

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **ALNWICK LINDISFARNE MIDDLE SCHOOL**

Alnwick

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique reference number: 122347

Headteacher: Mrs. Sue Hudson

Lead inspector: Roger Garrett

Dates of inspection: 20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> September 2004

Inspection number: 268335

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

© Crown copyright 2004

This report may be reproduced in whole or in part for non-commercial educational purposes, provided that all extracts quoted are reproduced verbatim without adaptation and on condition that the source and date thereof are stated.

Further copies of this report are obtainable from the school. Under the School Inspections Act 1996, the school must provide a copy of this report and/or its summary free of charge to certain categories of people. A charge not exceeding the full cost of reproduction may be made for any other copies supplied.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Middle deemed secondary
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	9 – 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	469
School address:	Lindisfarne Road Alnwick Northumberland
Postcode:	NE66 1AX
Telephone number:	01665 602534
Fax number:	01665 605994
Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr Ian Walker
Date of previous inspection:	14 <sup>th</sup> -18 <sup>th</sup> June 1999

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school is larger than the average middle school. In 2002, it obtained a School Improvement award for improving results between 1998 and 2001. In 2003, it obtained the Sportsmark Award and was designated a Partnership Promotion School by the Teacher Training Agency. The school is the centre for Lindisfarne School Centred Initial Teacher Training (SCITT) with provision for 34 graduate trainees. The socio-economic context is overall about average or slightly above, but pupils come from a wide catchment including areas of deprivation. Attainment on entry is broadly average. The school also takes children from RAF Boulmer and the number on roll can fluctuate as a result. Of the 469 pupils, the vast majority is white and there are no groups of minority ethnic pupils of any significant size. There are no refugees, asylum seekers, or pupils at an early stage of learning English. The proportion of pupils on the school's register of special educational needs is below average, as is the proportion with statements of special educational need. Most of these pupils have moderate learning difficulties, although the school provides for pupils with a wide and increasingly complex range of needs.

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
19913	R Garrett	Lead inspector	Citizenship; English as an additional language.
9724	B Quest-Ritson	Lay inspector	
31160	I Towler-Evans	Team inspector	English
8341	W Wimshurst	Team inspector	Mathematics; information and communication technology (ICT)
20380	N Pinkney	Team inspector	Science
13154	D Morton	Team inspector	Art and design; music
25431	L Clark	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages (French); design and technology
33019	S Aspinall	Team inspector	Geography; history
4605	M Lormor	Team inspector	Physical education
22695	R Cardinal	Team inspector	Religious education; special educational needs

The inspection contractor was:

ISIS  
3 Harrowby Road  
West Park  
Leeds  
LS16 5 HN

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be made initially to the inspection contractor. The procedures are set out in the leaflet '*Complaining about Ofsted Inspections*', which is available from Ofsted Publications Centre (telephone 07002 637833) or Ofsted's website ([www.ofsted.gov.uk](http://www.ofsted.gov.uk)).

## REPORT CONTENTS

	Page
<b>PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE MAIN INSPECTION FINDINGS</b>	
<b>STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS</b>	<b>8</b>
Standards achieved in subjects and courses	
Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)	
<b>QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL</b>	<b>10</b>
Teaching and learning	
The curriculum	
Care, guidance and support	
Partnership with parents, other schools and the community	
<b>LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3</b>	
<b>PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS</b>	<b>32</b>

## PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

### OVERALL EVALUATION

**This is a good school with some very good features.** It has a welcoming and approachable style that attracts parents and pupils alike. Pupils are particularly enthusiastic about the school – they like being here and it shows in their very good attitudes and behaviour. They enjoy a rich variety of creative and sporting opportunities beyond the normal school curriculum. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching, and standards are above average. The school **provides good value for money.**

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

- The school is inclusive in outlook so that pupils of all levels of attainment are able to achieve well.
- Very good attitudes and behaviour make a significant contribution to learning and to the happy atmosphere of the school.
- Pupils are very well cared for.
- Teaching quality has improved since the last inspection because of the headteacher's leadership, and standards are rising.
- The very good teaching practice that exists in the school is not shared widely enough to benefit all staff.
- Assessment information is not clear enough for teachers to use successfully for the benefit of pupils.

Improvement since the previous inspection has been good. The key issues have been dealt with successfully except that there is work still to do on using assessment information productively and sharing good practice across the school. Significant improvement has occurred in ICT, and physical education has sustained its high quality of provision. Standards are now securely above average overall. Teaching quality has improved.

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED

Results in National Curriculum tests at the end of Year 6, compared with:	all schools			similar schools
	2001	2002	2003	2003
English	B	C	D	E*
mathematics	B	D	B	E
science	A	B	C	E

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

At the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards were well below average in mathematics and science and very low in English when compared with schools of similar prior attainment. Standards declined in 2002 and 2003 because of a combination of factors: the movement of some pupils in and out of the school, the underachievement of some boys and of some higher attaining pupils, uncertainties about assessment, and issues surrounding the marking of National Curriculum tests particularly affecting English. The school anticipated improvement in 2004 through revised targets, intensive monitoring of individual pupils, monitoring of teaching and learning, reconsideration of Year 5 assessment procedures, . and feeder-school liaison. The school also used consultants for advice and for confirmation that strategies were appropriate. The effectiveness of these measures was borne out by provisional results for 2004. These indicate an improvement, particularly in English, and that improvement has been sustained into this inspection to the extent that standards now are above average in English, mathematics and science. Provisional 2004 results from Duchess's High School indicate that pupils from Alnwick Lindisfarne taking national tests at the end of Year 9 did particularly well in English, mathematics, science and design and technology and that picture

supports judgements in the current inspection, where standards at the end of Year 8 are above average.

**The achievement of all pupils, including those with special educational needs, is good.**

Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and Year 8. This represents good achievement in relation to pupils' average standards when they joined the school or began Year 7.

**Pupils' personal development is good and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.** Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Attendance and punctuality are good.

## **QUALITY OF EDUCATION**

**The school provides a good quality of education.** Pupils learn and achieve well because of **good** teaching. The curriculum provides well for pupils' needs and opportunities for enrichment are very good. Care is very good and support is good. The partnership with parents and links with the community and other institutions are good.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

**Leadership is good and management is effective overall in promoting achievement.** The headteacher's good leadership provides clear educational direction based on care for the individual needs of all the pupils. She is a very good role model for curriculum development and teaching. Senior managers provide good support. Governors understand the strengths of the school; they support and challenge it well, and fulfil their statutory duties. Financial management is good. The effective use of assessment information and opportunities to share good practice across the school are not sufficiently developed.

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

Parents think this is a good school. The Parents' Forum provides a very effective method of consulting parents and involving them in the work of the school. Inspectors agree with parents' views that the school's caring atmosphere and inclusive values support pupils very well. Parents have some concerns about the quality of information provided about progress. The inspection team believes that information about progress is satisfactory, but does not always contain enough precise detail about what pupils need to do to improve. Pupils are very happy in the school and rightly feel very well cared for and well supported.

## **IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED**

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

- Make assessment information more understandable and its use clearly focused on identifying the needs of individuals, setting targets and reviewing progress;
- Ensure that best practice in teaching is more widely shared across the school.

## PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

### STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

#### Standards achieved in subjects and courses

In work seen during the inspection, standards are above average in Years 6 and 8. Achievement is good in relation to pupils' average standards when they join the school and in relation to their average standards at the end of Year 6. Standards in the core subjects and most other subjects are above average, overall.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Standards are improving and achievement is good.
- Pupils from this school do well in national tests taken a year later at their high school.
- The school has worked purposefully to raise standards, particularly through consistency in the quality of teaching.
- Pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour are significant factors in their good achievement.

