

INSPECTION REPORT

WESTLANDS SCHOOL

Thornaby

LEA area: Stockton-on-Tees

Unique reference number: 111782

Headteacher: Allan Lacey M Ed

Lead inspector: Katharine Halifax

Dates of inspection: 1st - 4th November 2004

Inspection number: 268668

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 16
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
Number on roll:	115
School address:	Eltham Crescent Thornaby Stockton-on-Tees
Postcode:	TS17 9RA
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Appropriate authority:	Governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs E McNamara
Date of previous inspection:	April 24 th 1999

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SCHOOL

The school caters for pupils aged 5 to 16 years, though at the time of the inspection, the youngest pupil was seven years old. Pupils come from Stockton-on-Tees and five other local authorities and are from a range of socio-economic backgrounds. The school is full. With 115 on roll, it is of average size for a school of this type. All pupils have statements of special educational needs. The pupil population has changed since the last inspection as a result of local authority re-organisation. Most now have emotional, social and behavioural needs with some having a history of extreme behaviour. The number of pupils with autism has increased from five to 37. Attainment on entry to the school is below that expected of pupils of this age. Almost all pupils are of white European origin, and all speak English as their main language. There are far more boys than girls in most classes. Seven pupils are in the care of the local authority. In addition to the day provision, a residential unit can accommodate up to 15 pupils for up to four nights each week. At the time of the inspection seven were residents, with a further eight taking part in evening activities. The new headteacher has been in post two terms.

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Members of the inspection team			Subject responsibilities
25439	Katharine Halifax	Lead inspector	Personal, social, health and citizenship education History Geography Religious education Special educational needs
9511	Ann Longfield	Lay inspector	
8810	Sue Aldridge	Team inspector	Science French Music
23390	Mel Blackband	Team inspector	Mathematics Art and design Design and technology Physical education
2480	Christine Gilder	Team inspector	English Information and communication technology

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

OVERALL EVALUATION

Though currently satisfactory, this is an improving school because of the vision of the headteacher, his commitment, and the systems he has put into place. He has identified the weaknesses in the unsatisfactory curriculum and is already addressing these. Staff training has resulted in teaching and learning that are now satisfactory. Pupils relate well to one another and respect staff. Value for money is satisfactory.

The school's main strengths and weaknesses are:

- The passion and leadership of the new headteacher are helping the school to improve at a good rate even though a few key members of staff have low expectations and have been resistant to change.
- The quality of teaching, including the way staff assess pupils' achievements, has not kept pace with the national trend.
- The unsatisfactory curriculum provided for pupils in Years 10 and 11 is resulting in underachievement in a few subjects for higher attaining pupils.
- Very good provision for pupils' health and welfare, and very good relationships between pupils and adults are reflected in their improved confidence and self-esteem.
- The good residential provision is well led and managed.
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and limits what can be taught in some subjects.

Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. This can be partly explained by changes in the school population because of local authority reorganisation necessitating staff training. However, some staff have become complacent and not kept abreast of the developments in education, though this is not so for teachers of pupils with autism. The percentage of good and very good teaching is lower than at the time of the last inspection. Furthermore, some of the key and minor issues identified in the previous report have not been addressed. On a positive note, since the appointment of a new headteacher two terms ago, significant improvement has been made in the quality of education provided. He has inspired and motivated staff and engendered a feeling of optimism and ensured the school is in a position to continue to improve.

STANDARDS ACHIEVED

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

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

Achievement is, overall, satisfactory. Pupils in Years 3 to 6, the primary department, achieve well in English, mathematics and religious education. Their achievement in science and information communication technology (ICT) is satisfactory. In Years 7 to 9, achievement is good in mathematics and religious education. It is satisfactory in English, science and ICT. Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory overall because the work set for higher attaining pupils is not sufficiently demanding and because insufficient time is allocated to some subjects, particularly ICT, science and religious education. Pupils in all three age groups achieve well in personal, social, health and citizenship education (PSHCE). There is no significant difference in achievement by gender or ethnicity. Pupils' **personal development is satisfactory**. Most are making steady improvement in their behaviour. Pupils in Years 3 to 9 have a positive attitude to their work, though those in Years 10 and 11 occasionally become bored because the work is not sufficiently challenging. Provision for pupils' **spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good**. Attendance and punctuality are good.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The quality of education is, overall, satisfactory. Teaching and learning are satisfactory. Particular strengths are in the strong relationships enabling staff to manage pupils' behaviour well. Teachers and support staff work well together. The ways teachers plan work, the way they record achievement and the setting of homework are areas for improvement. The curriculum is unsatisfactory especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11 where it has an adverse effect on their achievement. The provision for sport and personal, social, health and citizenship education is good. Links with parents are good. Staff provide very good care for pupils' health and welfare. The provision for pupils who attend evening activities and those who stay overnight is good.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Leadership and management are satisfactory because of the very good leadership of the new headteacher. Senior managers are variable in quality with a few having created barriers to learning and achievement. Subject management is in its infancy with none of the co-ordinators having a clear view of what is happening in all age groups, particularly in Years 10 and 11. Governance is currently unsatisfactory. Though many of the governors are new they know what needs to be done. The management of pupils with special educational needs is unsatisfactory. Until the arrival of the new head teacher, the annual reviews of statements of need did not meet legal requirements. The same is so for the policy for special educational needs. Other legal requirements not met are in the provision for of religious education for pupils in Years 10 and 11 and in a small element of science in the primary years.

PARENTS' AND PUPILS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

Pupils and parents think well of the school. They report staff are approachable. They like the sporting and residential activities available. Parents would like to see more homework provided. The inspection team agrees with the parents' comments.

IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED

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

- Further improve the quality of teaching and learning
- Improve the provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Improve the management skills of those key members of staff who are reluctant to change and improve subject management
- In conjunction with the local authority, improve the accommodation.

and, to meet statutory requirements:

- the teaching of religious education and science
 - the policy for special educational needs and management of annual reviews
- ensure that information for parents contains all the information that is required

PART B: COMMENTARY ON THE INSPECTION FINDINGS

STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS

Standards achieved in areas of learning, subjects and courses

Achievement is, overall, satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Achievement is good overall in Years 3 to 6
- Though achievement is satisfactory overall in Years 7 to 9, pupils achieve well in some subjects
- Achievement is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11
- Achievement is good in personal, social, health and citizenship education in all year groups, in physical education, and in religious education in Years 3 to 9.
- There is insufficient data to set realistic targets to raise achievement
- The influence of the headteacher has a positive effect on raising standards

Commentary

1. Pupils achieve well in Years 3 to 6 because of good teaching. This is especially so in English and mathematics where the adoption of the Primary Strategy has resulted in well-paced challenging activities and had a positive effect on raising achievement. In this age group, tasks are carefully matched to pupils' capabilities so all are challenged to achieve well. Achievement in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory but improving, particularly in mathematics. The recent introduction of National strategies for English and mathematics has added rigour and structure to teaching so pupils are beginning to make good progress. Standards have risen significantly in mathematics since the recent introduction of the numeracy element of the strategy. However, three different teachers for English teach pupils in this age group and achievement is too dependent on who has taught the lesson. The curriculum offered to pupils in these age groups reflects that taught in mainstream school. This, and the good teaching, good achievement, and good knowledge of pupils' backgrounds have enabled two or three pupils each year to successfully return full time to mainstream schools.

2. Achievement in English, mathematics and science is unsatisfactory for some pupils in Year 10 and most pupils in Year 11. This is because of the low expectations of teachers and the short time allocation. For example, the time allocated to science is little over 30 minutes and the subject is taught by an unqualified teacher to pupils in Year 11. None of the pupils in Year 11 is working towards General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) even though their results in national tests at the end of Year 9 show them capable of achieving this award. The accredited course in mathematics is purely revision for some pupils and not sufficiently demanding. Similarly, in ICT pupils do not have the time or the opportunity to work towards nationally recognised qualifications. Year 11 pupils who left the school at the end of the last academic year were similarly denied the opportunity to take examination courses, even though they had the potential. Though three-quarters of these pupils went on to training and college placements, with higher qualifications they should and could have achieved more. Two notable exceptions are the provision for pupils with autism where higher attaining pupils have taken GCSE, and in the recent introduction of mathematics and English GCSE courses for higher attaining pupils in Year 10 where achievement is now good.

3. Pupils in all age groups achieve well in personal, social, health and citizenship education. This is because, in addition to the taught programme, daily routines and tutor time contribute to this important subject. Lessons are conducted at a good pace and the content is relevant to pupils' lives. In physical education, pupils achieve well because of good teaching and the wide range of activities on offer. Pupils achieve well in religious education in Years 3 to 9 because of thoughtful teaching, a suitable programme and the imaginative use of visits and visitors to make learning meaningful. Achievement in religious education is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11 because the subject is not taught.

4. Standards and achievement are not as good as at the time of the last inspection. This is partly because, until the arrival of the new headteacher, very little data had been collected on pupils' achievements. Teacher assessments were not accurate and most staff had a limited understanding of the National Curriculum levels. No systems were in place to identify pupils who may have a particular gift or talent. Over the past two terms, information about the knowledge and skills pupils have acquired has been collected, though this still has to be collated and used to set realistic targets for individuals, groups and for the school. In addition to building up data, the headteacher has raised the expectations of pupils' achievement in most staff. He has successfully raised achievement through the appointment of key staff in Years 3 to 9 and through his insistence on high standards of teaching and of curriculum development. Achievement has improved significantly since his arrival.

5. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on achievement in art and design, design and technology, history, geography, music in all age groups, in French in Years 7 to 11 and physical education in Years 3 to 6.

Pupils' attitudes, values and other personal qualities

Pupils' attitudes to their work and with staff and each other are good. Behaviour is satisfactory. Attendance and punctuality are good. Provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- High expectations for behaviour are matched by the pupils' positive response and improving behaviour, though this is not always so in Years 10 and 11
- Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well provided for
- Attendance is improving

Commentary

6. As at the time of the last inspection pupils' attitudes are, overall, good. Pupils in Years 3 to 9 try hard to do as well as they can and this makes some impact on their achievement. However, the attitude of some pupils in Years 10 and 11 is not quite so positive because they are not inspired by their work. Staff provide good role models in terms of forming relationships and respecting each other, resulting in very good relationships at all levels. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their behaviour and they respond well to the reward system. The majority of parents who completed the questionnaire say that their children like school. Overall, behaviour around the school and in lessons is satisfactory and improving because of consistent use of the behaviour management strategy by all staff. The lack of litter and graffiti confirms the pride the pupils have in their school. Parents and pupils reported some bullying, though none was seen during the inspection. Nevertheless, the headteacher has arranged for an outside speaker to talk to staff and for pupils to tackle this issue in personal, social and health education lessons. The number of exclusions is now falling and is due to fewer pupils because of the success and consistent application of the behaviour management policy. Furthermore, the application of the sanction is now carried out correctly.

Ethnic background of pupils

Exclusions in the last school year

Categories used in the Annual School Census	No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
White – British	99	65*	3
Asian or Asian British – Pakistani	5	0	0
Chinese	1	0	0
Information not obtained	10	0	0

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

* This has decreased from 107 in 2002/03. There has been a further significant drop this term.

7. Opportunities for pupils to develop an understanding of other races and cultures are good. Visits and visitors contribute to pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness and to their understanding of the views and beliefs of others. For example, pupils were fascinated by the visit of a Hindu lady, learning more about her beliefs and traditions and were proud to dress in Asian clothes. Pupils are encouraged to think of others for instance through the collection of shoeboxes for 'Operation Christmas' and, during the inspection, they were busy baking Pudsey Bear biscuits to sell for Children in Need. Pupils' moral and social development is well provided for through assemblies, the taught programme for personal, social, health and citizenship education and in subjects such as science where pupils consider issues such as conservation and the impact of greenhouse gasses.

8. Since the arrival of the headteacher good procedures have been put in place to improve attendance. Parents appreciate this. With the help of the education welfare officer and first day absence follow up, attendance has improved significantly. In the school year 2001-2002, 5190 pupil days were lost through absence. This was reduced to 4567 in 2002-2003. In the last school year, the number of days lost halved to 2121. Figures for this term show a further significant drop with a high percentage of pupils having 100 percent attendance to date. Though many pupils use public transport to and from school, punctuality is good.

Attendance in the latest complete reporting year (%)

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
School data	6.4	School data	3.5
National data	11.2	National data	7.7

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

*figures for pupils from similar schools.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED BY THE SCHOOL

The quality of education provided by the school is, overall, satisfactory, though a lot needs to be done with the curriculum, especially for pupils in Years 10 and 11.

Teaching and learning

The quality of teaching and learning is, overall satisfactory, though it is good in the primary department.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching, including the way teachers assess pupils' work, has not kept pace with the national trend
- Adults manage pupils' behaviour well
- The way teachers plan and assess pupils' work is an area for improvement
- Teachers provide well for pupils to improve their reading and communication, but not enough is done to help them improve their writing

Commentary

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection in 61 lessons

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
1 (2%)	3 (5%)	24 (39%)	30 (49%)	3 (5%)	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.

9. At the time of the last inspection, teaching was judged to be good in all age groups. Following the last report and the ensuing Beacon status, some teachers became complacent and rested on their laurels. They did not see the need for professional development and consequently are not aware of the expectations of the quality of teaching and learning in a dynamic special school. Where teachers have taken part in training, this shows in their practice and is reflected in pupils' achievements as was seen in literacy and numeracy in the primary department, and in citizenship in the secondary department. A prime example of understanding not having kept pace is the lesson content and low expectation of achievement in English for non-GCSE pupils in Years 10 and 11. Nevertheless, some teachers have remained focused, for example in science and religious education, and endeavoured to provide challenging work for pupils even though this has entailed the need to be creative because of the unsatisfactory accommodation. Parents commented they would like their children to receive homework. Though homework was identified in some teachers' planning it was not always set and tasks were not demanding. This disadvantages pupils for whom a return to mainstream education is a possibility and those who are preparing for GCSE coursework.

10. Anecdotal evidence, the fall in the exclusion rates and, more recently, pupil records show good improvement in how adults manage pupils' behaviour. They have formed very good relationships with pupils and teachers and skilled support assistants work together very effectively as a team. Staff know their pupils well, especially adults working with pupils with autism who are adept at managing idiosyncratic behaviour causing minimum disruption to learning. Adults are consistent in their approach so pupils know they must behave appropriately at all times. Where teaching is good or better, behaviour targets in individual education plans are referred to as a matter of course so pupils learn to manage their own behaviour. This has resulted in a calm learning environment where pupils feel secure and able to learn. As a consequence, concentration levels have increased and pupils work productively either individually or as part of a group as the task demands.

11. Teachers' planning and the way they assess and record pupils' achievements are inconsistent, especially in the secondary department. Lesson planning often identifies the activities to be covered as opposed to the knowledge and skill pupils will acquire. Where teaching is good or better, teachers identify what pupils will learn and use the review time at the end of the lesson well to check this has been achieved. In classes where this does not happen, pupils are uncertain what they will learn and no record is kept of what has been achieved. Since the arrival of the headteacher, recording and assessment are improving but some teachers in the secondary department still have a way to go. The quality of individual education plans is equally variable. Where the plans are good, targets are precise and easily measurable. For example, 'to make an oral contribution in each lesson'. However, many are too broad. For example, 'to improve reading'.

This makes it difficult to judge small steps progress. A further area for improvement is targets in English in Years 7 to 9 where pupils in the same group all have the same targets.

12. Teachers are keen that pupils will improve in speaking and listening. At the start of lessons they remind pupils of the need to raise their hands and to take turns. Most adults provide good models of how to listen by making eye contact and respecting what is said. Teachers emphasise new specialist words and expect pupils to repeat this to improve pronunciation and extend their vocabulary. Useful opportunities are provided for pupils to think and reason as was demonstrated in a class for pupils with autism. In this lesson, pupils articulated well for their ability, the reasons why they thought one teddy was 'old' and a second 'new'. In addition to improving communication, the teacher drew on their scientific understanding by discussing 'hard', 'flexible' and 'brittle'. Teachers provide equally well for pupils to improve their reading by expecting that pupils will read texts in most subjects. Where teaching is more effective, pupils are reminded of strategies to help them read new words, such as initial letter sounds, and sounds which blend together. However, not as much emphasis is placed on writing. Though pupils record their work, this is often just filling in missing words. While this checks pupils' understanding it does not give them the opportunity to write for different purposes such as lists, diaries, records, nor help with their spelling. Some teachers have a good command of computers and use the technology well to motivate pupils. Others have the skill but are at a disadvantage because of a lack of resources. Nevertheless, several lessons were seen where interactive white boards were used very successfully to improve pupils' ICT skills, to check their understanding and to maintain interest.

The curriculum

The curriculum is unsatisfactory. It does not meet legal requirements. While there is a suitable number of staff and adequate equipment, the accommodation is unsatisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The timetable is not broad or balanced for all pupils with the requirement for religious education not being met in Years 10 and 11 and in an aspect of science in the primary years
- Pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not follow courses designed to match their abilities or receive a worthwhile vocational programme to prepare them for further education or employment
- The provision for pupils with additional special educational needs is unsatisfactory
- The accommodation is unsatisfactory and affects what can be taught
- The school has not kept up with national developments and expectations in its curriculum development or provision

Commentary

13. Managers have not addressed the issue of providing more structured and effective provision for religious education in Years 10 and 11, which was identified in the inspection of 1999. The arrangement to teach the subject through weekly assemblies is unsatisfactory and does not meet the requirements of the Stockton-on-Tees Locally Agreed Syllabus. In science the programme for pupils in Years 3 to 6 does not meet requirements in that data logging is not covered. Class timetables show considerable variations in both the subjects taught and the amount of time spent on each. Amounts of time for lessons vary strikingly between classes in particularly in mathematics, science and ICT. This affects achievement, especially in Years 10 and 11. Pupils in the specialist provision for autism also receive varying programmes with science significantly under-represented in three of the five groups. Pupils have different experiences during the important tutorial period at the start of each day. This time is intended to support their PSHCE and literacy work but in some groups, breakfast takes precedence and up to two and a half hours' planned learning time can be lost. Without this work, the school does not meet the recommended hours of taught time each week. The provision for sport is strong in all age groups, but creative and expressive subjects are under-represented.

