

# INSPECTION REPORT

**Harelaw School**

Stanley

LEA area: Durham

Unique Reference Number: 114340

Inspection Number: 67040

Head teacher: Mr P Eagle

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Reporting inspector: Mr M H Whitaker

1424

Dates of inspection: 29 November – 3 December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 708333

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special, moderate and severe learning difficulties
Type of control:	County
Age range of pupils:	4 – 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Catchgate Stanley County Durham
Telephone number:	01207 234547
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Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor J T Thompson

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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M Whitaker	Modern Foreign Languages Physical education	Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
R Mothersdale		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils welfare Partnership with parents and the community
P Hall	Science Design and technology Equal opportunities Special educational needs	
M McCabe	Mathematics Information technology	Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
H Eadington	English Art Music	The curriculum and assessment
P Keighley	History  Geography Religious education	Pupils spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

The head teacher has provided very good leadership to establish this re-organised school. Clear strategies for development have been identified. As a result, the capacity to improve further, is good.

- A good ethos has been established with an emphasis on raising attainment and improving the quality of education. Consequently attitudes to learning, relationships and behaviour are all good and pupils make better progress.
- The quality of teaching is predominantly good because lessons are well planned and teachers have a good understanding of the subjects they teach.
- The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is good.
- Links with the community are very good. This considerably enhances the curriculum, particularly in Key Stage 4.

### Where the school has weaknesses

Teaching does not always meet the needs of lower attaining pupils, particularly in mathematics.

- I. The accommodation restricts some subjects, notably science where some aspects are not taught as fully as possible as a result. It also makes the supervision of pupils difficult in some lessons. The car park also causes some problems during the arrival and departure of pupils.
- II. The school does not have a full complement of permanent teaching staff. This affects the school's ability to monitor effectively.
- III. Subject co-ordinators and governors are not fully involved in systematically monitoring the curriculum or teaching.
- IV. Targets in the school improvement plan and in subject plans are insufficiently linked to the intended impact on pupils' learning.

**The weaknesses are outweighed by the strengths but they will form the basis of the action plan sent to parents and guardians of pupils at the school.**

### How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has not previously been inspected because of the re-organisation of special schools in County Durham. Since its re-opening in September 1998 good progress has been made. A broad, relevant and largely balanced curriculum has been introduced. The initial School Improvement Plan includes well chosen priorities for development. A positive ethos with an emphasis on raising attainment and improving the quality of education has been established. As a result pupils are largely making good progress. Due to long-term illness the school does not yet have a full complement of permanent teaching staff. This has hampered the introduction of full monitoring and evaluating of teaching and curriculum development, for which the governing body does not have a formal system. The accommodation restricts some aspects of the curriculum, for instance, science. The schools capacity to improve is good.

### Whether pupils are making enough progress

Progress in:	By 5	By 11	By 16	By 19	
Targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*		B	B		<b>Ke</b>
English:					<b>y</b>
Listening and speaking		B	B		
Reading		B	B	<i>very good</i>	A
Writing		B	B	<i>good</i>	B
Mathematics		B	C	<i>satisfactory</i>	C
Science		C	C	<i>unsatisfactory</i>	D
				<i>poor</i>	E

Pupils make good progress in all aspects of English and in relation to their individual targets in Key Stages 2 and 4. Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3. In Key Stage 1 pupils make very good progress in speaking and listening. In mathematics they make good progress by the age of 11 and satisfactory progress by the age of 16. Progress in mathematics is less good in Key Stages 3 and 4 largely because the work is not sufficiently well-matched to the needs of pupils, particularly lower attainers. Progress in science is satisfactory by the age of 11 and by the age of 16. However, progress in Key Stage 1 is good. Progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is hampered by the lack of an appropriate science room which restricts the gains pupils can make in some aspects of science. Progress in those elements not affected by the accommodation is good as a result of the very good teaching.

In personal health and social education pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 and very good progress in Key Stage 4 where this is enhanced by their careers and work experience programme. In art and physical education progress throughout the school is good where the good knowledge of the teachers has developed positive attitudes to the subjects. In information technology pupils develop their skills as they move through the school and by the end of Key Stage 4 they have all made good progress as a result of the well-planned curriculum and high quality teaching. Progress in geography is good throughout the school and in history it is good in Key Stage 3 as a result of the good quality of teaching. In design and technology progress is good in Key Stage 1, satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3 and good in food technology in Key Stage 4.

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**Quality of teaching**

	<b>Overall quality</b>	<b>Most effective in:</b>	<b>Least effective in:</b>
5 – 11 years	Good	Mathematics, English, history and physical education. Science in Key Stage 1	
11 – 16 years	Good	Science, English and history	Mathematics for lower attaining pupils
Post-16			
English	Good		
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Key Stages 1 and 2	Work with lower attaining pupils
Personal, social and health education (PSHE)	Good	Careers education and work experience in Key Stage 4	

The quality of teaching is predominantly good in all key stages. During the inspection 19 per cent of teaching was very good or better, 48 per cent was good, 29 per cent was satisfactory and 4 per cent was unsatisfactory. Where teaching is unsatisfactory work set is not usually well matched to the prior attainment of pupils and as a result their progress is hampered. This occasionally happens where teaching is otherwise satisfactory and particularly with lower attaining pupils.