#### Commentary

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

Standards in:	School results	National results
English	25.7 (26.9)	26.8 (27.0)
mathematics	27.7 (26.2)	26.8 (26.7)
science	28.8 (29.2)	28.6 (28.3)

*There were 119 pupils in the year group. Figures in brackets are for the previous year*

1. In national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003, standards were above average in mathematics, average in science and below average in English compared with all schools nationally. Standards were well below average in mathematics and science and very low in English when compared with schools of similar prior attainment. Standards declined in 2002 and 2003 because of a combination of factors: the movement of some pupils in and out of the school, the underachievement of some boys and of some higher attaining pupils, uncertainties about assessment, and issues surrounding the marking of National Curriculum tests particularly affecting English. The school anticipated improvement in 2004 through revised targets, intensive monitoring of individual pupils, monitoring of teaching and learning, reconsideration of Year 5 assessment procedures, better feeder-school liaison and the appointment of a consultant for Years 7 and 8. The effectiveness of these measures was borne out by provisional results for 2004. These indicate an improvement, particularly in English, and that improvement has been sustained into this inspection to the extent that standards now are above average in English, mathematics and science.
2. Provisional 2004 results from Duchess's High School indicate that pupils from Alnwick Lindisfarne taking national tests at the end of Year 9 did particularly well in English, mathematics, science and design and technology and that picture supports judgements in the current inspection. By the time pupils leave the school at the end of Year 8, standards are well above average in design and technology, French and music, above average in art, English, geography, history, mathematics, physical education and science, and average in ICT, religious education and citizenship.
3. This improvement has come about because of the successful way the school has responded to the task of raising standards and achievement through a co-ordinated approach of working with the local education authority, liaising with first and high schools, curriculum development



and improving the quality of teaching. As a result, achievement is good, overall, including for those with special educational needs and for pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds. It is very good in design and technology, French, ICT and music. Achievement is particularly good in ICT because recent developments have had significant impact in a short space of time and pupils are making rapid progress. Pupils achieve particularly well in design and technology because of the well-organised curriculum and opportunities to undertake extensive projects independently. In music, very effective teaching and a wide range of enriching musical experiences help pupils achieve very well. Pupils achieve very well in French because they encounter very good teaching and make rapid progress. The achievement of pupils with special needs is good and in line with their peers, and there are no significant differences in the achievement of other groups of pupils.

4. Important additional factors influencing pupils' achievement are pupils' very good attitudes and behaviour. All inspectors comment favourably on the interest, enthusiasm and good conduct displayed by pupils. These stem from the good teaching and strong relationships established between teachers and pupils.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities (ethos)**

Attendance and punctuality are good. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good. Their personal development is good. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils enjoy coming to school.
- All age groups readily join in a wide range of school activities.
- Pupils listen attentively and are eager to learn.
- Relations between pupils and teachers are very good.
- Pupils do not always have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.

### **Commentary**

5. Pupils have very good attitudes towards the school. This applies both to their studies and to the wide range of activities they can take part in. The principal reason is the fact that pupils like coming to the school. They find it friendly and welcoming, so they feel happy and secure in the school environment. Many of the pupils interviewed during the inspection considered that they were lucky to be able to come to the school. These very positive attitudes also showed in the way pupils listened attentively in lessons and were generally eager to learn. They were also evident in the numbers of pupils who take part in sporting fixtures, in musical events and in a wide range of other activities, such as the Garden Club. Such very good attitudes have a beneficial impact on pupils' achievements and upon their personal development. However, pupils do not currently have enough opportunities to take responsibility for their own learning.
6. There is further evidence of pupils' very good attitudes to the school in the very high standards of behaviour seen during lessons. Pupils also continue to behave very well outside lessons, during break and at lunchtimes. There are two main reasons for these high standards. The first is that teachers routinely expect pupils to behave well. The second is that pupils like the school and wish to preserve its friendly atmosphere. The very good relations between pupils and teachers are a common element of both reasons. The pupils say some bullying does take place, but they do not see it as a serious issue.
7. Pupils' personal development is good. The programme in tutor time effectively presents important issues for discussion, reinforces the school's moral and social values and encourages involvement in its life and work, for example by electing school council representatives. Assemblies celebrate achievement and make good connections with

citizenship (the Mayor and a councillor presented the prize for the school's award-winning garden at one assembly). As indicated above, there are many opportunities for pupils to take part in a wide range of extra-curricular activities, including residential ones, and they do.

8. Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is enhanced well overall by subjects. For example, science provides opportunities for moral debate and encourages respect for life; it particularly enhances social co-operation through safe and carefully conducted practical sessions. Most subjects foster pupils' cultural awareness well, and this is an improvement on the position at the last inspection. Art and music are particularly effective in this respect. On the other hand, most subjects miss opportunities to develop pupils' spiritual awareness, and such opportunities are overlooked or not sufficiently clearly identified in programmes of work. Very good examples nevertheless occur in art and music, where pupils find much enjoyment and inspiration from working in colourful and rich environments.

## Attendance

### *Attendance in the latest complete reporting year 2002-03 (%)*

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	5.7	School data	0.0
National data	6.0	National data	0.3

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

9. Levels of attendance at the school during the academic year 2002/2003 were above the national average at 94.2 per cent. This figure dropped during the year 2003/2004 to 93.7 per cent, much closer to the national figure. The school considers medical absence following serious illness largely to blame for the drop, although an increasing number of holidays taken during term time are also a factor in this. There is little unauthorised absence.

## Exclusions

### *Ethnic background of pupils*

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

### *Exclusions in the last school year*

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
462	9	0
2		
1		
2		
1		
1		

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

10. Levels of exclusion remain relatively low, in keeping with the welcoming nature of the school. Exclusions are appropriately used to maintain good standards of behaviour.

## QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The school provides a good quality of education. Pupils achieve well because of good teaching in a very good atmosphere for learning. The curriculum provides well for pupils' needs, and opportunities

for enrichment are very good. Care is very good and support is good. The partnership with parents and links with the community and other institutions are good.

## Teaching and learning

Teaching is good, overall, with some very good features, and pupils learn well as a result. All teaching observed was at least satisfactory and a high proportion was good or better. Teaching is very good in design and technology, French, ICT and music. Teachers' use of assessment is satisfactory.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- Some very good and excellent teaching generates significant enthusiasm and inspires pupils to achieve very well.
- Much teaching features very good planning, high expectations for good behaviour in the classroom and interesting work; pupils learn and achieve well as a result.
- Pupils' very good attitudes help them work hard and productively, and thus promote their achievement.
- Learning in some lessons is slowed by lack of challenge or pace, or missed opportunities for independent learning.
- Pupils do not always know what they need to do to improve.
- Not enough is done to share best teaching practice across the school.

## Commentary

11. In the best lessons teaching is enthusiastic, exciting and challenging, so that pupils are inspired and enriched by the experience. Excellent lessons of this sort were seen in physical education and design and technology. Teachers plan lessons very well using a variety of activities including ICT. They manage pupils very well. As a result, lessons are conducted in an atmosphere that helps learning and meets the needs of all their pupils. Pupils have very good attitudes to their work, are prepared to work hard and productively, and achieve well. While most lessons are well managed, conducted at a good pace and productive, at times teachers do not challenge pupils sufficiently or they allow the pace of lessons to slacken. On these occasions, teaching is not so effective. The teaching of pupils with special needs is good and often very good. In the best literacy and numeracy teaching, the level of challenge is high and pupils respond very positively to difficult tasks. Teaching and support staff work very well in partnership.
12. Overall, teachers use assessment satisfactorily to support learning. Teachers have access to a wealth of data, but this information is not in a form that makes clear how it can be used to support pupils' achievement and to plan for the needs of individuals and groups of pupils. Pupils are not always well informed about what they need to do to improve. For pupils with special educational needs, assessment is very good, with pupils fully involved in the setting and reviewing of their targets. The services of the local authority are appropriately used for diagnostic testing to inform planning for specific needs.

## Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 73 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
2 (2.7%)	21 (28.8%)	35 (47.9%)	15 (20.5%)	0	0	0

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

13. Teaching quality is better than at the last inspection. This is because leadership has encouraged discussion about good practice and up-to-date techniques (including taking

advantage of good ICT facilities and the presence on the site of graduate trainees from Lindisfarne SCITT), and management has constructed teams of teachers according to their strengths and interests and ensured that planning is effective. Not enough has been done to ensure that the very good practice that exists in the school is more widely shared.

## **The curriculum**

Curriculum provision is good. Opportunities for enrichment are very good. Accommodation and resources are good.

## **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- A rich and varied sporting curriculum and an extensive programme of extra-curricular provision have sustained the high quality of provision reported in the last inspection.
- Opportunities for, and participation in, the arts and other activities are very good.
- There is good provision for pupils with special educational needs and for personal, social and health education. Good co-operation between teachers and learning support assistants ensures that all pupils fully access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.
- Pupils are prepared well for the later stages of their education.
- Accommodation and resources are good, particularly provision for ICT.
- Leadership's good encouragement of curriculum development has enhanced the breadth of opportunities in several areas across the school.
- Lack of time for religious education in Years 5 and 6 restricts learning opportunities for younger pupils.

## **Commentary**

14. The school gained the Sportsmark Award in 2003. It provides a rich and varied sporting curriculum to its pupils and an extensive programme of extra-curricular provision. There are good links with other schools, and the development of partnerships with sporting associations further enhances this provision. There is additional specialist coaching in a range of sports and the school has enjoyed considerable success in local and county sporting competitions. The school has sustained the high quality of provision reported in the last inspection so that pupils achieve well in sporting activities both in and outside school.
15. Participation in the arts is very good. The quality of orchestral work is high, overall, and take-up for instrumental lessons is well above average with 110 pupils participating. Provision is inclusive with opportunities provided for the full range of abilities according to interest and need, and financial support is provided for instrumental lessons. The fact that former pupils have returned to play in the school orchestra from time to time reflects well on their previous musical experience. Enrichment opportunities in art and design are open to all on a voluntary basis. The work of professional artists is given an extra dimension through gallery visits to Scotland and London. In collaboration with the Tate Modern pupils explored the styles of Picasso and Matisse, resulting in high quality outcomes. In music, pupils have opportunities to visit concerts and participate in master classes with professionals like Status Quo's drummer. Participation in other activities is also very good. In mathematics, high attaining pupils participate in the Junior Mathematics Challenge in Years 5 and 6. In geography, local visits are planned for the Coquet River study. The school garden provides a focus and a source of pride for pupils in the school and their care and use of it are recognised beyond the school. All these activities contribute well to pupils' learning; they add to pupils' interest and enjoyment so that they achieve well, particularly so in music.
16. Support for learning outside the school day is good, especially in music, art and design, mathematics, English and science. Booster classes and intervention programmes help raise attainment. Science teachers base additional support on very good tracking of progress supported by well-selected materials. Instrumental support in music is inclusive and a range of

pupils participate in orchestra and choir. In art and design, Year 8 pupils support Year 6 pupils in observational work using the garden as a stimulus. Gifted and talented pupils also take advantage of and benefit from these opportunities.

17. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. Every effort is made to ensure that pupils with the greatest level of need receive appropriate support. Pupils' literacy and numeracy needs are given priority at the start of Year 5 and this emphasis continues in other year groups. Programmes to support groups of pupils with specific needs have been planned for introduction this year. Support is also provided in other subjects. Pupils with the highest level of need are supported throughout the curriculum. Some support staff have another role as lunchtime supervisors and this enhances the quality of provision overall. The use of ICT resources to support learning is limited but resources have been purchased to enhance the current provision significantly. The special needs co-ordinator has substantial experience and appropriate training. The level of support staffing is good, with additional funding made available to increase staffing levels. Support staff have good knowledge of individuals and work with skill and purpose. The result of all this is that pupils with special educational needs achieve equally as well as other pupils.
18. Provision for personal, social and health education is good. All classes have two 20-minute tutorial periods each week and follow a whole-school programme that, with the additional back-up of assemblies and contributions from other subjects like physical education, science and citizenship, makes for effective provision. At this early point in the school term, inspectors saw effective induction of Year 5 which made pupils familiar with school routines and reinforced the school's ethos well. This was also endorsed by parents in the parents' questionnaire and at the parents' meeting: "The school behaves as if it is a privilege to have the children".
19. Pupils are well prepared for the later stages of their education. Strong links exist with Duchess's High School so that transition arrangements run smoothly, and there is feedback on pupils' Year 9 examination results, discussion about standards and the content of schemes of work and various joint projects in, for example, design and technology and music. The good performance of Lindisfarne pupils in national tests at the end of Year 9 is evidence of the effectiveness of these links.
20. Overall, the accommodation is good. The accommodation for music is excellent and there is very good specialist accommodation for science, design and technology and ICT. Access for pupils with disabilities is generally good but, whilst the gymnasium and changing rooms are adequate to deliver the curriculum for physical education, they are in need of refurbishment.
21. The school has sufficient teachers to fully meet the demands of the curriculum. Each subject area has a designated co-ordinator and almost all are specialists in the subject. The school budgets for a generous number of classroom support assistants to provide ample flexibility to meet changing needs. Teachers and support assistants work very well together to ensure that all pupils fully access the curriculum and achieve their full potential.
22. Resources for teaching are generally good with particular strengths in music and ICT. In music, there is an ample supply of keyboards and tuned and non-tuned percussion instruments, and a wide range of instrumental tuition is offered to pupils. Since the previous inspection, the school has vastly improved its use of ICT. The school has a good number of computers, each classroom has a projector and all teachers have wireless-linked laptops. The five interactive whiteboards are well used and the school's Intranet is a valuable teaching and information resource. The science computer suite is regularly used. The school's library has been extensively re-designed and is a useful resource. The range of books has been considerably increased and pupils have good access to a range of literature. All these contribute well to pupils' good learning and achievement.
23. Curriculum development has been good, including increasing use of ICT to support teaching and learning, the development of cross-curricular links through the library, literacy and

citizenship, the (unusual) opportunity for French in Years 5 and 6, and improved provision in music and physical education. Although provision for religious education is under review and development at the moment, younger pupils' learning opportunities are restricted because of the lack of time allocated to the subject in Years 5 and 6.

### **Care, guidance and support**

Standards of care, welfare and safety are very good. The support, advice and guidance provided are good, overall. Arrangements for pupils' involvement in the work of the school are satisfactory.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils are looked after very well; they feel secure and happy in the school.
- Personal support and advice for pupils is very good.
- Although there is a school council, pupils consider this could be developed to allow them to have a more active role in the life of the school.
- Advice and support on academic progress are satisfactory but weaker than those on personal progress because the procedures for monitoring and how they are applied vary between subjects.

### **Commentary**

24. Standards of care are very good. Teachers have very good relations with the children and look after them very well. As a result, pupils feel comfortable in the school. This sense of security helps them to play a full part in school life and to do well. Child protection procedures are good. Health and safety procedures are carefully observed. The building and grounds are well maintained. Procedures to help new pupils settle in are thoughtful and considerate. Some pupils come from very small first schools or join during the school year. Both are taken into consideration in helping them to adjust. Pupils from the recent intake, while initially apprehensive, had taken no more than a few days to settle in.
25. The quality of care is matched by the very good personal support for pupils. This is because the members of staff on the pastoral teams know pupils very well. They back their knowledge with good records of pupils' personal progress, which enables them to be aware of any impending difficulties and to provide sensitive support if necessary. Though considered satisfactory, educational support for pupils is not as well developed, or as consistently applied across the school. This is largely because it remains the responsibility of individual subject departments with no overall co-ordination or monitoring as yet. Target-setting has barely started in some subjects while effective systems operate in others (for example, science). For pupils with special educational needs, trusting relationships between staff and individual pupils are very strong because of very good knowledge of pupils' special needs. However, whole-school assessment information is not sufficiently accessible to enable it to be well used in supporting individuals.
26. Current arrangements to seek pupils' views and to involve them in the work of the school are satisfactory. There is a school council, organised along democratic lines. However, last year – according to pupils interviewed – the organisation was slow to get going and met only intermittently. They did not regard it as giving them as effective a voice as it might. The school also considers this an area for improvement.
27. Standards of care are similar to those noted in the previous inspection report. Procedures for recording and monitoring attendance are now satisfactory.