14. The provision made for pupils in their last two years at school suitably includes college links and work experience, but there are many weaknesses. The most significant weakness is caused by two factors. These are low academic expectations and a misunderstanding of the educational priorities for this age group on the part of some key staff. Too many pupils spend time pursuing accredited courses designed for considerably less able pupils. This severely limits their options for the next stage of learning or employment. There are pupils currently in Year 11 and from last year's leavers' group, whose attainment at the end of Year 9 showed that they were clearly capable of much higher level qualifications than those that were available to them.

15. GCSE is being introduced in Year 10, starting with English and mathematics this year. Pupils are very well challenged by the course content and the very good teaching and guidance they receive. This is a welcome development and there are plans to extend the range of higher-level courses. For pupils in Years 10 and 11 at present, however, almost a full day each week is spent following courses which that were designed by other local schools in the early 1990s for the lowest attaining pupils. The quality of the modules is highly variable ranging from practical horticulture through to shopping. There are several versions of the latter module that last half a term, with objectives including the use of a shopping trolley and managing purchase at a checkout. This sort of activity is only appropriate only for pupils with severe learning difficulties or those who's social understanding and awareness is very severely impaired by autism.

16. The other weakness – a mistaken view of educational priorities – particularly affects the development of pupils' key skills in these important last years at school. Both English and mathematics are accredited by means of a vocationally oriented qualification and presented within the relevant context of preparation for employment. However, this is not sufficiently challenging for higher attaining pupils. Similarly the ICT course is not sufficiently demanding, or given enough time. There is insufficient emphasis on developing and honing these vital skills which further disadvantages pupils of all capabilities when competing for places for training, further education and employment. As a result, very few of last year's leavers progressed into activities in line with the abilities they showed by the age of fourteen.

17. The provision being made to support pupils with additional special educational needs is unsatisfactory. There is limited knowledge and understanding on the part of key staff about the nature of the additional difficulties many pupils face and no check that additional support is being provided. Pupils with autism work almost entirely separately from their peers. Many pupils in the unit are mildly autistic and would benefit from spending time in the main part of the school to increase their social skills. Some pupils who have been placed in the unit do not have autism on their statement of special educational needs and as such are being deprived of their opportunity to work alongside their peers. Insufficient access to transport for community-based learning further isolates them.

18. The unsatisfactory accommodation affects all pupils at some stage in their learning career. The limitations identified by the previous inspection of the school hall, and the mobile classrooms for the oldest pupils remain. The condition of the mobile unit, erected in the early 1990s as a temporary building with a planned life of eighteen months is now very poor. The accommodation for practical subjects is limited, and music and drama have to take place within classrooms. While there has been considerable effort expended recently to convert the headteacher's and caretaker's houses into additional teaching bases for pupils with autism, the entire facility is based in converted residential accommodation. The teaching bases converted from bedrooms create spaces in which staff do not have clear sight lines to supervise pupils effectively. Narrow corridors and poor circulation spaces have a particularly adverse impact on these pupils.

19. In the 1999 report, the school was commended for its early and enthusiastic implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. Since then, however, it has fallen very far behind other schools in its development work. It has been very slow to adapt its programme to reflect the changing pupil population or new national expectations. As well as retaining several outdated courses, staff have been very slow to implement the important National Strategies for key aspects of pupils' learning in Years 7-9, which have only just been introduced. Key staff have not prepared effectively for the requirement to provide a coherent and challenging programme of work-related learning

which came into effect in September 2004. The leadership team recognises the need to review the provision for pupils of all ages and capabilities.

Care, guidance and support

As at the time of the last inspection, staff provide very well for the care, welfare, health and safety of the pupils. Support, advice and guidance are satisfactory. The seeking of pupils' views through questionnaires and the student council is good.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff are careful to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety are high priority
- No formal check is made that pupils with additional special educational needs receive the support that is recommended
- Pupils have the opportunity to influence school affairs through the school council

Commentary

20. Effective child protection arrangements are in place and all adults working in the school are clear about procedures. Staff are concerned for the welfare of the pupils in their care. Relationships between all staff and pupils are very positive and parents feel that the staff work hard in supporting pupils. Learning support staff are used effectively to help teachers and encourage pupils. Parents are suitably made aware of all incidents and accidents by either telephone calls or the home-school diary. Risk assessments are carried out for all educational visits and journeys, for example sailing at the Tees Barrage. The school is working towards the Healthy School's award.

21. Staff are very conscientious about checking that classrooms and activities are safe. Most adults are aware of the additional special educational needs of pupils in their class. For example hearing or visual impairment. However, there is no check that pupils who require non-educational provision such as occupational therapy, speech and language therapy and support for their mental health problems, identified in their statements of need, is met. The co-ordinator for special educational needs does not monitor this aspect of the provision and has not ensured annual reviews are carried out on time. As a result, some pupils are missing out.

22. The school council, meets fortnightly and members are democratically elected each term. The opinion of all councillors, including the youngest in school and those with autism, is sought and valued. Members have many good ideas about school affairs. At the time of the inspection, they were arranging fund raising events for Children in Need. Pupils appreciate being asked for their ideas and are pleased adults take notice of what they say. For example, the headteacher's quick response to the recent questionnaire which raised concerns about bullying.

Partnership with parents, other schools and the community

Good links have been established with parents, other schools and the community.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Staff work hard to involve parents in their child's learning
- Pupils who are able, are helped to return to mainstream education
- Most pupils have too few opportunities to work alongside their peers in mainstream schools
- Good links with the community enrich learning

Commentary

23. The school serves a wide geographic area and pupils are transported to school by the local authority so there is little opportunity for parents to have casual, informal contact with teachers. Staff address this in a number of ways. For example, home to school diaries are used well in the primary department and classes for pupils with autism to keep parents informed about daily events and notable achievements. Parents of secondary age pupils receive either telephone calls or letters about any important event. Regular attractive and informative newsletters add to the information received. Until the arrival of the headteacher, parents did not play an active part in the annual review of their child's statement of need. Now, however, a detailed schedule has been drawn up, and, for the past two terms, reviews have taken place on time. Where parents experience difficulties with transport, reviews are now held in their locality. Parents are made aware of targets in their child's individual education plans so they can help at home. Annual reports of pupil progress suitably inform parents what their children know, understand and can do academically. While most information for parents is good, there are a few minor omissions from the prospectus and governors' annual report.

24. At annual review each pupil is considered for return to mainstream education. As a result of this, and the good links established with a few secondary schools, two or three pupils transfer to mainstream schools each year. Staff at secondary schools and parents of pupils who have re-integrated speak favourably of support offered by staff at Westlands enabling returning pupils to be successful. However, while a few pupils have the opportunity to work in mainstream schools, this is not so for the majority and as yet there are no plans for this to happen. Staff recognise that in addition to this helping pupils' social development links would provide challenge for higher attaining pupils. Pupils in Years 10 and 11 enjoy their weekly visits to the local college of further education, where they have recently embarked on various vocational courses.

25. Links with the local community are good. Through the connections of various governors a local firm has sponsored the new uniform and older pupils are welcomed into local firms for their work experience. For several years, pupils in Year 9 have organised a very successful weekly Mother and Toddler group in the school hall. In the absence of suitable facilities for physical education on site, the use of a range of community resources contributes to achievement in a number of sports. Visits out of school and speakers in lessons enrich pupils' experiences and make learning meaningful. For example, in history, geography and in religious education where pupils have visited mosques, temples and churches and have listened fascinated as a Hindu lady spoke about her beliefs and celebrations.

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

The headteacher provides very good leadership. The leadership of other key staff is unsatisfactory, and so is governance. Management is satisfactory.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- In the short space of time that the headteacher has been in post, he has initiated a period of rapid improvement in the school
- Governors do not fulfil their statutory duties, but they are keen to improve and are well supported in this by a committed, newly appointed chair
- The residential provision is well led and managed, but a few members of the senior management team in school do not carry out their roles well enough
- At present, there is too little assessment information for the school to evaluate its own success or adequately apply best value principles

Commentary

26. The headteacher provides a very good role model for staff and pupils. In his dealings with staff he insists on high standards of professionalism and conduct, and he has inspired many staff

and empowered them to engage in development. He knows the pupils well, and takes a personal interest in them. He shows respect for them, and this is reciprocated. Improvement to the accommodation has been secured, and a school uniform has been introduced. Above all, he has focused clearly on teaching, learning and achievement. An extensive programme of monitoring of teaching and learning has been carried out, and greater rigour introduced to the performance management process. As a result, GCSE courses in English and mathematics have been introduced, and there are plans to add science in September 2005. Attendance has improved. Already, there are signs that pupils are starting to reach their potential through these developments. There is a clear five-year improvement plan showing how the school intends to raise achievement.

27. When the headteacher was appointed, he inherited a number of difficulties that were not all immediately apparent. In conjunction with LEA (Local Education Authority) advisory staff, he undertook an audit of provision, with the result that the school was classified as giving cause for concern. A steering group was subsequently formed, and action has followed swiftly. All staff were asked to review their practice, and roles and responsibilities were revised. In each area of the school, teams of staff have been formed under the leadership of members of the senior management team. These teams are beginning to work well together, but a few staff remain resistant to change, and this presents a barrier to further improvement. The audit revealed that pupils' annual reviews were not being carried out on time, or with regard to the Code of Practice for Special Educational Needs, so this responsibility was delegated to a senior social worker, who is a member of the senior management team. The system is now well managed and is operating well.