*Inspectors make judgements about teaching in the range: excellent; very good; good; satisfactory; unsatisfactory; poor; very poor. 'Satisfactory' means that strengths outweigh any weaknesses.*

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## Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good. Any inappropriate behaviour is managed well. A small number of pupils have significant behavioural problems. The school is discussing the suitability of the placement with the local education authority.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The school has very good procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance. Most pupils are punctual to school and to lessons.
Ethos*	Good. There is a clear commitment to raising standards, pupils have positive attitudes to learning and relationships are good.
Leadership and management	Good. The head teacher and deputy head teacher have provided very good leadership. The roles of the governing body and subject co-ordinators are not yet fully developed.
Curriculum	Broad and generally balanced. There are coherent schemes of work for all subjects but curriculum development and teaching are not yet systematically monitored.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good. The school provides well for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. However the accommodation restricts the scope of teaching in some subjects. Staffing levels are low for this type of school.
Value for money	Good. Pupils make good progress and have positive attitudes. The quality of teaching is good and costs are relatively low. The school is efficiently led.

*\*Ethos is the climate for learning: attitudes to work, relationships and the commitment to high standards.*

### The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
V. They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.	IX. Complaints are not well handled.
VI. They find its easy to approach the school with question or problems to do with their children.	X. Pupils do not achieve a good standard of work.
VII. Pupils are encouraged to be involved in more than just daily lessons.	XI. They would like to see more homework.
VIII. Pupils like school.	XII. They are concerned about behaviour.

The inspection team agreed with the largely positive views of the parents. They found no evidence to suggest that complaints are not usually well handled and behaviour was found to be good. Pupils make good progress overall. Homework is provided and it is satisfactory although inspectors felt that a more structured approach with more information would be beneficial to the parents.



## **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise standards further the head teacher staff and governors should:

- (1) Ensure that lower attaining pupils make better progress, particularly in mathematics by matching the work set more closely to their known level of attainment. (Paragraph 12, 93)
- (2) Ensure that pupils, particularly in Key Stages 3 and 4, make better progress in some aspects of science by improving the accommodation to enable the curriculum to be more fully balanced. (Paragraph 19, 39, 102)
- (3) Improve the overall leadership and management in relation to monitoring and evaluating the progress made by pupils by
  - (a) establishing a full complement of permanent teaching staff; (Paragraph 72)
  - (b) developing the role of subject co-ordinators; (Paragraph 67, 68)
  - (c) developing the role of the governors; (Paragraph 67, 68)
  - (d) ensuring that targets in the school improvement plan and in subject plans are more specific and more clearly linked to the intended effect on the progress made by pupils. (Paragraph 69)

In addition to the above key issues the staff and governors should consider the following issues for inclusion in the action plan.

- (1) improve the accommodation where necessary to enable teachers to supervise pupils more effectively. (Paragraph 76)
- (2) Improve the car park in relation to the arrival and departure of pupils. (Paragraph 76)

(2) **INTRODUCTION**

(2) **Characteristics of the school**

1 Harelaw is a day special school for boys and girls between the ages of 4 and 16 years who have learning difficulties. A large proportion of the pupils are from socio-economically deprived backgrounds and 66 are currently eligible for free school meals. All pupils are of white ethnic origin. Pupils are from the north of County Durham in the main.

2 There are currently 72 boys and 46 girls on the roll. There is only one child aged under five. All but one pupil have statements of special educational needs.

3 In September 1998 the school was re-opened as part of a re-organisation of special schools in the north of County Durham. The role of the school has broadened to include a number of pupils with severe learning difficulties and autism who are able to access a modified National Curriculum. The number of pupils has increased by over 30 per cent in the last year. Some pupils have additional special education needs such as emotional and behavioural problems or speech and language difficulties.

4 It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.

5 The school aims are that pupils will receive the very best educational opportunities possible and will have the same range of opportunities that would have been available to them in a mainstream school.

6 Recent and current targets have been to modernise the school environment and resources, re-organise the curriculum and develop subject specialization. Specific targets include improving attendance, developing the homework system and increasing the range of nationally accredited courses available to older pupils. A heavy emphasis is placed on assessment and the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills.

(2)

(2) **7 Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed			%
Through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	7.1
	Absence	National comparative data	8
	Unauthorised	School	2.5
	Absence	National comparative data	3

(2)

(2) **8 Exclusions**

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	50
	Permanent	0

(2) **9 Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	19
	Satisfactory or better	96
	Less than satisfactory	4

(2) **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

(2) **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

(2) **Attainment and progress**

10 It is inappropriate to judge the attainment of pupils for whom this school caters against national expectations or averages. The report does however, give examples of what pupils know, understand and can do. Judgements about progress and references to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews.

11 At the time of the inspection there was only one child aged under five and there have only been two since the school was re-organised in 1998. There is therefore insufficient evidence to report on progress or provision for children aged under five.

12 Pupils make good progress in many areas of the curriculum as a result of the generally high quality of teaching and the good planning of lessons which have clear learning objectives. In some subjects, notably mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4, lower attaining pupils do not make as much progress as other pupils because work set is insufficiently matched to their level of attainment. In science in Key Stages 3 and 4 progress is hampered in some aspects, such as materials and physical processes by the lack of suitable facilities although the school compensates to some extent by the use of external resources such as colleges of further education. Progress in other aspects of science in Key Stages 3 and 4 is good because of the very good teaching.

13 In English pupils in Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 make good progress whilst in Key Stage 3 progress is satisfactory. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make very good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills. They answer questions with greater clarity, speaking out clearly during literacy lessons and listen attentively to stories. In Key Stage 2 good progress is made as pupils wait their turn patiently, paying close attention whilst others express their ideas. Poor concentration hinders progress in Key Stage 3 where many pupils do not listen carefully enough to the opinions of others although their ability to express their own views clearly and logically continues to improve. Good progress is made by many in Key Stage 4 when for instance preparing and delivering short talks on topics. Lower attaining pupils need encouraging to extend their responses whilst higher attaining pupils ask increasingly searching questions to organise and present their ideas.