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

The school has a good partnership with parents. Links with the community, as well as with other schools and colleges, are also good.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The Parents' Forum provides a very effective method of consulting parents and involving them in the work of the school.
- The school makes a good contribution to initial teacher training.
- Annual reports need more precise detail on how pupils can improve.

### **Commentary**

28. Considered overall, the school has a good partnership with parents. One area in particular stands out as being especially effective. The school reformed an existing Parent/Teacher Association into a Parents' Forum. This group has a membership, balanced by year group and catchment area, and is used to consult parents when changes are contemplated and to follow up parental concerns raised in surveys. So far it has been involved in a review of the behaviour policy to ensure greater consistency, and it is currently working on information for parents – both areas which some parents felt could be improved. It is proving a very successful method of involving parents in developments at the school.
29. For pupils with special educational needs, links with parents are very good in terms of both frequent informal contact and opportunities to meet relevant staff in school. Parents are kept fully informed about provision made and their views are sought when progress is reviewed. There are termly partnership meetings between the special needs co-ordinators of first, middle and high schools.
30. The general range of information that the school provides about itself is good. Information on progress is not as consistently good, though now under review. At present, parents receive only one full report each year. These vary in quality, and most should give more detail on how pupils can improve. However, this is being reviewed, and parents should this year also receive a short progress report as well as the full one.
31. Links with the local community are used effectively. The school takes advantage of its geographical position to extend pupils' knowledge of their environment; the town and surrounding countryside provide an invaluable resource. There are good links too through subject departments; these include business contacts in design and technology and local theatre links in the music department. Members of the community take part in aspects of school life; other groups benefit from using its facilities.
32. There are also good links with other schools and colleges. Although the school takes pupils from a number of first schools, contacts are effective and enable pupils to make a smooth transfer. Links are good, too, with the secondary school in the town at both pastoral and curricular level. These close subject links are important because pupils move up towards the end of a key stage. The school also makes an effective contribution to the initial training of new teachers. The area centre is based at the school so, although it is separate, contact is close and benefits both organisations.
33. The school's partnership with parents has improved well since the previous inspection.

## **LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

Leadership and management are good. The headteacher provides good leadership. The governance of the school is good.

## Main strengths and weaknesses

- The headteacher's good leadership provides clear educational direction based on care for the individual needs of all the pupils. She is a very good role model for curriculum development and teaching.
- Senior managers provide good support.
- Governors understand the strengths of the school; they support and challenge it well.
- The management of assessment data is not as sharply focused as it should be on identifying pupils' needs and tracking their progress.

## Commentary

34. The governance of the school is good. Governors take an active part in shaping the direction of the school and participate in all significant processes. A good example of their direct contact with the school is the fact that the governors' report to parents is designed and produced by pupils. The chair of governors has much professional expertise to draw on both personally and from his team, and all governors work collaboratively with the school to move it forward. They understand the strengths of the school well, in particular the inclusive and enriching experience it offers and its concern for pupils' care. They want to build on these strengths to improve the school's performance. They are used to asking questions of the school and challenging its intentions.
35. The leadership of the headteacher and other key staff is good. The headteacher's good, confident leadership and clear sense of direction are particularly apparent in relation to her concern for continuing curriculum development and improving the quality of teaching. She provides a very good model for teachers in her own right, a judgement endorsed by parents at the parents' meeting. She has acted firmly to raise standards where necessary in areas of the curriculum and teaching. Relationships between headteacher, senior managers and staff are very supportive, and parents view them as a team of enthusiastic, motivated, united and committed people. The very small team of two senior managers shares the headteacher's vision for the school and puts the school's aims into practice with commitment.
36. Management is good, overall. Effective day-to-day management, supported by dedicated office staff, ensures that the school operates efficiently. The school's work is regularly reviewed and performance management is appropriately focused on professional development. New members of staff are supported well, and the school uses its association with Lindisfarne SCITT to advantage in keeping abreast of new ideas and when recruiting teachers. Management has also been largely effective in ensuring that developments in the curriculum and improvements in the quality of teaching and learning have been incorporated into the work of the school. Some aspects of management, however, like monitoring the consistency of support and advice on pupils' academic progress or ensuring the spread of good teaching practice across the school, are not yet so effective.
37. For pupils with special educational needs, leadership is good, overall, and the co-ordinator appointed last year has had a significant impact on improving provision. School funding has been used well to enhance provision. Links with governors are very good. Regular meetings of staff, both teaching and support staff, are a very useful means of raising concerns and reviewing progress and provision for individuals. Teachers receive full information about pupils' needs and targets set. Close contact is maintained with a wide range of outside agencies. Improvement from the last inspection has been good with improvements in provision and pupils' achievement.
38. Financial management is good and has been particularly effective in maintaining staffing quality and improving accommodation and resources. The school seeks best value in all aspects of its work. The small size of the management team is itself an example of 'best value', but also places limits on its effectiveness. As a result, no system is in place to ensure



that best practice in teaching is widely shared or that the wealth of assessment information is used effectively.

**Financial information for the year April 2003 to March 2004**

Income and expenditure (£)	
Total income	1,060,455
Total expenditure	1,012,425
Expenditure per pupil	£2270

Balances (£)	
Balance from previous year	72,425
Balance carried forward to the next	48,030

# PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

## SUBJECTS AND COURSES IN KEY STAGES 2 AND 3

### ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

#### English

Provision in English is **good**.

#### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Good leadership and management provide a consistent approach to the work of the department.
- Teaching is consistently good with some very good features, so that pupils learn and achieve well.
- Standards have improved and are currently above average.
- In some lessons there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own learning.

#### Commentary

39. Results in the Year 6 tests in 2003 were below the national average and very low in relation to similar schools. Provisional results for 2004 indicate a marked improvement, reversing the trend of the previous three years.
40. In work seen, at the end of Year 6 standards are above average, reflecting good achievement from attainment on entry that was broadly average. In Year 6, pupils are able to articulate their ideas thoughtfully in relation to shared reading, applying a good grasp of technical vocabulary. They demonstrate knowledge of a range of texts and their skills of deduction are good. Writing shows a competent grasp of technical features and higher attaining pupils are able to apply imagery and grammatical features well, to enhance meaning. By the end of Year 8 standards are above average, with speaking and listening well above average. Pupils use their writing skills imaginatively and appropriately. Their sophisticated use of language when writing a report from the events of a myth, for example, illustrates this clearly.
41. Achievement is good overall. In Years 5 and 6, this is because of a structured and consistent implementation of the literacy strategy. Similarly, Years 7 and 8 pupils encounter a wide range of challenging and interesting material. Lower attainers, including pupils with statements of special educational need, achieve well because of teachers' use of a range of strategies and the effective deployment of support staff. Pupils' retrieval of information is good, well supported by library provision including access to CDs and talking books.
42. The quality of teaching and learning is now more consistently good or very good compared to the previous report. Teachers' warmth, humour and good relations mean that pupils want to succeed. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and model a range of reading strategies, engaging pupils as active readers. In Year 6, pupils confidently compare Roald Dahl's extreme characters with others from their wider reading. Very good teaching is characterised by skilful questioning and the use of imaginative resources. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils generated questions enabling them to explore plot, character, motivation and genre in a murder mystery, well supported by the use of realistic documents and teachers in role. Where teaching is less effective, pupils are given insufficient opportunities to take greater responsibility within the learning process. In such lessons, the use of drama and oral opportunities to deepen pupils' interpretation and broaden contexts for talk are less evident. Some good examples occur of the confident use of the interactive whiteboard to engage and involve pupils, but ICT is not fully exploited by pupils in their own work.