28. The senior management team has been broadened to include the head of care, who leads and manages the good quality residential provision well. Key appointments have strengthened the team. However, there are members of this team who do not provide good role models for other staff, or carry out their responsibilities well. For instance, low expectations have resulted in a curriculum for Year 10 and 11 pupils that takes too little account of the potential that pupils show at the end of Year 9. As a result, pupils at this stage do not achieve well enough because they are not provided with suitable courses. The team member responsible for co-ordinating special needs provision does not have an overview of all the needs outlined on pupils' statements, so several pupils are not supported well enough. Occasionally, parents pay for services that the school should be providing, such as anger management training. Few subject leaders carry out their roles as they should, or have an overview of provision in their subjects.

29. Prior to the headteacher's appointment, not all key staff participated in local initiatives, such as the Key Stage 3 strategy, and their practice is under-developed as a result. However, one notable exception was training to support pupils with autism. As the number of pupils increased in size staff working with pupils with autism have undertaken training and provided workshops for their colleagues. Now all staff are actively encouraged to take part in whatever professional development the LEA provides, and to pursue more substantial courses as well. LEA advisory staff have been welcomed into the school, and are supporting the school well in implementing the ambitious improvement plan.

30. The headteacher is in discussion with the LEA about amendments to the school's budget to take account of the increasingly complex needs of pupils being admitted. The current school improvement plan is clearly costed, so that financial resources support planned developments. In the past, this was not the case.

Financial information

Financial information for the year April 03 to March 04

Income and expenditure (£)		Balances (£)	
Total income	1,451,133	Balance from previous year	45,943
Total expenditure	1,409,439	Balance carried forward to the next	66,763

31. In the past, governors met regularly as a group, and received detailed reports from the headteacher, but did not meet in smaller groups to monitor the school's provision and ensure that statutory duties were met. They were not involved in formulating the school improvement plan. There are a number of breaches of statutory requirements; the curriculum does not meet requirements, and several pupils are not being provided with the support specified on their statements. Between them, the prospectus and the governors' annual report do not give all the information that they should about the governors or the school's special educational needs policy. Recently, governors have carried out a self-evaluation exercise and have started to take the necessary action to improve their work. They are about to embark on significant training, to be provided by the local education authority, and have identified two committees that will meet twice termly, to keep the school's work under review. The very recently elected chair is strongly committed to the school, and has the time to visit the school at least once a week. Governors' visits to school were not encouraged in the past; they now plan to observe lessons and form links with subject leaders. Minutes of governors' meetings show that they are beginning to ask questions, and to request information. For instance, they asked that the headteacher keep them up to date with the progress of the school improvement plan. They are also supportive, by writing to the LEA about the school's budget, for instance.

32. The school runs smoothly enough, although there is only one full-time member of the administrative staff. In her absence, members of the support staff take on reception duties. A bursarial service is purchased from the LEA. The most recent audit report (2002) found that financial procedures were good.

33. At present, the school has insufficient assessment information to enable it to evaluate the success of teaching, learning and the curriculum. However, the senior management team has started to collect baseline assessment data, and information that gives an indication of pupils' potential. This is to be used to set realistic but challenging targets for raising achievement. The process is helping to raise staff expectations. The school consults parents and pupils, and seeks best value in the purchases it makes. A lack of assessment information prevents the school from comparing itself with similar schools, and application of best value principles is unsatisfactory.

Boarding Provision

The residential provision is **good**. Currently seven pupils stay up to four nights each week with a further eight, who have identified social needs, joining in evening activities. In addition, the unit provides for pupils who attend other schools who may have social needs. One such pupil was taking part in evening activities.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The provision is well led and managed though some aspects of record keeping need tightening
- Very good attention is paid to pupils' well-being
- Staff provide an interesting programme of activities

Commentary

34. The head of care has made significant improvements in her two years in post. She works with focus, commitment and drive. Her skills have been recognised by the headteacher and since his appointment she has become a valued member of the senior management team. In response to the latest Community Social Care Inspection report she and the hard-working staff have endeavoured to ensure the criticisms are met. As a result pupils now have en-suite facilities in their bedrooms, social areas have been refurbished to a high quality, and plans are in hand to up-grade the desks and wardrobes in each room. The issues regarding employment have been addressed. While some improvement has been made to record keeping, the book recording incidents of physical restraint is not bound and does not have numbered pages. In addition the space allocated

to each incident is too small for the required detail. Nevertheless, the head of care has produced attractive leaflets for the benefit of parents and pupils outlining routines, procedures and pupils' rights. Parents particularly appreciate the visits made to their homes prior to their child going into residence.

35. Staff in the residential provision work well as a team. Furthermore, to maintain continuity between the unit and school, a number work in both settings. Unit staff liaise at the start and end of the school day with education staff and, as any good parent, follow up on any concerns which might have arisen during the school day. Staff are knowledgeable and have successfully provided a unit where pupils report they feel safe and secure. Relationships are very good, and the respect between pupils and adults is evident. Staff have the same high expectations of behaviour and use the same code of conduct as is used in the school. Suitable child protection procedures are in place and good attention is given to health and safety. Meals are nutritious, using fresh produce, and food is plentiful. Special occasions such as birthdays and other notable days are celebrated. For example, during the inspection, pupils tucked into red potatoes and bright green swede as part of their Halloween festivities. Meal times are used well to promote pupils' social skills.

36. Time spent in the unit is used productively for pupils to continue their learning. Through activities they make choices, learn to play and to socialise, and take responsibility for their actions. Quiet time has been built into the programme, and time for pupils to do their homework, though this is not always set by teaching staff. Evening activities are well organised and clearly enjoyed by staff and pupils alike. The planned programme is displayed for each term. Activities vary according to the evening and include 'club activities', 'social activities' and 'group choice' nights. In addition to improving skills in for example, computers, swimming, and judo, pupils are expected to get along with each other and negotiate group activities. While adults have planned a varied programme that reflects pupils' likes and dislikes most activities are physical with too little attention to the arts.

Work related learning

The provision for work related learning is, overall, **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- A number of work related activities take place, but the school has not yet implemented in full the new requirements for work related learning
- Key skills are acquired through accredited courses in literacy, ICT and numeracy, but standards achieved by higher attaining pupils in these subjects are too low
- The provision for pupils with autism is good
- A strong partnership with the Connexions service ensures that pupils' planning for their next steps on leaving school is well supported, but the partnership with local colleges is under-developed.

Commentary

37. Preparation for employment or training is well established in the school. Learning about work takes place in a number of lessons and a range of options, known as 'vocational education' which occupies up to three afternoons of each week in Years 10 and 11. In addition, work experience is arranged for pupils in Year 11. However, the co-ordination and planning for work related learning is under-developed. The provision has not yet been audited or reviewed to develop and co-ordinate it in line with new national requirements. Pupils with autism follow a programme designed and taught separately from other pupils, and the 2003 programme for a higher attaining pupil with autism shows that a range of activities designed to stretch the most able individuals is achievable. Though the provision is allocated a significant amount of time in Years 10 and 11, it does not, as is required, begin for pupils in Years 7 to 9.

38. Teaching and learning are at least satisfactory in lessons such as citizenship education and careers education. In one such lesson, the teacher's knowledge and understanding of the

requirements for successful interviews was helpful for pupils and they showed considerable interest in the essentials of a successful interview. Citizenship education is well taught, and pupils respond maturely and positively to the relevance of topics such as youth offending and substance misuse. The programme makes a good contribution to their social and moral development.

39. The school offers a range of external accreditation for pupils' work in Years 10 and 11. The level of these courses, however, needs review, as too many pupils are pursuing courses that do not stretch them enough. In ICT, the current accreditation 'ceiling' is the National Skills Profile – for pupils achieving at Level 3 in the National Curriculum. The courses available in literacy and numeracy are designed for pupils at the same level of attainment. Many pupils are capable of achieving higher than this. The vocational education options currently available do not have sufficient focus on preparation for work. Their purpose was described as providing a 'positive experience' for pupils, to contrast with their experience of English, mathematics and literacy, which they attend 'under sufferance'. Several of the options provide lifeskills and sports experiences, but the options are dependent upon staffing from those who are prepared to work with the older pupils. The units of accreditation used are inappropriate for all but pupils with severe learning difficulties. While a 'mini-enterprise' to produce greetings cards has been set up, insufficient attention is given to the planning, costing and supply elements of this venture.

40. Pupils with autism in Years 7 to 11 are prepared well for life after school. Close liaison with parents, with other professionals and with local colleges and universities allow programmes to be tailored to individual needs. In Years 7 to 9 pupils take part in 'taster' days, and consider real-life issues. An examination of the leisure, management of river wildlife and the logistics of crossing the River Tees are good examples of work related activities for this age group. Higher attaining pupils with autism in Years 10 and 11 have followed GCSE courses, taken part in work experience and attended college. With very good support from the specialist Connexions advisor, those with more complex needs are helped to find suitable placements to continue their education with a phased programme to allow for smooth transfer.

41. There is very good liaison with external agencies such as the Connexions service which is highly valued. Partnerships with the local colleges for pupils other than those with autism are under-developed. The school accepts all the provision that is on offer, but there is not yet a clear grasp of pupils' activities on these placements or their link to school based work. The leadership team has very recently considered the need for a vigorous review of this provision, to build on its strengths and address the need to raise pupils' standards in this area through challenging accredited courses.

