christianity was effective and supportive in developing pupils' learning about Christian practices. Marking of pupils' work is not effective in helping to raise attainment in terms of either subject knowledge or understanding. Pupils are not provided with guidance on how well they are doing in this subject against the expectations of the Agreed Syllabus. There is limited use of ICT to enhance teaching and learning but the use of visits and visitors is good.

71. Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and the way in which they apply themselves to activities is a significant factor in their learning. Pupils' ability to work collaboratively in all years, when asked to do so, is an effective contributor to learning. The responses of pupils in discussion about moral, social and cultural dilemmas is good and reflects their growing confidence and knowledge.

72. Due to a sustained period of absence of the teacher in charge of religious education, the leadership and management are only satisfactory. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The requirements of the Agreed Syllabus are being met but the assessment of pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills, and the reporting of this to parents, is not properly in place. Some monitoring of provision has taken place by senior managers, but the outcomes have yet to make an impact on the quality of provision overall.

73. The subject has made satisfactory improvement since the last inspection. The issue of visiting places of worship has been addressed but little has been done to improve pupils' attainment through increased time allocation, more and better resources or the provision of a religious education base.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

The provision for design and technology is **good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils in all age groups attain above average standards.
- The attitudes to learning of pupils are very good.
- The support and guidance sheets given to help pupils record their progress with the design process are good.
- Teaching is consistently good.
- The schemes of work are good and ensure a very good level of challenge.
- Assessment procedures are very good.
- Liaison with the high school is very good.
- Links with the first schools require further development.
- Good links are made between art and design and technology.

Commentary

74. Standards of attainment in design and technology are above average by the end of Years 6 and 8. Achievement is good for all pupils including those with SEN. The most able pupils achieve very high standards. All pupils acquire a good understanding of the design process from the start of their time at the school. The design folders for each project require pupils to record the process from sketching their ideas to writing evaluations of completed products. The folders provide a good commentary of their progress through the process. Year 6 pupils produce drawings of their designs that are well labelled and that clearly communicate their design intentions. They are developing good sketching skills that help them to work up their designs.

75. By the end of Year 8 their practical skills are above average. Pupils learn to use a good range of tools and equipment well and this equips them for the next stage of their education. The strong emphasis on practical work ensures that pupils become confident makers and that they have a good knowledge of the properties of materials and of the ways in which these can be altered and shaped to achieve the desired outcomes. Teachers introduce techniques such as the use of templates and of measuring devices such as marking gauges to ensure that pupils of all ages learn to work with good levels of accuracy. Pupils produce well considered evaluations that offer ways in which they can improve their practice.

76. Teaching is consistently good. Lessons are well structured. Clear objectives and appropriate, and generally short, introductions leave ample time for the practical activities. Lessons are effectively drawn together through well-structured plenary sessions. Teachers guide research well, making sure, for instance, that pupils know how to use the Internet for research, and so contributing to the development of pupils' ICT skills. Information and communication technology (ICT) is also used well to develop pupils' knowledge and understanding of control and mechanisms. Expert demonstration give pupils a clear idea of how they should best go about using tools and equipment efficiently and safely. Class management is good and teachers emphasise the need for pupils to be safety conscious. Skilful question-and-answer sessions, especially at the start and end of lessons, test understanding as well as usefully sharing the observations of pupils. They also contribute to the development of pupils' oral competence. Assessment procedures are very good and clearly indicate to pupils what they have achieved and what they need to do to improve further.

77. Pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. They are keen and enthusiastic and contribute fully to all lessons. They work well in a variety of ways, whether individually or in groups. They understand the need to work safely and adhere to workshop rules and conventions responsibly. Behaviour is consistently very good as are relationships with others and with teachers.

78. Leadership and management of the subject are very good. The co-ordinator leads by example. He is a very good practitioner and has written very good schemes of work which are designed to provide appropriate challenge when working with a good range of materials. He has transformed the workrooms, putting in a lot of time and effort to create an effective working environment for design and technology. The work of the department and the progress of pupils are monitored effectively. Liaison with the high school is very good but links with the first schools require further development. Good links are made between art and design and technology. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art

Provision in art is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- The attainment of pupils at the end of Years 6 and 8 is well above national expectations.
- Realistic challenges enable pupils of all abilities to progress at a good rate in relation to their capabilities.
- Independent learning is encouraged.
- Exciting displays of work stimulate and inspire pupils.

Commentary

79. In 2003, the attainment of pupils at the end of Year 6 and Year 8 was well above the national average for pupils of their age. From an average to below average skills base on entry to the school, achievement and progress over time are very good. Pupils with SEN achieve as well as all other pupils and the most able pupils achieve very high standards.