43. Leadership and management are good. The leadership has provided clear direction to the work of the department about how to implement the literacy strategy and this has been managed effectively and consistently. The monitoring of teaching and learning is productive, particularly at Years 7 and 8 where teachers plan effectively and team teach, building on each other's strengths. Through a rigorous analysis of data, the subject leaders are getting a clearer picture of pupils' standards so that they can raise them further. The department has implemented pupil self-evaluation but this is not yet fully developed as pupils are not always clear about how they can improve. Because of the positive developments taking place, the recent uplift in standards and the consistency in teaching quality, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

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

44. Standards of language and literacy are above average and, overall, subjects contribute well to the development of pupils' skills. The school tells parents about their drive to raise literacy standards by informing them of targets in pupils' literacy books. A common marking scheme for writing is adopted across the curriculum to ensure consistency. Pupils use talk productively in French, art, music, geography and history where well-established question and answer routines challenge pupils through discussion and problem-solving tasks. Support for pupils' literacy skills is particularly strong in design and technology. All subjects use subject-specific vocabulary and pupils apply this well.

### **French**

Provision in French is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards are well above the level expected by the end of Year 8.
- Teaching and learning are very effective, though some pupils express reservations about the way they are taught.
- Aspects of leadership and management are underdeveloped.

### **Commentary**

45. Standards are above average at the end of Year 6 and well above expected levels by the end of Year 8. This is a similar picture to that reported in the last inspection. Pupils enter school with no previous knowledge of French and by the end of Year 8 they speak the language with a very good accent and intonation, use an extensive vocabulary and a wide range of idiomatic phrases. By Year 8, the majority of pupils write fluently and at length, in paragraphs, using words such as 'aussi', 'maintenant' and 'finalement' to vary their sentences. The small proportion of lower attainers write much simpler sentences but with considerable accuracy. Pupils achieve very well.
46. The teaching seen during the inspection was of very good quality. Almost all lessons were taken by a supply teacher who had only joined the school the previous week. The new French course, adopted by the school, proved an invaluable resource and enabled a fast rate of well-directed learning to take place. Notable strengths were seen in the teaching in Year 5 where pupils enthusiastically leapt to their feet in turn to declare their names in a well-rehearsed dialogue at top speed to try to beat their record, and in the teaching of higher and lower attainers in the other year groups. In the top set in Year 8, for example, pupils quickly devised much more elaborate conversations than the example they were given as they enthusiastically used new phrases to debate meeting places and times with each other. Pupils, however, have mixed attitudes towards French. Their enthusiastic response to the calm, methodical teaching with its punctilious attention to detail seemed to be unusual. A representative sample of pupils

from Years 6 and 7 thought that lessons were generally boring and repetitive, sometimes too hard and often too easy. In the lessons seen, however, boys and lower attainers in particular, were keen to join in. Pupils achieved very well and learnt new material at a rate that was very well matched to the different levels of ability in each class. Support assistants gave very good assistance to those with special educational needs so that they could be fully included in oral work.

47. Leadership and management are satisfactory, overall. Monitoring of teaching and learning by the two specialist teachers indicates areas for development which the new French course is beginning to address. The French room is a lively resource in itself with colourful displays. However, there is little evidence of pupils learning about French in a wider context, or doing independent research or practising their skills using an extensive range of ICT and other resources. Nevertheless, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

Provision in mathematics is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Pupils achieve well as a result of good teaching.
- Teachers plan well to meet the needs of pupils. This ensures that pupils make good progress.
- Good leadership and management give the subject a clear vision and direction for improvement.
- Marking does not provide sufficient information about what pupils should to improve their work.
- Targets are not used effectively to check pupils' progress.

### **Commentary**

48. Results in the 2003 Year 6 national tests were above average. They were average in relation to pupils' attainment on entry to the school. Girls performed better than boys. In 2004, provisional results were similar.
49. In Year 6, pupils' mathematical skills are above average. This represents good achievement as they enter the school at the beginning of Year 5 with skills in mathematics that are broadly average. Pupils are developing well their ability to handle numbers confidently when doing mental calculations. Most are able to recall their tables. The highest attaining pupils can multiply two-digit numbers confidently using different methods. They understand how to check their answers by estimation. The lowest attaining pupils understand how to halve and double whole numbers although some have difficulty with doing the same with decimal numbers. In Year 8, pupils' standards are above average. They are achieving well in relation to their previous learning. The highest attaining pupils can recall confidently facts about angles and can apply them to identifying angles formed by parallel lines. The lowest attaining pupils, however, are still developing their knowledge of angles formed by straight lines.
50. The quality of teaching is good and results in good learning and achievement. Teachers' planning is good; it builds well on pupils' learning to ensure that they make good progress. The three-part lesson is well integrated into teachers' planning and tasks are matched well to pupils' needs with appropriate extension activities for higher attaining pupils. Teachers question pupils well and use their subject knowledge effectively to help pupils understand new skills and concepts. Teachers set clear expectations for pupils' work and behaviour and they manage and organise pupils well. This ensures that pupils' attitudes are very good and they behave very well in lessons. Good attention is given to pupils' literacy skills with new vocabulary developed effectively. Teachers use new technology well to demonstrate skills and concepts, and computers are used effectively by pupils to support their learning. Good

provision is made to support individual pupils, including those with special educational needs. This ensures that all groups of pupils make good progress. The marking of pupils' work is regular, but it does not provide sufficient comments about what they need to do to improve their standards.

51. Leadership and management are good. The subject co-ordinator provides a clear vision and direction for the subject and teachers are working well as a team to improve standards. Procedures to assess pupils' attainment as they move through the school are good. However, pupils' targets are not yet used as effectively as they might be to check pupils' progress. Good improvements have been made since the previous inspection. Pupils' progress and results in national tests are better. The subject now is led and managed well and pupils use computers more regularly.

### **Mathematics across the curriculum**

52. Pupils' competency in mathematics is average and numeracy skills are developed well in mathematics lessons. In design and technology, pupils' measuring skills are good. A good contribution is made in science. Teachers are aware of the new approaches to the teaching of mathematics and as a result most subjects are making a satisfactory contribution to supporting pupils' numeracy skills.

### **SCIENCE**

Provision in science is **good**.

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

- All pupils achieve well through the school.
- Procedures for target setting and tracking pupils' progress are very good.
- The quality of teaching and learning is good.
- Very good use is made of ICT in all areas of teaching and learning.
- Leadership of the subject is very good.
- There is inconsistency in planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6; as a result they do not all receive the same quality of experience.

#### **Commentary**

53. Results in the national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2003 were average in comparison with all schools, but were well below average in comparison with similar schools. Over recent years, the results have slowly declined but have always been above or close to the national average. Unconfirmed results for the 2004 tests showed a marked improvement, reversing the recent downward trend.
54. Standards by the end of Year 6 are broadly average. All pupils acquire sound basic skills in practical work and are enthusiastic and responsive in lessons. They enjoy carrying out scientific investigations but many are not confident in drawing clear conclusions from their results. Standards are above average by the end of Year 8. Most pupils have very sound general knowledge of their science topics and many are able to apply their knowledge. Higher attaining pupils are consistently reaching higher levels in their work. Lower attaining pupils and those with special educational needs are well supported and reach expected standards. Pupils generally achieve well through the school due to the good quality of teaching, the variety of planned activities and the imaginative use of ICT in all areas of work. These factors all contribute to generating pupils' interest and involvement in learning and as a result they display very positive attitudes. They are keen to volunteer ideas and information, although when speaking their clarity of expression is often limited.