14 In Key Stage 1 pupils make good progress in reading, developing their knowledge and understanding of "title page" and "illustrator". Their knowledge of sounds represented by a number of letters such as "sh" and "th" improves and higher attaining pupils can blend sound to read simple words. Good progress continues in Key Stage 2 where picture cues are used effectively and most pupils recognise familiar words. Higher attaining pupils towards the end of the key stage use their knowledge of letters and blends to read unfamiliar words and understand stories well enough to predict the outcome. In Key Stage 3, particularly in Year 9, poor concentration hinders the progress of a small number of pupils. However, most pupils recognise many words and develop their reading using pictures and letter sounds effectively. Many however continue to rely on adult help for unfamiliar words since they have not developed the skills of using all cues routinely to help them. By the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils have developed their ability to read with reasonable fluency and can identify their favourite stories. Although many can read independently a significant minority continue to need extra support.

15 Literacy sessions throughout the school promote writing skills. Progress in Key Stage 1 is good. Higher attaining pupils can write their own name and begin to use up to five words to create sentences. A greater awareness of the structure of sentences develops in Key Stage 2 and basic punctuation is used correctly. Handwriting improves although letter formation and word spacing is erratic. Higher attaining pupils learn to spell a number of high frequency words. In Key Stage 3 progress is satisfactory. Handwriting standards are maintained and although spacing becomes more regular most pupils continue to

print. Most pupils steadily increase their writing styles and the majority work hard to present their work well, often using information technology skills to aid them. A small minority of pupils find it difficult to settle to written work and this impedes their progress. Pupils in Key Stage 4 make good progress in using different forms of writing such as poetry, diaries and book reviews. Punctuation is extended and used with greater confidence although a small number of pupils rely on adult support and creative writing is limited.

16 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress in mathematics. They develop their understanding of concepts such as “more than” and “less than” and use them accurately. Their understanding of the relationship between numbers develops. They begin to understand the concept of time. Simple shapes such as squares, triangles and circles are recognised. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build successfully on previous learning and continue to make good progress. Their ability to add and subtract to 20 develops with higher attaining pupils able to calculate mentally. Lower attainers use number lines or counters. Pupils begin to measure more accurately sometimes using plastic cubes but sometimes in centimetres and estimating skills develop. Pupils’ understanding of shape develops to include three-dimensional work such as cubes and spheres.

17 A small number of higher attaining pupils make good progress in Key Stage 3 but for the vast majority it is satisfactory. Higher attainers work confidently with fractions but lower attainers struggle with halves and quarters. The work is insufficiently matched to their needs and in these areas progress is unsatisfactory. Most pupils become more secure in estimating and use mental arithmetic with increased accuracy although lower attaining pupils remain insecure. Similarly with shape, higher attaining pupils develop their knowledge and understanding well, whilst lower attainers can explain that a triangle or square does not have curved sides but still sometimes confuse them with circles.

18 A similar pattern of progress is evident in Key Stage 4 in mathematics where higher attaining pupils make good progress, the majority make satisfactory progress and for a small minority of lower attaining pupils progress is unsatisfactory. This again is usually related to an unsatisfactory level of work being set for these pupils.

19 Progress in science is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory throughout the rest of the school. Progress in Key Stages 3 and 4 is hampered by the lack of specialist accommodation which restricts the schools ability to teach some aspects fully. In the areas covered in detail and in work undertaken at local colleges progress is good and sometimes very good.

20 In Key Stage 1 pupils increase their awareness of their bodies making good gains in their understanding of similarity and differences. They begin to be able to select conditions necessary for beans to grow, recognising and colouring simple diagrams. In Key Stage 2 pupils develop their understanding of sources of light and learn to predict the shape of shadows thrown by different objects. They learn to understand the relative size of planets despite appearances. Some begin to understand planetary movement and rotation although lower attainers find this difficult.

21 In Key Stage 3 pupils extend investigations to include properties of materials, testing rocks for porosity. Their recording abilities develop and they explore the use of materials.

22 Good progress in the areas covered in detail continues in Key Stage 4. During college courses pupils develop their understanding of gears when building vehicles and of animal husbandry when undertaking health checks on pigs. In school they develop their understanding of push and pull forces and can record accurately the impact of additional mass being added to floating objects.

23 In personal health and social education pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1, 2 and 3 very good progress in Key Stage 4 it is enhanced by their careers and work experience programme. In art and physical education progress throughout the school is good where knowledge of the teachers has developed positive attitudes to the subjects. In information technology pupils develop their skills as they move through the school and by the end of Key Stage 4 they have all made good progress as a result of the well-

planned curriculum and high quality teaching. Progress in geography is good through out the school and in history it is good in Key Stage 3 as a result of the good quality of teaching. In design and technology progress is good in Key Stage 1, satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3 and good in food technology in Key Stage 4.

24 In Key Stages 3 and 4 pupils make satisfactory progress in French, developing and using their increased knowledge of vocabulary in practical situations. Many extend their use of French during an annual trip to France. Progress in religious education is good in Key Stages 1 and 4 and satisfactory in Key Stages 2 and 3.

25 Pupils of all ages make good progress in relation to the individual targets identified in their individual education programmes.