80. By the end of Year 6, pupils are confident with tone and the use of bold colours; they experiment with different media and can identify the distinctive features of established artists' styles and techniques. By the end of Year 8 pupils are becoming more aware of the elements of art and use perspective and proportion well. They annotate their work carefully and use art vocabulary to great effect. They produce very individual and creative compositions based on the work of Picasso and Andy Warhol.

81. The quality of teaching is very good. Learning is very good because realistic challenges and expectations enable pupils of all abilities to progress at a good rate in relation to their capabilities. Lessons are well planned and contain a variety of activities. Very good relationships ensure that pupils are committed and remain engrossed in their work. In a lesson introducing pupils to Aboriginal art, the teacher's excellent knowledge of Aborigine culture led to a lively discussion of symbolism and spurred the pupils on to discover more. Assessment of pupils' work is accurate. Teachers keep detailed records of pupils' progress and communicate targets for improvement through written commentaries on their work and oral feedback in lessons.

82. The department is very well led and managed by a committed, skilled art specialist. The schemes of work are creatively designed and cater for pupils of all abilities. Information and communication technology (ICT) programmes are well used for both research and as a resource of stimulus materials. There is a strong emphasis on skills development in the department, which helps to underpin the experimentation and independent learning which are encouraged. The work of the department is well monitored by the curriculum leader and senior managers.

83. The department has a very good range of teaching resources and encourages extra-curricular activities in the department. Visits to art galleries locally and in London are undertaken regularly; the art clubs at lunchtime are lively and attract large numbers of pupils. The art room is light and airy and the exciting displays of work stimulate and inspire the pupils.

84. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Teaching is, now, consistently very good; the use of ICT is well developed and the department contributes effectively to the multi-cultural awareness of the pupils.

Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Lessons are well paced and contain a variety of activities which ensure the pupils' attention and commitment.
- Very good assessment sheets communicate levels to pupils and set targets for future development.
- The very good provision of extra-curricular activities helps to raise the profile of the music department.
- The lack of sound-proofing in the practice rooms has an impact on teaching in the music room.

Commentary

85. Because of previous staffing difficulties, attainment in terms of National Curriculum Levels was not tested at the end of Years 6 or 8 in 2003. However, from lessons observed and the scrutiny of work during the inspection, standards are very good and pupils are often attaining well above national expectations for their ages. This represents very good achievement and progress across the school. Pupils with SEN achieve as well as other pupils and those identified as being gifted and talented achieve exceptionally high standards.

86. By the end of Year 6, pupils can use musical vocabulary accurately, analyse the elements of music in recorded pieces successfully and sing confidently both within a group and as soloists. By the end of Year 8, they compose using major and minor keys, play keyboards with precision and interpret complex rhythms appropriately.

87. The quality of teaching is very good. Learning is very good because lessons are well paced and contain a variety of activities which ensure the pupils' attention and commitment. A very good rapport is established in lessons and the teacher's skilled musicianship is much appreciated by the pupils. Lessons are designed carefully to ensure that pupils of all abilities progress well and experience a sense of achievement as a result of their music making. In a lesson based on 'The Daniel Jazz', the excellent warm-up exercises were enjoyed by the pupils and had a beneficial effect on their breath control and articulation, as they sang with gusto and enthusiasm.

88. The department is very well led and managed by an energetic, specialist music teacher. Schemes of work are carefully constructed to ensure that all pupils are challenged at levels commensurate with their abilities. Expectations are high but realistic and are underpinned by a very clear numeracy and literacy policy. Detailed assessment sheets for all pupils contain level descriptors and are communicated regularly to the pupils when targets are set for their future development.

89. A wide range of peripatetic teaching supports the work of the department. The extra-curricular provision is very good and helps to raise the profile of the music department. The members of the Year 8 jazz band are particularly professional and impressive when performing their own compositions. Information and communication technology (ICT) is used well to enhance the work of the department but the lack of sound-proofing of the practice rooms can cause some distraction to the music lessons.

90. Improvement since the last inspection has been very good. Greater attention is paid to vocal technique and to differentiation in lesson schemes. Information and communication technology (ICT) is more widely used to support learning, and assessment procedures are used more positively to inform future planning and set realistic targets. Teaching is now consistently very good.

Physical education

Provision for physical education is **good**.

Strengths and weaknesses:

- Good quality teaching leads to good quality learning by the pupils.
- Pupils' attitudes and behaviour in lessons are very good.
- Pupils consistently achieve well over time.
- Very good leadership and management have led to a forward-looking department.
- Limited indoor space inhibits the learning of new skills.

Commentary

91. Pupils' standards on entry to the school in Year 5 are average. Progress by the end of Year 6 is good when standards are above average. When pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8, their standards are clearly above average. This represents good achievement and progress over four years.