55. The overall quality of teaching and learning is good. Teaching is slightly better in Years 7 and 8 where all teaching is by science specialists. Lessons are planned well, with clear learning objectives, and are modified to meet the needs of all pupils, although there is inconsistency in planning for the needs of higher attaining pupils in Years 5 and 6. Interactive whiteboards are used very imaginatively and the dedicated computer suite is regularly used for accessing information or carrying out simulated experiments to collect and process data.
56. The subject is very well led. The newly appointed co-ordinator has already made a marked impact. The new scheme of work gives good guidance to non-specialist teachers, and there is extensive use of computers in teaching. There has been a marked improvement since the previous inspection in producing very effective procedures for target setting and tracking pupils' progress. All pupils know their current and target levels and the steps needed to achieve these targets, and booster classes are provided for those pupils requiring additional support. Bearing in mind the history of results and the relatively recent changes, improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision in information and communication technology (ICT) is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils from Years 5 to 8 achieve very well as a result of very good teaching.
- Pupils want to learn so they make very good progress.
- Very good leadership and management provide clear vision, direction and organisation, with a focus on improving standards.
- Very good planning to deliver all aspects of the curriculum ensures that pupils develop skills well.
- The use of computers by pupils in other subjects is not consistent. As a result, not all pupils are receiving similar ICT experiences.

### Commentary

57. In Year 6, pupils' attainment is average compared to national expectations. This represents very good achievement since entering the school. Pupils have developed well their ability to use desktop publishing packages and are beginning to learn about multimedia presentations. In Year 8 standards are average, but this also represents very good achievement given their prior attainment. Pupils understand the importance of using a variety of ICT tools including text, graphics, sound and pictures when designing *PowerPoint* presentations about their projects so that they are suitable for a particular audience.
58. The overall quality of teaching and learning is very good. All teaching in Years 5 to 7 is delivered by the subject co-ordinator and it is very good. ICT skills in Year 8 are developed through design and technology and here teaching is good. Teaching is enthusiastic and knowledgeable, which engages pupils' interest. Tasks are challenging so that all pupils are constantly made to think. Pupils are often engrossed in their work because of the pace and demands of the lessons. Teachers help individuals very well and in doing so use very good questioning skills to encourage the pupils themselves to find solutions to problems. Lessons are very well planned so that activities develop and consolidate pupils' knowledge and understanding. The tasks provided support pupils' learning well. Relationships are very good and teachers' high expectations of good behaviour mean that learning proceeds without interruption. Pupils also achieve very well because they have very positive attitudes towards ICT. They like the subject and, as their questioning of their teachers shows, they want to learn.

59. The department is very well led and managed. The new co-ordinator has significantly improved all aspects of the subject in a short period of time. There is a clear sense of direction with the main focus being on improving standards. Much time has been spent ensuring that there are sufficient resources around the school to adequately deliver all aspects of the subject and to support teachers in their delivery of their subjects. The resources are very well managed and very good support is provided by the technician. This has resulted in very good improvement since the previous inspection. Resources have improved significantly, all strands of the National Curriculum are now delivered effectively, teaching is better, and effective assessment arrangements are now in place. The impact of new resources on pupils' learning has not yet been carefully checked to ensure that all pupils receive similar experiences of using ICT in all subjects.

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

60. The use of ICT across the curriculum is satisfactory. All teachers have been provided with laptop computers and nearly all rooms have data projectors and some have interactive computer display boards. They are using this new technology effectively to make lessons interesting. Very good use is found, for example, in science, design and technology and mathematics. Other subjects are in the process of developing the use of ICT by pupils and most have it built into their schemes of work. At the moment, however, not all subjects ensure that pupils are using computers often enough to support their learning.

## **HUMANITIES**

### **Geography**

Provision in geography is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards have shown a steady improvement and are above average.
- The quality of teaching is good overall, and lower attainers are well catered for.
- Although teachers make good use of ICT they do not sufficiently develop pupils' own use of, and skills in, ICT.
- Teachers do not sufficiently explain to pupils how they can improve.

### **Commentary**

61. Assessments in 2004 for Year 9 pupils from the school were above average and have shown a steady improvement since the last inspection with girls consistently doing better than boys. Assessments at the end of Year 6 were average.
62. Pupils enter the school in Year 5 with average standards in geography and by Year 6 continue to reach average standards. Work seen in Years 7 and 8 is above average and this represents good achievement. Pupils gain a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject responding to the teachers' high expectations and the good variety of topics presented to them. They particularly enjoy the opportunity of local fieldwork such as the study of the Coquet River and the inclusion of independent learning topics such as the study of the Druridge Bay conservation area.
63. The quality of teaching and learning, overall, is good. Teachers plan their lessons well and use relevant resources. Teaching methods are often imaginative and always supportive and encouraging so pupils feel secure and actively take part in lessons. Lower attaining pupils are given good support both by teachers, who are starting to set differentiated work, and by teaching assistants who are used effectively and respected. These pupils also benefit from a

clear emphasis on key words that are always explained and displayed in classrooms. In some lessons, higher attaining pupils are encouraged to work to their full potential and are set tasks that challenge and extend them. For example in a Year 6 class, a group of higher attaining pupils were asked to produce a news report explaining how the water cycle worked and then to present it to the rest of the class. They did this with confidence and enthusiasm and learned a lot themselves in the process. However, this challenge is not evident in all lessons because good practice is not sufficiently shared among all those teaching the subject, especially non-specialist teachers. Teachers make good use of ICT in their lessons but pupils have been given too few opportunities to develop their own skills in this area.

64. Teaching is helped by the fact that pupils want to learn and by behaviour that is very good. Teachers know their pupils well and monitor their progress against National Curriculum levels. However, this information is only just beginning to be shared with pupils and they do not yet know what they need to do to improve. Homework is set regularly and links closely into work done in lessons.
65. The subject is well led and managed and the subject leader has a clear vision of what is needed to continue the improvement in standards. Issues from the last inspection have been successfully dealt with. Collaborative planning is evident and the link with history is beneficial. Improvement since the last inspection has therefore been good.

## **History**

Provision in history is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Standards in history have improved steadily and are above average.
- Teachers have a good command of their subject and plan lessons to meet the needs of all pupils.
- Leadership is good and strategies are in place for further improvement in standards.
- Marking of homework does not give a clear indication of how a pupil can improve.
- The use of ICT in lessons by pupils is not sufficiently planned.

### **Commentary**

66. The 2004 assessments show standards in history were average by the end of Year 6 and above average for the Year 8 pupils. Standards have risen steadily each year since 2001 and girls have consistently done better than boys.
67. Overall, standards are above average and pupils' achievement is good. By the end of Year 6, pupils have an understanding of chronology and can make links between historical events and the changes that then took place. They have investigated several aspects of local history, including a study of the former Alnwick railway branch-line and station and are able to explain contrasts between Victorian times and the present. By the end of Year 8, pupils can evaluate and use sources of information and explain their reliability. Topic work, such as the North American Indians and the Roman Empire, gives good experience of research and an analysis of cause and effect. Higher attaining pupils can take a hypothesis such as "People were glad to be members of the Roman Empire" and put arguments for and against this, drawing on several sources of evidence. Lower attainers tend to rely on single evidence sources and often give too little detail, making their answers superficial, but they are supported well.
68. The quality of teaching and learning is good. Teachers generally have a good command of their subject, plan lessons well to meet the needs of all pupils and have high expectations. Learning objectives are made clear at the start of each lesson and checked at the end. Pupils behave very well, participate in discussions and work well together in group activities. These



attitudes contribute significantly to their good learning. Homework is regularly set and marked although the marking does not always give a clear indication of how the pupil could improve. ICT is well used by teachers, but its use by pupils is still developing and teachers do not sufficiently plan for its use in lessons.