## **(2) Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

26 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In the small number of lessons where they are not as good, it is nearly always directly linked to unsatisfactory or inappropriately planned teaching. Pupils work well in pairs, as for example in food technology where pupils share resources, mix food, clean up and are sensible with the knives and cookers in the food technology room. They can collaborate well, as for example in PHSE lessons where one group planted bulbs together and another group discussed the different challenges that might be presented to them on a work experience placement. In general pupils listen well to their teacher as for example in a physical education lesson where pupils recognised the importance of following their teacher's instructions carefully in order to understand the rules of the game and the different techniques for hitting a shuttlecock. Pupils are prepared to discuss situations with their teacher, for example in a religious education lesson where pupils considered the meaning of the festival of light at Hannukah. They can focus well on a challenging topic as in a modern foreign language lesson where pupils had to concentrate to hear the correct pronunciation and vocabulary when requesting various fruits in French. Where pupils' attitudes to learning are not good as, for example, in a geography lesson they are slow to settle, shout out and are not focused on their task, it resulted from work that some of the pupils found too hard, struggled with and became disruptive. The lack of a dedicated library area in the school prevents some opportunities for independent learning activities in the school.

27 Pupils' behaviour in and around the school is good despite the fact that the school records show a significant number of fixed period exclusions during the previous year and in the current term. In some lessons, a few pupils cause a disruption. Even though the staff have very good strategies for managing poor behaviour, they are not always effective. Virtually all pupils are very careful with the school's resources, for example in a music lesson where pupils work with tape recorders, they handle the machines with respect. Pupils take responsibility for managing their own behaviour well, and display great pleasure when given positive comments on their behaviour report sheets.

28 The quality of relationships in the school are good between most pupils and between most pupils and adults. Pupils genuinely care for each other, and for example on trips into work experience placements, they take great care to ensure that their friends are wearing the correct protective clothing, are positioned so that all can see the outcome of a particular activity and share out refreshments equally. The good quality of relationships in the school has a positive impact on learning as pupils help each other to respond to musical or artistic challenges. The success of the awarding of monitor and prefect roles in the school to different pupils relies on respect and good relationships to maintain the relevance of these roles.

29 The quality of pupils' personal development in the school is good. Pupils take responsibility for class and school based tasks such as clearing away after a lesson, helping to clear up after lunch or supervising the safe passage of pupils in and out of doors at break times. Pupils take increasing care of their appearance. Work experience placements contribute to personal development as pupils learn to behave sensibly in work settings. They know how to react to a variety of moral and personal challenges and to take charge of, their own punctuality to a job or college lesson. Pupils make a positive contribution

to their own community by their involvement in a playgroup for local pre-school children held in the school, and through PHSE lessons respond to litter picking up tasks and the planting of bulbs to improve the environment of the school. Pupils respond well to the chance to learn how to prepare simple meals for themselves and shop for the appropriate ingredients for a recipe. The opportunity for older pupils to participate in a residential trip to France, is greatly appreciated by pupils experiencing, often for the first time, another country, culture and cuisine. This again contributes to personal development. Pupils personal development and personal challenges are taken even further by their willing participation in the sporting activities of a residential week in Howton, in the Lake District.

(2)

### **Attendance**

30 Attendance at the school is satisfactory and most of the pupils are punctual. Pupils' attendance at lessons is regularly registered during the day. A minority of pupils are often absent from school for reasons that are not authorised by the school.

## (2) **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### (2) **Teaching**

31 The quality of teaching is predominantly good in all key stages. During the period of inspection 19 per cent of teaching was very good or better, 48 per cent was good and 29 per cent was satisfactory. Teaching was unsatisfactory in 4 per cent of lessons seen. Where teaching is unsatisfactory there is an inappropriate match between the work set, particularly for lower attaining pupils, and the prior attainment of pupils. Even in some cases where teaching is satisfactory this occasionally occurs. For example, in a Key Stage 2 science lesson exploring the solar system the worksheets provided had too high a reading level for some pupils. As a result the amount of progress they make was reduced.

32 Teachers throughout the school generally have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. It is very good in Key Stage 1 where pupils have a particularly wide range of special educational needs. The teacher uses her knowledge of the subjects and her knowledge of the individual needs of pupils to ensure that all are fully involved in lessons and are able to make good and sometimes very good progress. For example, in a science lesson exploring light sources the teacher used her knowledge well to focus questions to pupils enabling them to develop their knowledge and understanding whilst insisting that questions were answered in full sentences. The use of some specialist teachers in Key Stages 3 and 4 is a strength of the teaching, as in design and technology including food technology where pupils benefit from their expertise. Occasionally, specialist subject knowledge is not used to best effect because of their lack of experience in relation to the special educational needs. For example, in mathematics with lower attaining pupils where the work is not always set at a well-matched level.

33 Teachers expectations are very high in Key Stage 1, high in Key Stage 2 and satisfactory, in Key Stages 3 and 4. However in some subjects pupils of secondary age such as science and history expectations are very high. For example, in a Key Stage 3 and 4 history lesson looking at the Blitz the teacher expected pupils to be creative in developing their own ideas for air raid shelters through role play and drama. As a result good progress was made in pupils' understanding of life during the Blitz. Lesson planning is generally good throughout the school. All lesson plans have clear learning objectives, methods of matching work to the needs of different groups of pupils are identified and evaluations to advise future lessons are undertaken. These are particularly thorough in French when, for example, pupils in Key Stage 3 learn to count to 20 and then 30 in successive lessons increasingly applying this knowledge to practical situations or using it to develop their numeracy skills. Science planning is also very thorough. Occasionally, methods of matching work to pupils' needs are unsatisfactory and progress is affected, for example in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4 with lower attaining pupils when there is an over-reliance on a published mathematics scheme.

34 Lessons in Key Stage 1 are very well organised and a good range of teaching methods is adopted. This is particularly successful with the younger pupils with a wide range of special educational needs. In physical education, for example, a good mixture of whole class, paired work and individual work with regular changes of activity motivates and interests pupils. This enables pupils to make good progress in their awareness of space, in their ability to balance a beanbag and in their throwing and catching abilities. In Key Stages 2 and 4 the organisation and management of pupils are good, whilst in Key Stage 3 they are satisfactory. Occasionally, as for example in a Year 8 music lesson too much time is spent on an introduction with little opportunity for the involvement of pupils. This leads to unsatisfactory behaviour because pupils lose interest.