PART C: THE QUALITY OF EDUCATION IN SUBJECTS AND COURSES

SUBJECTS IN KEY STAGES 2, 3, 4

ENGLISH AND MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

English

Provision in English **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The overall performance of pupils has deteriorated since the last inspection
- Pupils achieve well in Years 3-6 and most make good progress with their reading. Achievement is satisfactory in Years 7 to 9.
- Achievement in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory in both reading and writing. However, pupils in Year 10 following a GCSE course achieve well because they are well taught.
- Teaching is good overall in Years 3-9, but is too variable throughout the school and is unsatisfactory for the majority of pupils in Years 10 and 11
- Subject leadership and the oversight of provision for pupils with autism and in Years 10 and 11 are unsatisfactory.

Commentary

42. Since the last inspection the increasingly complex needs of pupils alone does not account for the overall deterioration in pupils' performance in English. In the 1999 report, the school was commended for its timely and effective introduction of the National Strategy for Literacy. It has now fallen behind schools with a similar mix of pupils, and this is becoming apparent in the achievement of particular groups. Pupils with additional special educational needs and those in Years 10 and 11 not following a GCSE course are not well supported. Until very recently, the school has not partaken in the comprehensive national literacy programmes by using the strategies designed to raise standards in Years 7 to 9. Too many of the more able pupils do not maintain their early progress. Until this term, the highest attaining pupils were not offered GCSE courses at 14+ despite four out of ten Year 11 pupils having reached the ceiling of the test used to assess reading and spelling ages by the end of Year 9.

43. Pupils make good progress in the primary years in reading, writing and spelling. In the best of the morning tutorial sessions, with adult support, pupils develop their enjoyment of shared reading and practise their spelling. Support staff make a very positive contribution to this work, showing good understanding of individual pupils' particular difficulties, and the majority of pupils are motivated to read well. Their English books show a judicious balance of work to improve their confidence in using language, with regular writing for a range of everyday purposes as well as creative and personal writing. Handwriting is not promoted consistently throughout the school, and the use of cursive script can be haphazard both between classes and for individual pupils.

44. Free writing continues to develop well in Years 7 to 9, with some very good examples of imaginative writing in Year 9, as part of pupils' study of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* with ICT used well as part of the drafting and re-drafting process. Poetry is presented imaginatively in some lessons, with pupils from the autism unit working hard together on practising creating pairs of rhyming words and reciting stories and rhymes with predictable and repeating rhymes. Despite these strengths, overall achievement in English in this age group is only satisfactory. Not enough is being done to diagnose the extent and nature of persistent literacy difficulties and then provide structured, targeted support for these pupils. Until recently only general reading and spelling age testing was done annually, and pupils who were absent were not tested on their return. A number of pupils who have been at the school since their primary years are not improving their reading and spelling sufficiently well, particularly some of those with the greatest difficulties. They are not helped to achieve more by some poor practice in the use of learning targets in their individual education

plans. In many classes in Years 7 and 9 the targets pasted in books are the same for too many pupils, and this happens consistently each term.

45. English provision in Years 10 and 11 is unsatisfactory for all but the six pupils in Year 10 embarking on GCSE. The majority of pupils are underachieving as a result. Those who find English difficult are not challenged by imaginative English teaching to engage and stretch them. The only accreditation available for those not doing GCSE is from City and Guilds through its 'Wordwise' course, intended for those with attainment up to Level 3 in the National Curriculum. The strength of this approach lies in its application of literacy skills to the relevant and motivating context of preparation for work, but the necessary work to develop and extend the key skills of reading, writing and spelling does not take place and extended or personal writing is very limited. Works of literature are not studied and as a result, pupils' experience and skills are impoverished. There is a stark contrast between the folders of these pupils' work and those from the Year 10 GCSE group in terms of the lack of lively and thought-provoking content and writing activities that promotes reflection and personal development.

46. The quality of English teaching varies for different age groups. It is best for the primary age pupils, including those with autism, but outstanding poetry teaching was observed in Year 8 and very good GCSE teaching in Year 10, which is already producing very promising written work by the pupils. The best lessons in the primary years were securely rooted in the practice embedded in the national strategies for literacy. They were highly structured, and carefully planned to help pupils make connections between each activity with a first rate balance between whole group, paired and individual work. Some very good teaching of pupils with autism blended this structure with closely targeted communications support, finely tuned to pupils' individual difficulties in this area.

Example of outstanding practice

In Year 8, an outstanding poetry lesson was exhilarating for pupils to take part in – and observe!

A cracking pace was set throughout, with pupils being challenged to review and develop the work they had started. They explored how to use similes to describe experience in a vivid and personal way and were so captivated by their early efforts that throughout the long session they took part fully. The pupils were keen to show a wall display of their most recent writing. One pupil proved particularly adept at expressing his thoughts in this way, and others listened in genuine admiration to his first effort. They were then all highly motivated to review their own work and when, towards the end of the lesson he read out his completely re-thought version 2, the delight taken by his friends, the teacher and his assistant was infectious and inspiring.

47. There are three weaknesses that characterise much of the current teaching in English. The first is lesson planning which does not identify clearly enough what the pupils are expected to learn from the lesson. Teachers confuse the activities and tasks that will take place with the knowledge, skills or understanding they seek to promote. As classes are small, it is also realistic to set out learning objectives for individual pupils so that support staff can also focus on these in their individual and small group support. A second weakness is in the structure and timing of many lessons, which lack a clear introduction which explains to pupils what they will learn as a group and what they are to aim for as individuals. Timing is not tracked closely enough and these lessons lack a closing section, in which pupils' individual achievement and progress can be identified and celebrated. The final weakness is in marking of pupils' work, which is inconsistent throughout the school. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows that in all age groups and in the facility for pupils with autism, only some teachers provide helpful guidance and comments on work for pupils. More attention is needed to showing pupils what their strengths are and how they can improve their work.

48. The leadership and oversight of the subject is unsatisfactory. Teachers in Years 7 to 9 have not been guided about how to adopt and adapt the national strategies to meet the pupils' needs and

raise standards. The monitoring of classroom practice is unsatisfactory, as it has not identified weak teaching or inconsistent marking. The co-ordinator plays no part in developing and promoting the subject within the facility for pupils with autism and accepts no responsibility for the quality of English provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11. Not enough attention is given to helping pupils who for a range of reasons have difficulties in speaking well, though the school has identified the need to improve pupils' listening to others' opinions and views and to sharing their opinions without displaying bias. Furthermore, pupils with particular difficulties with literacy are not receiving enough extra help. There has been limited use of focused and diagnostic assessments to identify the causes of poor progress for less able pupils or collate and analyse performance data to create targets for improvement in the subject.

Language and literacy across the curriculum

49. Though this aspect is satisfactory overall because of the way pupils' communication skills are developed, there are a number of areas for improvement. While some teachers endeavour to provide well for pupils to improve their reading and spelling, especially in the primary department, this is not always so, especially in Years 10 and 11. In addition to their English lessons, literacy skills for pupils of all ages are intended to be developed in tutorial sessions at the start of every day. The purpose is to develop and practise the crucial skills of reading, writing, and spelling, speaking and listening. The best of these sessions showed many pupils to be enthusiastic about reading, and confident about what is expected of them in the half-hour available. The timing of the session, however, poses some difficulties for pupils who rely on the school transport and in the groups where priority is given to pupils preparing drinks and breakfast during the time allocated.

50. Delay in embracing the National Strategies to raise standards in Years 7-9 has meant that secondary teachers are not yet giving enough emphasis to the literacy dimension of their subject teaching. More attention needs to be given to building up pupils' vocabulary and terms arising in subject work and to promoting the key skills of reading and writing more fully. Too many examples of pupils' written work, particularly from worksheets, do not challenge them to write at any length and demonstrate their skills. Opportunities to promote personal writing, recording information and writing for a range of audiences are missed. There is an inconsistent approach to marking and correcting spelling, punctuation and grammar in pupils' work, and teachers' planning does not indicate how they can extend the basic skills pupils of all abilities in subject lessons.

French

51. The subject was not a particular focus for this inspection, and too little evidence was collected to make secure judgements about the provision, pupils' achievements or teaching and learning. Altogether, two lessons were seen, and teaching was satisfactory in one and good in another. The teacher has high expectations of what pupils might achieve, and has introduced an accredited course for pupils in Year 9. Teaching makes clear to pupils what they need to do to achieve a Level 3, and so pupils are clear about what they need to do to improve. Learning is fun; pupils are taken through a series of activities, so that they do not become bored with repetition of a task. Practice helps them to refine their language skills, and they try hard to pronounce words correctly. Activities also enable pupils to develop their reading and writing skills. There is a good pace to the lesson, so pupils make good progress in the time available.