69. The subject leader gives good leadership, has clear vision and has identified strategies for improving standards still further, particularly the achievement of boys. The teaching team is well managed and supported and there is a sharing of good practice through regular team meetings and lesson observation. There are close links with geography that benefit both subjects.
70. The issues raised at the time of the last inspection have been successfully dealt with, and improvement has been good.

## Religious education

Provision in religious education is **satisfactory**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- The emphasis in lesson planning on 'learning by doing' develops pupils' skills well.
- Curriculum planning enables pupils to build on their learning from one year to the next.
- Effective leadership and management provide good support to non-specialist teachers in the form of resources and lesson plans.
- Younger pupils' learning opportunities are restricted because of the amount of time allocated to the subject.
- There is no system in place to monitor the teaching of the subject and this restricts further improvement.
- Pupils' understanding of how they can improve is limited because of the absence of subject-specific assessment procedures.

### Commentary

71. Standards by the end of Year 8 are average, meeting the expectations of the locally agreed syllabus. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils trace the origins of Hinduism and use religious terminology well to explain its key features. Higher attainers show a good grasp of Hindu beliefs. In work on Judaism, pupils explain how belief affects daily living. All pupils, including lower attainers, express their own beliefs clearly, including reference to a belief in God. In work seen, pupils' learning about religion is stronger than their skills in reflection and response. In Year 5, pupils produce their own Ten Commandments and show a good awareness of right and wrong. They give imaginative accounts of what the Kingdom of Heaven might be like. There is insufficient evidence to judge achievement and standards by the end of Year 6.
72. Teaching and learning are good. In the two lessons seen, learning was good because pupils were motivated by the challenge of research tasks and they were provided with a good range of resources to consolidate their learning. The wide range of resources available included artefacts and ICT. In both lessons, learning was further consolidated by organising activities in groups so that pupils learned from each other as well as through individual work. In one lesson, challenge and learning were better because the pace was more challenging and all pupils were required to report back on their research findings. ICT was particularly well used in one lesson, with pace sustained through the projection of objectives and tasks as the lesson progressed plus the projection of a 'ticking clock' to remind pupils of the time they had to complete a task. There is insufficient evidence to make a separate judgement of teaching and learning in Years 5 and 6 because no lessons were observed and samples of work seen were for Year 5 only.

73. Leadership and management are good. Two temporary co-ordinators appointed to cover for the absence of the postholder, have made a significant impact in a short space of time in producing a curriculum plan, an action plan and detailed lesson plans, together with resources. Planning has taken careful account of the need to build on previous learning and the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. Lesson plans and resources give good support to the needs of non-specialist staff. Improvement from the last inspection has been satisfactory, although the time allocated to the subject remains low for Years 5 and 6. There is as yet no whole-school strategy to monitor the delivery of the newly-planned provision. Subject-specific assessment procedures have yet to be developed.

## **TECHNOLOGY**

### **Design and technology**

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

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

- Standards are above average by the end of Year 6 and well above expected levels by the end of Year 8.
- Pupils achieve very well because the quality of teaching is very good.
- Very good leadership and management ensure that the new resources for learning are used creatively to help pupils to learn very effectively.

#### **Commentary**

74. Pupils' skills are broadly average when they enter Year 5 but quickly rise to above average by the end of Year 6 because of the very well-organised curriculum, designed to engage young pupils' interests and develop their skills by building on what they know and understand. By Year 7, pupils are ready to undertake extensive projects, such as designing a game for younger pupils incorporating electrical components and multiple circuits. When pupils transfer to the high school at the end of Year 8, almost all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve higher than expected standards, with a large proportion displaying high levels of competence and skills in all aspects of design and technology. Standards are higher in Years 7 and 8 than they were at the time of the last inspection and achievement is very good overall.
75. Teaching is very good and learning comes on apace as pupils have many opportunities to learn practical skills through investigation, disassembling finished products, experimenting with temporary and permanent ways of joining materials and using a wide range of machinery and resources. Lessons are very well planned and teachers are very clear about what they want to achieve. Teachers' very good subject knowledge and enthusiasm help to inspire the pupils. Lessons are planned within an imaginative framework which gives pupils a heightened sense of purpose, setting 'design' in a wider context. Thus Year 8 pupils designed clocks for members of staff which involved extensive consultations to negotiate different materials, finishes and modifications to their original designs and gave a real edge to making a prototype. Pupils are given a great deal of independence and they respond extremely well to their teachers' very high expectations. An excellent lesson opened with the teacher in role as a managing director of a plastics company with 'experts' needed to train new employees in the different processes. 'Expert' pupils competently instructed small groups how to use different machinery safely to cut and shape plastic materials and carry out injection moulding, for instance. The teaching by the pupils was excellent and those being taught were impressed, commenting that a lower attaining pupil was "a mint teacher". 'Quality control' in the form of evaluation sheets proved that pupils learnt a great deal in a short time.

76. Very good leadership and management ensure that pupils of all abilities are included fully and that those with statements of special educational needs receive very good support. ICT is used effectively as a teaching tool and is used well by pupils for research and to generate and modify designs. Links with literacy are well developed; pupils are taught to use technical vocabulary accurately and are given very good guidance to ensure that their evaluations are not trite or meaningless. Improvement since the last inspection has been good.

## **VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS**

### **Art and design**

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

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

- Good teaching leads to effective learning, as a result of which pupils' achievement is good.
- Both art rooms provide a rich learning environment that promotes very good attitudes to learning amongst pupils.
- Pupils enjoy art and as a result contribute to the learning of each other.
- Sketchbooks are underused in Years 7 and 8 and therefore opportunities are missed for pupils to plot their own progress and achievement.
- Marking is very supportive, but does not offer enough ideas of how pupils might improve their work.

#### **Commentary**

77. Standards are above average and the achievement of pupils is good. Good, and occasionally very good, teaching ensures that pupils enjoy working in art and do well. Pupils achieve well, and make progress as they move through the school, in the basic skills of drawing and painting. Paintings and pastel work in still-life observational drawings of flowers provide a good example of this. Some excellent work is displayed in Year 5 rooms whilst elsewhere in the art and design area, similar work of Year 8 pupils is exhibited. The development of skills from a very good starting point is clear to see. Pupils manage pencils with increased control and subtlety of shading in Years 5 and 6; similar techniques are well learned when working in oil pastels. At best, pupils are introduced to an analytical way of drawing from observation and rely less on imagination and invention. Effective one-to-one support by teachers makes sure that pupils of different attainment levels are extended and challenged as well as helped to feel a sense of success. At other times, work exhibited by pupils in Years 5 and 6 in two- and three-dimensional modelling and sculpture shows that they manipulate shape for effect with imagination and developing skill. They understand colour and how it can be mixed for subtlety and purpose. In Years 7 and 8, pupils begin to show an understanding of basic principles of art and have some knowledge of how some significant artists such as Van Gogh, Monet, Matisse and Picasso used imagination and skill in painting, collage and sculpture. Teachers are adventurous in the thinking they demand of older pupils; sometimes, however, the tasks to reflect that thinking are insufficiently rooted in the culture and heritage of particular artists. Pupils do not usually see their own work in its cultural perspective. The danger of this is that their work can be shallow rather than extending.
78. Teaching and learning are good. At best, the level of imagination brought to teaching shows flair and energy to which pupils readily respond. Features of the best teaching are effective planning to match learning objectives. During the course of lessons, teachers assess pupils well and therefore help them to achieve close to their best, but assessment generally does not plot progression carefully enough and marking does not suggest ways in which pupils can improve. Resources are well used, however.

79. Leadership of the subject has signs of being good, although at the time of the inspection the co-ordinator was absent. Nonetheless, evidence indicates a sense of purpose and direction in pupils' experience of art and design. Management is good, the best examples being the help and support given to non-specialist teachers in Year 5, enabling them to produce examples of outstanding work, the quality of the art areas and the support being given by the deputy headteacher, an art specialist, to a supply teacher currently covering absence. Art and design continues to be an enriching part of the school curriculum and, since this has been sustained and enhanced since the previous inspection, improvement has been good.