35 A similar pattern across key stages occurs in respect of the management of pupils. It is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2, good in Key Stage 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3. Differences are generally a result of the experience of teachers in working with pupils with moderate learning difficulties. It is to the credit of teachers who are only temporary or supply teachers who have only been in the school for a few weeks that they are generally successful in most areas.

36 Time and resources are usually well used throughout the school. The resources needed for every lesson are identified in lesson plans and are readily available. This successfully ensures that lessons move at a good pace maintaining pupils interest and enhancing their learning. In French, for example, where a robot is used to locate places on a town plan enabling pupils not only to practice their instructions in French but also to consolidate numeracy skills whilst enjoying themselves.

37 Day-to-day assessment is good overall and very good in Key Stage 2 where thorough recording and evaluations occur in every lesson. Non-teaching staff thoroughly record pupils attainment to guide future planning. Similarly, in Key Stages 3 and 4 science and French pupils reactions to questioning are carefully recorded and analysed to establish their understanding.

38 Homework is used effectively to support learning in a number of subjects. There is, however, no formal agreed approach to the provision of homework. Parents would welcome a clearer system and the inspection team supports this view.

## (2) **The curriculum and assessment**

39 The curriculum is satisfactory. It is broad relevant and generally balanced, and overall the school effectively promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development. Curricular provision to support progress in spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is also effective, and is well supported by work in subjects, and the personal, social and health education programme. In Key Stage 2 the weekly lesson time is below the general guide to good practice for pupils of this age, although there is no overall effect on the progress made by pupils. There is some imbalance in science in Key Stages 3 and 4 as accommodation restricts the progress some pupils can make in some aspects of the subject.

40 At Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, the school provides a curriculum which combines both topic and subject work. The curriculum covers all subjects of the National Curriculum, and religious education based on the locally agreed syllabus. There is a strong emphasis on promoting pupils' speaking and listening, and literacy and numeracy skills and this has a very positive effect on their progress. At the time of the inspection, only 1 child in the school was under five years old. The curriculum is planned to cover all areas of learning for this age group.

41 At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is mainly subject based and includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum, and religious education. Literacy and numeracy continue to be high priority areas. Pupils learn French as a modern foreign language, and careers education also begins in Year 7. This effectively introduces pupils to preparing for life after school. The curriculum in Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 is supported well by subject specialist teachers.



42 The curriculum for pupils at Key Stage 4 is enhanced by close links with local further education colleges and a nearby comprehensive school. Pupils are offered a number of accredited courses including General Certificate of Secondary Education art, and Certificates of Achievement in English, maths, technology, science and art. College courses are carefully chosen to provide relevant learning experiences and opportunities for pupils to be successful. The Youth Award Scheme plays a significant part in the curriculum at Key Stage 4. The challenges pupils undertake for the scheme are particularly effective in promoting their communication skills, as for example when they research, prepare, and deliver a talk for others in their class. Participation in the scheme gives students well-structured support, and enables them to develop and apply their skills in a range of contexts. The school makes good provision for careers education and pupils are given good guidance from the school and the local careers service. They follow units to prepare them for two week's work experience, on placements which are well suited to their interests and abilities. The pupils are well prepared for leaving school, and to transfer to work or the next stage of education.

43 There are good arrangements for pupils' personal, social and health education. The programme includes all aspects of personal and social development, and helps most pupils to mature and contribute well to the school community. There are good sex education and drugs awareness programmes, and all personal, social and health education issues are dealt with sensitively by the staff.

44 Curriculum planning is satisfactory. It is good in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Policies and schemes of work are available for all subjects, and these are supported by daily lesson plans. They enable the majority of pupils to build progressively on their learning as they move through the school. Subject co-ordinators have responsibility for ensuring continuity and progression within and between key stages, and curriculum documentation pays careful attention to this. The school is aware of the need for regular monitoring of classroom teaching and learning, and has identified this as a priority for development. It is not yet established in all subjects and as a result the school cannot be sure about the quality of education consistently provided.

45 The school strongly promotes equality of access for all its pupils. Pupils' entitlement is emphasised in all subject policies, and is well promoted in the life of the school. There are good arrangements for identifying and meeting the needs of most pupils with special educational needs. However, a small number of low attaining pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 and the end of Key Stage 4 do not progress as well as they should in mathematics because work is not well matched to their abilities.

46 The relevance of the curriculum to most pupils' needs is good. Following appropriate assessment, and discussion with pupils and parents, individual education plans are drawn up which identify learning and behaviour targets. Targets in relation to behavioural and social objectives, and to English, mathematics, science and information technology are used effectively to guide planning and are addressed by teachers throughout the curriculum.

47 The curriculum is enhanced by a range of extra-curricular activities including football games against other schools, extended cycle rides, skating, outdoor pursuits during residential experiences, a visit to France and singing in the school choir.

48 Assessment procedures are satisfactory overall, and include procedures for the assessment of children under five when they have them in the school. The quality and use of day-to-day assessment is good. This has a positive impact on pupils learning and enables them to make progress. This is particularly evident in Key Stage 2 literacy sessions, where classroom assistants record the progress of each pupil in relation to their daily literacy targets. The school has a whole school assessment policy, which guides the implementation of satisfactory systems for measuring and recording pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics, science and information technology. Together with information relating to pupils' behavioural and social targets, these are well used to identify appropriate targets in individual education plans. Other subjects have their own assessment procedures which follow the

guidelines of the whole school policy. These indicate in broad terms what pupils know, understand and can do, and are also used in the planning of future work. In these other subjects however, some targets are too generalised to be used effectively by teachers in monitoring the small, but measurable, gains that pupils make.