MATHEMATICS

Provision in mathematics is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The quality of teaching and the curriculum have been improved through the introduction of the National Strategy in Years 3 to 9

- The achievement of higher attaining pupils in Year 10 has been improved through the introduction of GCSE, but some pupils in Year 11 are underachieving because the syllabus offered restricts their opportunities to attain more highly
- Teaching is, overall, satisfactory, but some teachers place too much emphasis on the use of commercial worksheets
- Subject co-ordination is unsatisfactory

Commentary

52. The recent introduction of the National Strategies, especially the three part lesson, has added rigour and focus to pupils' learning. Teachers have made appropriate adaptations with the support of local authority advisory staff. As a result the achievement of the pupils in recent months has risen considerably. Though overall satisfactory, it is good in Years 3 to 6 and improving at a good rate in Years 7 to 9. There has been an increased focus on pupils' depth of understanding. Many lessons have an emphasis on discussion about mathematical problems and this has enabled the pupils to gain a better understanding of the concepts which underpin their work. For example, pupils in Year 7 spent much of their lesson in discussion about the probability of certain events such as the odds of picking certain numbers or colours. The pupils were able to make very good use of computer aided graphics to suggest hypotheses and to discuss alternatives and they made good progress in their understanding of the mathematics behind 'a good chance' and 'certainty' of events happening.

53. Some pupils in Years 10 and 11 are not enabled to reach their full potential through the constraints of the curriculum but the school has recently provided a GCSE course for higher attaining pupils in Year 10 which is beginning to have a significant effect on their achievement. Their work is very structured and they respond well to the increased challenge. These pupils are making good progress in their understanding of algebra and have mastered the process of substituting letters for numbers, understanding how to apply their knowledge of addition and subtraction to the results. Some pupils in Year 11 underachieve because the course they follow is unsuited to their higher ability. The course limits these pupils to the lower levels of attainment and is delivered exclusively through the use of worksheets and for many is purely revision of previous work. As a result pupils become bored and do not give of their best. Other pupils, however, benefit from the highly structured nature of the course and the continual assessment of their performance. The course has been constructed to allow pupils to evaluate their own targets and progress and a few respond well to opportunities to take charge of their own learning. However, pupils do not benefit from group discussions of the work they do because each pupil is at a different stage of the course. The teacher is effective in encouraging pupils and in working individually with them and he has developed very good relationships with the pupils. He is well supported by a very knowledgeable teaching assistant.

54. Teaching has significantly improved recently in Years 3 to 6 and is now good. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 is satisfactory and has shown a good improvement since the introduction of the National Strategy. Teaching of the GCSE course in Year 10 is good and other teaching within Years 10 and 11 it is satisfactory. Lessons in Years 3 to 6 are characterised by a high standard of planning. Teaching proceeds at a good pace and the teachers use questions effectively to establish what pupils understand and can do. Teachers have increasingly high expectations for their pupils and the pupils respond well to the challenge. They are motivated to learn and they enjoy their lessons. Teaching in Years 7 to 9 follows the structured approach of the National Strategy. The teacher makes good use of questions and encourages pupils to discuss their work. Pupils respond well to the brisk pace of activities. They concentrate on their work and they are enthusiastic to answer questions. Many of the pupils have gained the confidence to suggest alternative answers to problems. The teacher has a very good grasp of the subject and is able to stretch the higher ability pupils by skilful questions which challenge their understanding. The pupils' written work, however, relies too heavily on commercially produced worksheets which do not always appropriately match the lesson objectives.

55. Leadership and management are, overall unsatisfactory as is improvement since the last inspection. The two teachers who lead the subject in Years 3 to 6 and in Years 7 to 9 have made

good progress recently in raising standards. However, there is no overall co-ordination and no guidance on the development of numeracy in other subjects and the significant needs of pupils with autism have not been addressed as part of a whole school policy. Assessment is at an early stage. There are as yet no plans to promote the continuity and progression of the pupils' learning as they move from the primary to the secondary part of the school or to ensure that they continue to make progress within the more flexible curriculum in Years 10 and 11. Resources for the subject are adequate but higher attaining pupils would benefit from a wider range of more appropriate books and materials.

Mathematics across the curriculum

56. Opportunities for pupils to increase their mathematical knowledge in other subjects are satisfactory. In food studies, for example, pupils are encouraged to weigh ingredients and good practice is followed in design and technology where pupils are expected to measure accurately. There are appropriate displays of the equivalent words in French for numbers and months of the year. An understanding of handling data is increased in science as primary age pupils produce bar charts, for example, when stretching materials and those in Years 7 to 9 construct and interpret line graphs. This was further developed in personal, social, health and citizenship education when pupils considered accident statistics, comparing the type of vehicles involved to the number of fatalities.

SCIENCE

Provision in science is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The science co-ordinator has high expectations, but has not been well supported in implementing changes until recently.
- The most skilled pupils in Years 10 and 11 do not achieve their potential, because there is too little time allocated to the subject at this stage, and no suitable accreditation.
- Pupils are well motivated by practical approaches, but too little use is made of ICT and homework to encourage learning.
- The science accommodation for secondary aged pupils is unsatisfactory, and limits what can be safely provided.

Commentary

57. Pupils' achievements in science are satisfactory overall; they are satisfactory in Years 3 to 9, but unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11. Since the last inspection, the science co-ordinator has pressed for provision that challenges the pupils, in particular preparation for entry to national tests and the provision of externally accredited courses. However, she has not been well supported in implementing changes. With the arrival of the new headteacher, there has been a marked change in attitudes, and there are now firm plans to start teaching a GCSE course to pupils in Year 10 from September 2005. To give pupils a good chance of success in this, the time allocated for science in Year 9 has been increased this year. At present, the provision for pupils in Years 10 and 11 does not challenge the most able. Time for science has been reduced to 45 minutes each week, to allow for work-related learning. Last term, pupils missed this lesson because they were at college. This is not enough to enable pupils to build on the knowledge, skills and understanding that they gained up to Year 9. Last summer, most Year 9 pupils had reached Level 4 in science, showing their potential to achieve a GCSE pass.

58. Teaching and learning in lessons ranges from satisfactory to good, and is satisfactory overall. Where science specialists teach classes, teaching is best. Practical approaches motivate and interest pupils, so they are engaged well during lessons. Teachers stress safe practice in lessons, and pupils soon learn, and respect, the rules of the laboratory. Staff are sure to encourage pupils to predict, and to work out whether tests are fair or not. As a result, higher attaining pupils in

the Years 3 to 6 quickly understand the principle of fair testing. For instance, the most skilled Year 6 pupils understand that when testing substances to see if they will dissolve in water, it is important to use the same amounts of water, and to leave all samples for the same time before looking at the result.

59. Assessment is satisfactory. Suitable records are kept, so that teachers can see when pupils reach each level; records also show where there are gaps in learning. However, there are inconsistencies in marking; in the best examples, work is marked helpfully, and a level is shown; in others, a significant amount of work is not marked and errors are not corrected. Most lessons start with a question and answer session, and these are helpful in establishing what pupils recall, and what needs to be revisited. During these, pupils also learn from one another. The co-ordinator has, for some time, prepared pupils for national tests in Years 6 and 9. She has analysed the most recent results, and found a weakness in analysis of data; this has now become a focus in teaching.

60. Since the arrival of the new headteacher, all lessons in Years 2 to 9 are prepared using the QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) planning as a guide. As a result, pupils cover a suitable range of topics and continue to build on their knowledge, skills and understanding. Because teachers know the pupils and their abilities well, they plan work that is suitably challenging. They cater adequately for pupils of different abilities by varying the degree of difficulty of questions, or having two versions of a recording sheet. However, too little thought is given to the use of homework as a means of extending literacy skills or consolidating learning. For instance, teachers use scientific vocabulary well, and generally write key words on the board, so pupils learn to understand and use terms. However, they do not learn to spell them correctly. Because worksheets are used extensively, there are too few opportunities for pupils to write at any length, such as an account of an investigation. There are good opportunities for pupils to consolidate and extend their numeracy skills, through weighing, measuring, using stop watches, recording results graphically, and interpreting graphs. The use of ICT in science is unsatisfactory. Very little evidence was found in pupils' work; a suitable video was used in one lesson and pupils do word process some of their work. However, the requirement for pupils to use sensors connected to computers to collect and record data in the primary years is not met.

61. Practical tasks are popular with pupils. In most lessons seen, pupils were developing their skills, safe practice, and their knowledge of scientific methods. They were sensible, occasionally shared resources, and took good heed of safety advice they had been given. They greatly enjoyed using batteries and connectors to form circuits, testing liquids by using the colour extracted from plant materials, resting a leaf for starch and finding out how brushing removes bacteria from teeth. The co-ordinator, who carries out much of the work of a laboratory technician, ensures that other teachers have the equipment and resources that they need for each lesson. This is laudable, but is not the most effective use of her time. Although many support staff play an important part in direct teaching during lessons, none are deployed to provide the sort of help that the co-ordinator needs in preparing practical tasks and clearing up at the end of the day.

62. The science room has a number of weaknesses. It is L shaped, and one area has no artificial lighting, so cannot safely be used. There is no hot water supply, so pupils need to leave the room to wash their hands, and all washing up of apparatus has to be done in the staff room. There is a good, secure storage area, but no fume cupboard, and limited gas taps. It is unsuitable for teaching examination courses.