## Music

Provision in music is **very good**.

### Main strengths and weaknesses

- Very good teaching results in pupils' achieving very well through very effective learning experiences.
- Pupils enjoy music lessons, their attitudes are very positive and they are keen to learn.
- Well over 100 pupils have instrumental tuition; as a result the school has an impressive orchestra that makes a major contribution to the cultural life of the school.
- Lessons are essentially practical; the teaching consistently demands quality in pupils' music-making.
- The use of ICT in composition and the provision of software for Years 7 and 8 are areas for development.

### Commentary

80. Standards are well above average, overall, and the achievement of pupils is very good. This is the result of very effective teaching that lifts standards from average to above average during Years 5 and 6 and then to well above average by Year 8. Pupils make progress as they move through the school, increasingly developing their understanding of music and their skills of music-making. They contribute greatly to their own learning through their enthusiasm for music and willingness to work hard. Teaching uses the good resources available, notably keyboards and tuned percussion instruments, to provide pupils with the opportunity to compose and perform instrumental and vocal music. When appropriate, those learning orchestral instruments play these in group music-making activities; this is an enriching experience for the whole class. Most pupils perform individually and collectively with musical confidence; they express mood when playing and enjoy opportunities for improvisation. Higher attainers use full staff notation when composing and most are familiar with note values and names. Singing is a feature of music lessons in all years. Pitch and tone are usually good and singing has energy, once a song is well learned. The many pupils learning to play instruments soon graduate to the orchestra. In an assembly, the orchestra and whole-school singing in canon of a version of *The Lord is My Shepherd* was a rich musical experience showing the strength of music in the school.
81. Teaching and learning are very good. Notation is appropriately adapted to encourage as many as possible to extend their composing effectively. Year 8 completed a difficult task well where they composed new melody sequences to 'Let's Dance'; higher attainers were challenged to match correct chord sequences and use passing notes in completing this task, while lower attainers were helped to line up melodies to the correct chord and worked in pairs, one playing their composed melody, the other the matching chords. This represented very thoroughly planned teaching, designed to meet the learning needs of all pupils. The class enjoyed the lesson: one said, "Don't music lessons go quickly!" Pupils with special educational needs make good progress and in this Year 8 lesson received good support from a teaching assistant who was well briefed on the content of the lesson. Pupils are encouraged to evaluate their own work and that of others. They relate their work to National Curriculum targets and

the teacher is encouraging pupils to set their sights higher than levels expected of pupils nationally. There is space for using ICT in composition as well as taking advantage of available software. The use of ICT is an area teaching is tackling currently. Nonetheless, lessons are always very effective. Self-discipline and creativity are encouraged. The quality of peripatetic instrumental teaching is good and supports the work of teaching in the school.

82. Leadership of all those who become involved in music provision is very good and shows vision and purpose. The co-ordinator manages the instrumental teachers and support staff very well to ensure pupils achieve their very best. Music was judged to be good at the previous inspection. Standards and teaching are now better still and improvement since 1999 has been good.

## **Physical education**

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

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- The co-ordinator provides exceptionally strong leadership and a clear vision for the future development of physical education.
- Pupils' attitudes are very good and contribute positively to the progress they make.
- The school provides a rich and varied curriculum that is further enhanced by a wide range of extra-curricular activities.
- Teachers work hard and have high levels of subject expertise.
- The accommodation is adequate but in need of refurbishment.

### **Commentary**

83. At the beginning of Year 5, standards in swimming are well above average and a significant number of pupils demonstrate above average standards in gymnastics. There is, however, a very varied picture across the subject disciplines, with standards of hand-eye co-ordination and awareness of space in games being below average. Overall, therefore, attainment on entry is average. By the end of Year 6, most pupils have made good progress. They maintain high standards in swimming, reach above average standards in gymnastics and at least average standards in other areas. In most lessons, pupils of all abilities make at least good progress and sometimes very good progress in developing gymnastic skills, in refining swimming technique and in understanding positional play in games situations. They work independently and co-operatively in planning gymnastic sequences. They are able to evaluate their own performances and the most able do this with an eye for detail and quality of performance. Pupils in Years 7 and 8 continue to make good progress and by the time they leave school, pupils are reaching standards that are above average. Achievement overall is, therefore, good.
84. Overall, teaching is good. It is never less than satisfactory, often good, sometimes very good and occasionally excellent. Teachers have good subject knowledge and very high expectations of behaviour. Lessons are well planned and most are delivered at a lively pace. The use of teaching assistants to support pupils with special educational needs is very good. Overall, learning is good and the quality of teaching has a positive impact on the progress that pupils make. Teachers occasionally make activities too demanding for the skills some pupils possess, and very occasionally do not challenge more able pupils sufficiently, so that these pupils' progress is slowed. On the other hand, in one excellent Year 7 lesson, the teacher's high expectations, lively pace and challenging questioning placed the onus on pupils to evaluate their own and others' gymnastic work in a mirroring and matching activity. As a result, they made excellent progress in developing important skills and responded to the challenge with maximum enthusiasm and effort.

85. Leadership is very good and there is a clear vision for the future development of physical education. The co-ordinator's commitment, sense of purpose and high aspirations are communicated to staff and pupils alike, resulting in a shared enthusiasm for the subject. Management is good. There are detailed schemes of work that support the work of other teachers. Assessment procedures are clear and targets for pupils' improvement are set. A digital camera and video are used effectively to share good practice. There is some monitoring of teaching and learning but this is not rigorous enough to provide sufficient guidance to other teachers as to how they might further improve standards.
86. The school gained the Sportsmark Award in 2003. It provides a rich and varied curriculum to its pupils. An extensive programme of extra-curricular provision, good links with other schools and the development of partnerships with sporting associations further enhance this provision. There is additional specialist coaching in a range of sports and the school has enjoyed considerable success in local and county sporting competitions. The gymnasium and changing rooms are adequate to deliver the curriculum for physical education, but they are in need of refurbishment. Overall, the school has sustained the high quality of provision reported in the last inspection, so that improvement has been very good.

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

### **Citizenship**

Provision in citizenship is **good**.

### **Main strengths and weaknesses**

- Good leadership and effective management ensure that pupils benefit from a citizenship programme that is comprehensive, interesting and progressive.
- Good teaching supports pupils' learning well and achievement is good as a result.

### **Commentary**

87. Standards are average, overall. Pupils have a good grasp of the principal features of living in a democratic society and understand the concept of fairness well. They recall previous learning well. They are achieving well because of good teaching, good support material and their good attitudes to learning.
88. Teaching and learning are good, overall. Successful teaching is characterised by careful planning, use of interesting materials (often involving considerable preparation) and a good choice of activities designed to involve pupils in their learning. As a result, pupils learn well how difficult it is to make fair decisions, for example, or to discriminate between the degrees of seriousness of different crimes, or to assess the consequences of actions or decisions. Occasionally, teachers prolong explanations, discussions or activities so that the pace of learning slows. Teachers do not always capitalise on the good attitudes of pupils by moving briskly on to the next stage of a lesson. However, it is much more typical of most lessons that good learning takes place.
89. A significant feature of the citizenship programme is the very thorough way it has been planned and thought through. As a result teachers know what to do and how to do it, without being denied opportunities for flexibility. Monitoring, evaluation and regular checking of pupils' progress are built in to the scheme. The citizenship programme also has an impact on how pupils behave in the school – after one lesson a pupil returned to the classroom to hand in a watch found in the cloakroom.
90. Leadership and management are good. There is a clear sense of purpose that is shared by the teaching team, and the work of the subject is co-ordinated effectively by the same two

people who have been responsible for religious education this year. Improvement has been good.

## PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

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