49 Although satisfactory, the school is aware of the need to refine its assessment procedures. Assessment information could then be used even more consistently in planning so that pupils always build clearly on earlier learning.

## (2) **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

50 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The quality of provision enhances the pupils' ability to develop as people. It also enables them to benefit from the curriculum offered by the school, in terms of the progress they make in lessons.

51 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Through Acts of Collective Worship, reflection times after lunch and in a number of subject areas, pupils make good progress in their spiritual development. For example in a Year 11 Act of Worship, pupils were invited to remember those known to them who were unwell, by lighting a candle. Reflection and circle time in Key Stages 1 and 2 offered pupils the chance to respond to religious and secular music. In a Year 9 geography class, pupils were awestruck by the action of an erupting model volcano. In a Year 7 history class pupils reflected upon the awful conditions of people during the Blitz. At the agricultural college Year 11 students were amazed at the birth of pigs. In a Key Stage 2 Act of Worship pupils were encouraged to reflect upon 'stilling' music and upon light. All worship in Key Stage 1 is beautifully recorded and used to celebrate pupils' responses to spiritual stimuli. Pupils are guided to show reverence during whole school collective worship. Thanksgiving is said in a dignified and meaningful way at the beginning and end of meals.

52 The school encourages and develops good levels of moral awareness amongst pupils. The school has recently introduced a policy and strategy for promoting positive behaviour. Pupils with challenging behaviour have individual behaviour management plans which are closely monitored by staff. These systems are working very effectively and pupils know the principles which separate right from wrong. Pupils are taught to respect and care for each other. They are aware of the school's 'code of conduct'. Pupils' behaviour out of school, during field visits, to residential centres and on college visits is good. Houghall College staff consider that Hare Law pupils display good manners and are well behaved during their visits. Staff at the school provide very good role models. They have high expectations of pupils and handle challenging behaviour very sensitively. Parents consider that the school's values and attitudes have a positive effect upon pupils' development. The inspection supported this view.

53 The provision for pupils' social development is good. The school actively promotes positive relationships. Staff interact well with pupils. Relationships are warm and supportive. Pupils are involved in the community through a wide range of educational visits, sporting activities, work experience placements and college courses. These all help to foster social development. Opportunities are provided for pupils in Year 9 to visit an outdoor centre in the Lake District and for others to visit France as part of their studies. The concept of belonging to a community is promoted by classroom routines and through assemblies. During the Friday assembly pupils' achievements are recognised and celebrated. The occasion also engenders a spirit of togetherness, respect and concern for others. The school has successfully developed a number of charity events so that pupils can think about, and do something for others. Among these are the shoe box appeal for Romania and the Blue Peter appeal. There are some good examples of planned social development in lessons. In a Year 7 history class pupils had to work together to set out a North American Indian trail. In a Year 9 geography class pupils had to work together to construct a model volcano. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibilities throughout the school. Some are given responsibility for monitoring pupils on the yard, in the hall, the collection of registers and for coats. They do this very effectively. Students in a Year 11 physical education class took responsibility for their actions during an unaccompanied bicycle ride of some six miles. In a Year 6 geography class pupils were

encouraged to carry out some personal research from library resources.

54 The school makes good provision for pupils' cultural development. The school celebrates a number of religious festivals in Collective Worship. The religious education curriculum is rich in culture through the teaching of aspects of Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and Sikhism. The geography and history curriculum engages pupils in thinking about the life-styles and culture of the North American Indians. Pupils are taught to appreciate their own culture. This is accomplished through planned educational visits into the local environment to extend their knowledge of the area. A particularly good example of this is the history, geography and religious education curriculum for all key stages. Pupils in Key Stage 2 study the mining activities that took place during the 1930s. Good links have been established with a local artist, and the music curriculum celebrates local traditions.

55 The arrangements for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development makes a positive impact upon pupils attainment and progress. Planning these aspects throughout the taught curriculum would enhance the pupils' personal development even further.

## **(2) Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

56 The school's provision for support, guidance and pupils' welfare is good.

57 The school has satisfactory procedures for monitoring the academic progress of pupils. Previous procedures for monitoring the pupils' progress in these areas have proved unwieldy, inaccurate and inconsistent in their application by staff. The school is now targeting procedures that encourage self advocacy by pupils, and targeted development supported by portfolios of evidence of progress in a pupil's work. Monitoring of pupils' personal development is well supported by an extensive PHSE programme that infiltrates most areas of the curriculum and makes a very good contribution to pupils' careers advice and provision for life and further education after leaving the school. Pupils can now relate to the same pastoral team in their progression through secondary education in the school and this offers stability and continuity in pastoral provision for all pupils.

58 The school's procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and discipline in the school are very good. Records on the incidences and reasons for bullying are maintained and scrutinised for any patterns of behaviour that can be prevented. Both individual pupils and whole classes are required to maintain report sheets for specified periods of time in order to satisfy the high expectations and criteria of good behaviour demanded by the school. Good and improved behaviour is rewarded with a range of highly regarded merit slips and certificates. Where practical, the head teacher is always available to staff to support them in their application of the school's behavioural strategies, and where applicable, will use a fixed period exclusion for a pupil if their disruptive behaviour threatens the safety, well being and learning environment of the school, pupils and staff. This has proved a successful strategy in the majority of cases although a small minority have continued to cause problems. The school is in discussion with the local authority about the appropriateness of the school for these pupils.