63. Leadership and management in science are good; the co-ordinator has high expectations, supports staff well, and knows what needs to be done to improve provision. The subject is now developing in exactly the right way. However, through no fault of the co-ordinator, curriculum innovation has been delayed, so improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory rather than good. The lack of a technician and the unsatisfactory accommodation are barriers to further improvement.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

Provision for ICT is **satisfactory**

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Development of ICT equipment, resources and facilities has improved the provision overall
- There is not enough specialist teaching time for all pupils to have equal access to the subject
- Achievement is satisfactory in Years 3-9, but is unsatisfactory in Years 10 and 11
- The curriculum is well planned and specialist teaching for the younger pupils is effective
- Higher attaining secondary age pupils who have autism achieve well

Commentary

64. Improvement since the last inspection is, overall, satisfactory. The school is now well equipped in classrooms and in the two specialist bases, one equipped with PCs, the other with Apple computers. Several classes have interactive whiteboards and data projectors and some teachers show real flair in using these to plan, present and structure pupils' learning. Network connections are well established, with an effective intranet to support staff in their work. Systems to save and organise the pupils' work are good and pupils of all ages are adept at managing this process. They show their own work with pride.

65. The school organises its teaching to use both specialist subject teaching time for each group and developing the skills learned through subject activities, homework and personal research. The timetable in use at the time of the inspection was unsatisfactory as the subject is not taught to every group and the time allocations not equitable. The effect of this is to deny a number of pupils equal access to both the planned curriculum and the equipment. Provision ranges from none to an hour and a half each week, and where there are two parallel classes in a year group in the main school in years 7,9 and 10, a considerable variation exists between each class's ICT time.

66. The time constraint has an adverse impact on the quality of teaching and learning and so limits the achievement and progress of the pupils who receive the smallest allocations. Where pupils are being introduced to new skills, processes or aspects of software use, there is not enough time for them to practise and consolidate the new learning. It was only possible to watch a single lesson at primary, Years 7-9 and 10 -11, and for pupils with autism. All teaching was satisfactory or better. Planning for progress between classes is now developing well, with programmes being adapted from national guidance, but not enough focus on each individual's next steps is evident. Annotated copies of key pieces of pupils' work needs to be retained by teachers to indicate the quality of the pupils' work and important progress made.

67. There are considerable strengths in the very good relationships between staff and pupils in all the groups visited. Pupils really enjoy their lessons, are very keen to start and reluctant to finish. Many come into the computer bases at lunchtime to complete the work they couldn't finish in class. Two lessons demonstrated these strengths. In one, primary pupils were continuing their work on how to build simple presentations using computers and in the other, secondary age pupils with autism were reviewing each other's finished work and learning more advanced techniques with the headteacher. The primary pupils listened attentively to the new information, on how to add sound effects, and at the end, the teacher put instructions and reminders on the walls using printed slides. Pupils quickly challenged their teacher about their quality, outbidding each other to step out at point out a range of their faults – text size, font choice, background /foreground decisions. It was a delightful, good humoured and sparky exchange, culminating in one pupil's overall evaluation – "I'd not come and listen to one of *your* presentations, Miss. We'd all fall asleep!"

68. In the other lesson, the older pupils with autism concentrated on watching each individual and unusual presentation, offering opinions and views in a mature way. Achievement was good for both groups of pupils – the younger ones showed they had grasped the techniques fully and could use humour judiciously. The older pupils demonstrated very good understanding of a range of

techniques, and asked intelligent and astute questions. Several revealed an awareness of the importance of constructive and careful criticism, representing good achievement for pupils with autism.

69. Achievement and progress is unsatisfactory for the pupils in Years 10 and 11 for two reasons – accreditation and timetabling. There is no higher level qualification for pupils, several of whom could gain a graded GCSE pass, but their achievement is limited by the choice of the National Skills Profile, designed for those working up to Level 3 in the National Curriculum. Members of the support staff team lead the course, and at present no teachers are providing advanced skills development for higher attaining pupils. The allocation of 45 minutes each week is less than that provided for Year 7-9 pupils. Within the proposed review of provision for this age group, matching access to qualifications to pupils' ability for this core area of learning is an early priority.

Information and communication technology across the curriculum

70. Overall, the use of ICT to support other subjects is satisfactory. Pupils are motivated by the technology and showed increased motivation when using interactive white boards. Some pupils use computers to redraft, being proud of the finished piece. The use of ICT to support mathematics and science is at an early stage with the school not meeting requirements for data logging in the primary years.

HUMANITIES

Only two lessons were seen in history and one in geography, so it is not possible to make a judgement on provision.

71. In **geography** pupils have compared life in, for example, Jamaica and Kenya to that in the United Kingdom and considered how the cold climate on Baffin Island influences the life of the Inuit. Teaching and learning in the one lesson observed were unsatisfactory. While relationships were good and the teacher knowledgeable about the subject, the lesson was late starting, pupils were not adequately prepared for the video and the one girl was not included in the lesson until almost the end.

72. In **history**, younger pupils have considered aspects of the lives of Ancient Greeks and the Victorians. Those in Years 7 to 9 have considered the features and siting of castles, supported by visits to Bowes and Middlesbrough Castles, and the life of children in World War Two. As part of a residential visit, pupils have visited the Rydale Museum and Whitby Abbey. Pupils with autism had good recall of their visit to Bede's world where they dressed in monk's habits and learned about daily life in a monastery. Others increased their understanding of 'old' and 'new' as they compared teddy bears and dolls from different ages. The work of pupils in Years 10 and 11 is accredited by the Achievement and Qualifications Alliance. Teaching and learning in the lesson seen in this age group were unsatisfactory because the teacher lacked confidence in the subject and did not challenge pupils in the work that was provided.

73. The scheme of work for both subjects is in its infancy and only adopted recently. Nevertheless, pupils cover a wide range of topics, though from pupils' work and teachers' planning, progression in the knowledge and skills pupils acquire is not clear. Other than the occasional 'word search', most of the work produced is using worksheets, filling in missing words. This means pupils do not have the opportunity to write independently, imaginatively or at length. Both subjects make a useful contribution to pupils' cultural development.

Religious education

Despite good provision in Years 3 to 9, overall the provision for religious education is **unsatisfactory** because the subject is not taught in Years 10 and 11.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The teaching of religious education does not meet legal requirements in Years 10 and 11
- Pupils in Years 3 to 9 learn and achieve well because of good teaching
- Good opportunities are provided for pupils to improve their reading and spelling, though this is not always so for writing
- Subject co-ordination is, overall, unsatisfactory
- The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development

Commentary

74. Improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory. Despite the criticism in the report, little has been done to remedy the weakness identified in the need to develop religious education in Years 10 and 11 in a more structured way. Teachers in these year groups have chosen not to include religious education on the timetable and there is still no planned programme to allow pupils to acquire knowledge and understanding in a progressive way. While teachers use assembly time to address issues in pupils' lives, the well-maintained assembly log shows on occasions these have little to do with religious education, for example, safety on bonfire night. Even taking assemblies into account and including work in citizenship, there are huge gaps in what is expected under the Stockton Locally Agreed Syllabus. This has resulted in unsatisfactory achievement.

75. Pupils in Years 3 to 9 achieve well because of good teaching. In Years 3 to 6, the subject is taught by class teachers. Lessons are well planned with a range of tasks to maintain pupils' interest. Good attention is paid to specialist vocabulary and pupils are encouraged to give their opinions. In Years 7 to 9, a subject specialist teacher teaches all lessons. Lessons are conducted with a sense of urgency and time is taken for discussion and to make pupils think. For example, when expecting pupils to reason why houses in the United Kingdom do not have flat roofs like the houses in Palestine. The teacher's very good subject knowledge extends pupils' understanding of world faiths well and enables them to learn from religion.

76. Literacy is promoted well in Years 3 to 9 and teachers provide time for pupils to read. New vocabulary is introduced well. For example in Year 6, the teacher wrote the word 'sacred' on the white board and expected pupils to use their strategies for recognising other new words and further tested their spelling by deliberately reversing 'b' and 'd'. In Years 7 to 9, the teacher has produced useful booklets to accompany each module with opportunities for pupils to read and to complete missing words and word searches. However, pupils' work shows too few activities are planned for pupils to write independently and imaginatively. For example, the Christmas story from the perspective of Mary or the donkey. The opportunity to write independently in all subjects is important as all pupils have literacy targets, including producing longer pieces of writing.

77. Subject co-ordination is, overall, unsatisfactory. However leadership is good and management satisfactory in Years 3 to 6 and 7 to 9. The two teachers work well together and have taken the subject forward for pupils in these age groups. However, they do not have an overview of what is taught in Years 10 and 11 and teachers of pupils in this age group have not heeded the expectation that what is taught meets the requirements of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. Though at an early stage, assessment for pupils in Years 3 to 9 now records the knowledge and understanding pupils have acquired. The subject is well resourced and objects are used effectively, for example pupils in Year 6 were enthralled when their teacher showed them the Koran, and knew they should wash their hands before handling the sacred text. Similarly, pupils with autism were curious about the objects on a puja tray.

78. Good use is made of visits and visitors to make learning meaningful and to contribute to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural understanding. Pupils talk knowledgeably and with enthusiasm about visits to a Hindu Temple, a church and a mosque. Higher attaining pupils recall similarities such as sacred books in the three special places. The visit by a Hindu lady encouraged

respect for the beliefs and values of others as she spoke in graphic detail about her wedding, her special gods and her dietary requirements.

TECHNOLOGY

Design and technology

Both aspects of this subject were only sampled.