92. In the work seen in Years 5 and 6, there is no apparent difference in the achievement of boys and girls. The special requirements of all pupils are taken into account in the teachers' effective planning. Pupils arrive promptly at lessons, and this clearly benefits learning as they spend more time on task. They know how and why to warm up before strenuous activity. Pupils demonstrate increasing control and levels of accuracy in dance. They are very confident when asked to express their evaluations of their own and others' performances. Pupils are clearly benefiting from specialist teaching. All pupils are fully included in lessons and make good progress.

93. The standard of work at the end of Year 8 is above average. A small number of pupils work at a standard well above the national average. There are very few pupils whose skill levels are below those which would be expected of pupils of their age. Some boys and girls achieve success both individually and as team players, gaining regional recognition in hockey, soccer and netball.

94. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are very good. They are attentive, and their capacity to sustain concentration is good. Relationships between teachers and their pupils are very good. Pupils work very well both as individuals and when collaborating in groups of varying sizes. All pupils are quick to recognise and celebrate the achievement of others. They are tolerant of the different abilities of their peers. They react positively to the high expectations of their teachers and they show initiative in setting up and packing away equipment for gymnastics and badminton.

95. Teaching and learning are good overall. The levels of knowledge and understanding shown by pupils are well above the national expectation, though their specific skill development is inhibited by limited indoor accommodation. Skilful teachers use effectively a wide range of teaching methods,

so that that pupils learn well. Teachers pay due regard to all aspects of health and safety. They have high expectations of their pupils and give clear and precise explanations and demonstrations. Pupils are encouraged to develop their skills of working independently and often have opportunities to observe, analyse and refine their own and others' work.

96. Leadership and management are very good. The teachers form a well-balanced team. They provide a very good range of internal extra-curricular activities and fixtures with other schools. In a quietly effective manner, staff place high value on personal standards of behaviour, fair play, and commitment. This underpins pupils' very good social and moral development. Schemes of work are detailed with assessment opportunities included. The work of the department is effectively monitored by the curriculum leader and senior managers and there is a clear focus on sustained improvement. The resources for the subject are good. The accommodation overall is satisfactory, with extensive fields and hard areas. Internal space clearly inhibits pupils' progress, and changing rooms are cramped.

97. Improvement since the last inspection has been good. Strengths have been maintained. The curriculum is well balanced, with well-defined learning objectives.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

Citizenship

Provision for citizenship is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses:

- Pupils' good attitudes and engagement with topics support their learning.
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and social development.
- The subject is not systematically managed in a way that it can be clearly identified, monitored and evaluated in Years 7 and 8.
- There is no framework which specifies how the taught curriculum and wider school opportunities contribute to pupils' development.
- There are no pupil-profiles for citizenship and this limits how teachers monitor pupils' progress in citizenship across other subjects.

Commentary

98. The school has a very good programme of PSHE that also includes aspects of citizenship.

99. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' knowledge, understanding and skills in relation to the non-statutory guidance on citizenship are developing satisfactorily. Pupils' good overall language and literacy skills support their responsible attitudes to discussion of important topical and political issues. In Years 7 and 8, pupils are in line to reach standards that are above the expectations described in the end of Key Stage 3 statement of attainment in citizenship, when all aspects of school life are considered. Achievement in Years 5 and 6 is satisfactory but the good attitudes, good engagement with issues that affect themselves, together with their ability to take on responsibility make pupils' achievement good in Years 7 and 8.

100. Teaching and learning are satisfactory overall. Planning specifically for pupils to improve their knowledge, understanding and skills against the statutory citizenship curriculum at Key Stage 3 is not effective. The schemes of work and lesson plans do not identify how the skills of enquiry, communication, participation and responsible action are to be developed and measured. The development of pupils' moral and social awareness is well promoted through the PSHE and citizenship topics in all years. Pupils' learning is assisted by good behaviour and their ability to act responsibly as members of the school community.

101. Leadership and management in the subject are unsatisfactory. There is not a clear vision of the way in which citizenship should feature in the school. The organisation and planning of the citizenship curriculum in Years 7 and 8 do not focus explicitly on the statutory programme of study. Although the knowledge and understanding elements of the statutory citizenship curriculum are to be found in the PSHE programme, the identification of the skills to be taught and learnt are not clear. There is no whole-school policy or framework which specifies how the taught curriculum and wider school opportunities contribute to pupils' development. Assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do is not effective. The use of pupils' 'progress files' which track and monitor their progress, is not in place to support the raising of standards. Reports to parents for Years 7 and 8 pupils do not give a picture of their achievements and progress in citizenship. There is little evidence of other National Curriculum subjects contributing to citizenship but the school is providing many opportunities for pupils to participate in the democratic processes of the school and local community.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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