59 The school's procedures for the monitoring and promoting of attendance are very good. The school conscientiously cross checks registration systems to ensure that all absences and late records are carefully monitored and analysed. Good attendance is rewarded with certificates. The school has appropriate signing in and signing out procedures. The school regularly liaises with one of the three educational welfare officers involved with pupils and where appropriate, ensures that pupils are provided with work at home.

60 The school's arrangements for ensuring effective child protection procedures are very good. All staff are aware of them, and they are an inherent feature of the induction of new and supply staff. Both the head teacher and deputy head teacher are designated persons in the school, but all staff, including lunch time supervisors, have also received recent and relevant training.

61 The school's procedures for promoting the health and well being of pupils are good. Arrangements for the dispensing, storing and recording of medication are good. When pupils go out of school for an educational activity or trip, the school makes appropriate arrangements to ensure that the right medication for individual pupils is available. The school's kitchens are aware of any allergies amongst pupils when preparing lunch. There are good arrangements for pupils to shower after any sporting activity and discrete arrangements for the maintenance of hygiene and dignity for any younger pupil who requires changing facilities. Four classroom assistants are trained first aiders, and all lunchtime staff have received emergency first aid training and first aid boxes are well stocked, clearly sited and accidents appropriately recorded. The school makes good arrangements for the safety of its pupils. Regular safety checks are carried out of the school premises and risk assessments have been completed. The school ensures the efficiency of fire fighting, portable electric appliances and physical education equipment with regular testing procedures. Cleaning materials are stored securely. The school has not yet completed risk assessments for necessary procedures within some curriculum areas, but has addressed risk assessments in all other areas and the school caretaker and head teacher make a daily health and safety check of the school building and grounds. Arrivals and departures of pupils within the school grounds, take place within an inherently dangerous and restricted area, but the school's effective systems to oversee the daily exercise ensures the process is safe for pupils. The lay out of the accommodation in the present science room, produces some health and safety issues in relation to effectively supervision of pupils' behaviour and activities.

## **(2) Partnership with parents and the community**

62 The school's partnership with parents and the community is satisfactory.

63 The school's links with parents to promote high educational standards are satisfactory. The school works hard to improve parental involvement in pupils' learning and has recently set targets to increase homework following an analysis of areas for its own improvement in pupils' learning at home. The wide catchment area for pupils inhibits the regular commitment of many parents as helpers in the school, but the school does value the assistance it receives from a few parents in lessons, on school trips and outside activities. The recent provision of home/school diaries is extending opportunities for communication between parents and carers and school, and enabling them to continue some aspects of the curriculum at home. The school encourages parents and carers to come to the school at any time to observe their child's work. Currently parental involvement in pupils' learning has a limited impact on their progress.

64 The quality of information provided by the school to parents and carers is satisfactory. The school's prospectus, the Governors annual report to parents and the annual reports that form part of the pupil's annual review, all meet statutory requirements. Reports to parents are of satisfactory quality and include appropriate information about progress. However, the school is reviewing the information it provides to parents and carers on the curriculum and is developing the provision of pupil's portfolios of work so that parents and carers can obtain a more detailed view of their child's progress and work.

65 The enrichment of the school's curriculum links with the community is very good. The school has fostered very good links with a wide range of employers in the community to support its careers advice and work experience placements. During the course of the inspection visits were made to an equestrian centre, crisp factory and a national manufacturer of table mats, all of whom provide exemplary support and opportunities to pupils in their first experiences of a work placement. One of these employers, Pimpernel, also support the school's football team by the provision of modern football strip and extends the learning of many pupils by the valued, regular support of a special needs voluntary teacher in a number of lessons. The school has close links to a number of colleges and schools in the area and this especially extends the provision of specialist science accommodation facilities for Key Stage 4 pupils. Integration facilities for Key Stage 4 pupils are a developing feature of the art curriculum. The school makes very good use of the immediate community to support sporting experiences such as use of a local sport's centre and local

bicycle trail. The school has good links to training providers in the area and two trainees are currently based in the school and offering invaluable support in administrative and information technology areas.

66 The largely positive views expressed by the parents both through the questionnaire and at the meeting are endorsed to suggest that complaints are usually well-handled. Behaviour was found to be good. However, inspectors agreed that there should be greater clarity about homework.

## (2) **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### (2) **Leadership and management**

67 The quality of leadership and management is good. Since the re-organisation of the school much has been achieved. The roles of subject co-ordinator and governors are not yet fully established in monitoring and evaluating teaching, curriculum or developments but given the short-time since the re-organisation and all of the staffing difficulties caused by long-term illness progress has been good. The head teacher, more recently supported by the newly appointed deputy head teacher, has provided very good leadership and management in establishing the school. Good progress has been made in establishing a positive ethos with a clear commitment to raising standards and improving the quality of education. Clear plans are in place for future improvements. The leadership of the school has proved very effective so far.

68 All staff have job descriptions and a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The frequent staffing changes have made consistency difficult but all permanent staff share the commitment to school improvement and even temporary staff who have been in school for only a short-time have undertaken significant roles. Co-ordinators have been established for every subject and they have worked hard to develop the curriculum. Schemes of work are in place and some monitoring and support of teaching and the curriculum has been undertaken by the head teacher, deputy head teacher and co-ordinators of core subjects. The school understands that this needs to be extended to all subjects and to involve governors more systematically. Although this is planned for it has been affected by staff absences. Governors have been supportive but do not have clear, formal procedures for monitoring provision. This is a weakness.