79. The subject is well planned in Years 3 to 6 and in the unit for pupils with autism. In the lesson observed pupils achieved well in making and decorating a purse. They had spent time considering materials suitable for the purpose and worked independently on their design for decoration using beads and ribbons. The lesson was successful not only in improving the pupils' skills in design and technology but also in encouraging them to work together and to describe their work to others.

80. Teachers' planning and photographic evidence show work in **resistant materials** is very limited for pupils in Years 7 to 11. The time allocated to the subject is insufficient and the curriculum does not meet requirements. Planning in this aspect of design and technology is inadequate. There is no continuity or progression in the programme or in the skills pupils are expected to acquire. Pupils are allowed to choose their own projects and the instructors and a part-time teacher attempt to teach various skills as the need arises. Nevertheless, in the lesson which was observed, pupils worked enthusiastically on their projects in wood and were able, with support and encouragement, to work on such tasks as making a table lamp and a wooden jigsaw. Evidence in completed projects and in photographs shows higher attaining pupils are shown how to make simple joints and are encouraged to use machinery such as lathes and drills.

81. Planning and assessment in **food studies** is good. There is a structured scheme of work which emphasises healthy eating and which builds on the pupils' understanding as they move through the school. The simple, but effective, assessment system records pupils' knowledge and understanding effectively. In the one lesson observed, teaching and learning how to bake bread were good. The lesson was well prepared and taught and pupils responded well to the practical activities. Pupils were responsible for each stage of the process and the teacher had high expectations of their achievements. Pupils' achievements are accredited through the Unit Award system.

82. Management of the subject is unsatisfactory. There is no co-ordinator to lead development and while provision for food studies is good, in other aspects the provision is poor. Although resources for the subject are very good, the time allocated and the lack of a structured programme has a negative effect on pupils' achievement.

VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS

Art and design

83. This subject was only sampled. There is insufficient evidence to make a judgement on teaching, learning and achievement in Years 3 to 6. However, it is evident provision is unsatisfactory in Years 7 to 9 because of the poor facilities and the absence of a scheme of work. Although the standard of classroom displays in other subjects in the school is good there is very little displayed artwork that has been produced more recently than a year ago. In the one lesson observed in Year 11, pupils made satisfactory progress in drawing a detail from a diagram.

84. Planning for the subject is in its infancy. The school has very recently begun to plan work according to National Curriculum requirements and there is still no co-ordinated whole school scheme of work that would provide for progression in pupils' learning. Resources are inadequate and the accommodation for pupils in Years 7 to 11 poor. The room is badly equipped, in a poor state of repair, and too small to allow groups of pupils to work independently. Storage facilities are

unsatisfactory. The recently appointed co-ordinator is aware of the major constraints but works only two days each week and has yet to audit resources and manage curriculum development.

Music

85. The subject was not a focus for this inspection and too little evidence was collected for judgements to be made on provision, achievement, teaching or learning. There is no music specialist on the staff, and no lessons were seen. However, the school makes use of occasional visitors to provide musical experiences for pupils, and one of these sessions was observed. Mainly primary pupils with autism were able to join in familiar songs and play as a band. Most were able to start and stop on command. The session was enjoyed by most, but a small number were disturbed by the noise.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Provision in physical education is **satisfactory**.

Main strengths and weaknesses

- Pupils in Years 7 to 9 achieve well because of good teaching
- A wide range of additional activities allows good participation in sport for pupils of all capabilities, contributing well to their personal development
- As at the time of the last inspection, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory

Commentary

86. Pupils in Years 7 to 9 benefit from teaching by a specialist teacher who has good knowledge about the subject. Lessons are characterised by good planning which establishes clear progression in the skills to be acquired. During activities, the teacher makes frequent teaching points and carefully assesses the progress of pupils throughout the lesson. Important teaching points are illustrated at regular intervals by selecting individual pupils to demonstrate their work. Reminders of the lesson's objectives enable pupils to remain focused on their technique and the progress they are making. As a result, pupils in this age group achieve well. They respond with enthusiasm to the wide variety of activities on offer and have made good progress in, for example, volleyball. Good teaching has enabled pupils to build on skills acquired in earlier lessons as was seen in a Year 8 lesson when pupils' confidence increased as they advanced to more demanding catching and passing moves. In addition to acquiring new skills in short tennis and basketball, pupils in this age group with autism have adapted well to using the leisure centre, particularly in coping with the large open space and noise levels experienced in sports halls.

87. Teachers in Years 10 and 11 make good use of the strong relationships they have developed with pupils to motivate and encourage their participation. They are successful in providing activities which, in addition to providing nationally recognised awards, ensure pupils experience success, and which encourage growth in their self-esteem. For instance, in fitness training, teachers carefully matched the ability of pupils to the different activities and so were able to encourage individual pupils to increase their effort and consequently their progress in understanding and developing their fitness. In addition to an increased understanding of their fitness, sharing the facilities with members of the public improved their social development through the expectation that they would behave in an adult and responsible way. No lessons were observed in Years 3 to 6, so it is not possible to make judgements on teaching and achievement for these pupils.

88. The curriculum is suitably broad and balanced and the weakness in dance identified by the last inspection has been remedied. Pupils have many opportunities to participate in sport and the individual challenges presented contribute well to their personal development. For example, pupils in Year 7 responded very well to their first experience of kayaking on the Tees Barrage. In addition to learning to paddle, to turn and to stop, their confidence increased as some faced the challenge of capsizing their canoe and wading ashore. Their achievement was celebrated by all and recorded in

photographs of the occasion. Older pupils have benefited from coaching by players at Middlesbrough Football Club. Good links have been established with other special schools in Durham, Cleveland and Darlington for events such as cross-country and a six-a-side soccer tournament. Some pupils have recently taken part in a skiing trip to Italy. Pupils take part in optional activities on Friday afternoons which include activities such as cycling, badminton and sometimes ice-skating. Pupils who are resident take part in weekly evening activities such as Judo and swimming.

89. Subject leadership and management are satisfactory. Since the last inspection, the co-ordinator has produced a suitable development plan. However, assessment remains a weakness and there are no procedures to identify pupils who may have a talent. Photographic records of pupils' achievements are maintained, but this is haphazard and uncoordinated. As at the last inspection, the accommodation remains unsatisfactory. Changing and showering facilities are barely adequate and the size of the hall limits what can be taught, necessitating expense in hiring sports facilities. The hall remains a thoroughfare despite efforts to divert pupils and staff during lessons. Though there is an outside playground and a playing field, these are unusable during the winter months. This has a negative effect on pupils' learning and achievement so making progress since the last inspection unsatisfactory.

PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION AND CITIZENSHIP

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

Main strengths and weaknesses

- The subject is high priority and is relevant to pupils' needs
- Good teaching has resulted in effective learning and good achievement in all age groups
- The interesting programme makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

Commentary

90. In addition to weekly lessons in the subject, additional time spent in tutor groups has been allocated at the start and end of each day and is used well in some classes to increase pupils' knowledge and understanding of their personal and social needs. Pupils learn from discussions in this time, particularly the consequence of their actions and how these affect others in the school community. Pupils have drawn up rules and agreements for behaviour and for working together. This is reinforced by, for example in one class, the children's charter so pupils know they have the right to learn and to be safe in school and at home. Pupils with autism make good progress in understanding the world around them through drama, focusing on body language and facial expressions. As part of the Healthy School Award, all pupils have considered healthy eating, which many observe at lunchtime and through keeping fit. Pupils' social skills and awareness of being a good citizen are further encouraged through the democratic process of electing the school council each term and through residential experiences.

91. Teaching is lively in all age groups. Teachers are knowledgeable and have established very good relationships with pupils. The mutual respect enables pupils to grow in confidence and self-esteem and to discuss issues that present personal difficulties, for example factors which affect family life such as illness, divorce and bereavement. Discussions are thought provoking, and as well as well as improving pupils' subject knowledge contribute well to their skills in communication. All lessons include opportunities to read and write; though often recording is in the form of filling in missing words.

92. A number of older pupils have a history of significant behavioural difficulties with a few being known to the courts. To address this a particular focus has been placed on, for example, the Criminal Justice System and car crime. Pupils pay great attention in these lessons and were fascinated by work on finger and DNA printing. Younger pupils were equally engrossed by their

work on the needs of animals and animal rights. Following a parent and pupil survey, which identified concerns about bullying, staff sensibly reorganised the programme to focus on this aspect of learning immediately; what did transpire was pupils' differing perceptions of bullying and these are now being addressed. Alongside this topic, pupils are considering what makes a good friend and how to strike up friendships. As part of the element, 'participation and responsible action', pupils in Year 9 provide a weekly Mother and Toddler group where, in addition to enriching their understanding of citizenship, they have increased their knowledge and understanding of young children.

93. Improvement since the last inspection and subject leadership and management are satisfactory. The two teachers work well together and have a clear overview of what is taught in all age groups. The requirement to teach citizenship education to secondary age pupils is developing well. Resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good, with suitable use made of the Internet and computer technology. A useful assessment system has recently been introduced and is being trialled in Year 7 that will clearly record the progress made in pupils' understanding.

PART D: SUMMARY OF THE MAIN INSPECTION JUDGEMENTS

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

Inspectors make judgements on a scale: excellent (grade 1); very good (2); good (3); satisfactory (4); unsatisfactory (5); poor (6); very poor (7). In a special school such as this, standards achieved are judged against individual targets and not against national standards.