69 The school improvement plans have proved effective vehicles for the initial development of the school. These have been well supported by subject audits and development plans which have helped to identify priorities. Although effective in the initial development of the school, targets are too broad and do not focus sufficiently on the intended impact on pupils' learning. It would be difficult for the school to evaluate the success of improvements in these terms. It is increasingly important to improve this aspect of management as the monitoring and evaluating roles of co-ordinators and governors develop.

70 The school's aims, values and policies are reflected in every aspect of school life. They are evident in the positive ethos created where pupils' behaviour and attitudes indicate a desire to improve despite a small number of pupils whose behaviour is challenging. An attractive, effective learning environment has been created where pupils value their own achievements and celebrate those of others. The celebration assembly at the end of each week clearly demonstrates pupils' pride in their achievements. Good relationships are evident at all levels throughout the school. This has a positive impact on learning as pupils and teachers help each other to achieve a positive learning environment. All pupils have equal access to the whole curriculum although work is not always well matched to the prior attainment of lower attaining pupils, particularly though not exclusively, in mathematics in Key Stages 3 and 4. This does affect the amount of progress they are able to make.

71 Statutory requirements are fully met.

(2)

### **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

72 There is a satisfactory number of experienced and qualified teachers to meet the demands of the

curriculum. A number of permanent teachers are on long term absences and their places are currently taken by teachers who are on short term contracts or who are at the school on a temporary basis. This has placed a heavy workload on permanent teachers who are carrying extra responsibilities on a temporary basis. It also means that some teachers are inexperienced in meeting the needs of lower attaining pupils and the small number of pupils experiencing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

73 The school has seen an increase in numbers since the recent reorganisation by the local education authority. Subjects are now being taught to the majority of pupils by specialist teachers and although some teachers have relevant qualifications for the subjects they teach, a significant number have no extra qualifications in the teaching of pupils with special educational needs. The school is aware of this and is ensuring that inexperienced teachers are offered good support within school. The number of teaching staff in the school is below the national average for schools of this type.

74 The number of support staff is well below the national average for schools of this type but they are well qualified and experienced and are satisfactorily meeting the needs of the curriculum. The school ensures that they are well deployed and that they have received training to meet a range of needs, including the medical needs of a small number of pupils. Some extra support is provided by the local education authority for a small number of pupils who are experiencing emotional and behavioural problems but current staff are not always sufficient in number or experience to meet the needs of these pupils.

75 There are satisfactory arrangements for the professional development of staff. In common with many schools the school is currently awaiting new guidance on the appraisal of teachers but all staff have regular interviews with the head teacher which identify areas for professional development. The school ensures that staff have access to relevant training and keeps careful records of the courses attended.

76 Accommodation for the curriculum is satisfactory. The hall is a good size and is well used for assemblies and for physical education as well as pupils' dining. It is attractively decorated with replica stained glass windows designed and made by pupils and a large, attractive wall mural. There are also good facilities for food technology, design and technology, music and art. There is a small, secure play area for younger pupils and the whole building is well maintained by the caretaking and cleaning staff. There are a number of areas which the school needs to tackle. Provision for the teaching of science presents a number of safety issues of which the school is aware. The room is too small for the number of pupils who sometimes occupy it which means that pupils occasionally are too close to the mobile trolley used to heat substances. The room is also L shaped which limits opportunities for staff to supervise all activities closely. The room is also inadequately equipped to teach some aspects of science. The school uses outside facilities well to compensate for this but none-the-less progress in these areas is adversely affected. The library is very small and has been set up in a converted kiln room. Although books are well displayed and stored in other areas of the school, the library is too small to accommodate more than a few pupils at a time and does not present an attractive and stimulating learning environment. The art room has no hot water and pupils in the mobile classrooms need to cross the yard to the main building to use the toilet. There is insufficient room in the car park for vehicles to turn safely when picking up and dropping off pupils. The school is aware of many of these issues and plans are in place to tackle them.

77 The quality and range of learning resources to support the teaching of the curriculum is satisfactory. Resources for design and technology, information technology, music and religious education are good. Apparatus for gymnastics is inadequate. Mathematics resources are underused to meet the needs of older lower attaining pupils and this inhibits the progress these pupils make. The school has conducted a recent audit of resources and has made a significant investment in new resources to replace outdated books and equipment. Resources are readily accessible to pupils and are well used to support their learning. The school makes effective use of the local education authority's library service in order to support the teaching of English and this makes a strong contribution to pupils' progress in English. The donation by a local firm of a wide range of resources for information technology and of games' kit has further promoted pupils' progress and self esteem. The school makes good use of local and other facilities and educational visits such as trips to Woodhorn Colliery, Howtown outdoor education centre and a residential trip to

France have enhanced the quality of pupils' work.

**(2) The efficiency of the school**

78 The school is efficiently led and managed. Financial planning is good. Priorities for development are identified in the school improvement plan and money is allocated according to educational need. Subject co-ordinators are now required to carry out audits of their subject and to produce action plans which outline the priorities for improvement within the subject. These are then built in to the whole school plan and financed. Currently the plans only cover one year and do not have long term projections. The priorities identified are not sufficiently linked to the intended impact on pupils' learning to enable clear evaluations to be undertaken or value for money determined.

79 The school has had a significant carry forward as a result of the growth in pupil numbers and the re-organisation. Effective plans are in place to reduce this as the school develops and permanent staff are appointed. The planned carry forward for the next financial year has been reduced to £10,000.

80 Decisions about the deployment of teaching staff have been difficult because of the long-term absence of some teachers. However, good decisions have been taken about the use of temporary staff. There is a good combination of subject and special needs specialists and they are used effectively. Clear criteria are used to allocate non-teaching support staff to areas of greatest need. This has a positive impact on learning in literacy, practical subjects such as technology and science and with younger pupils. Non-teaching staff provide valuable support and work effectively with teachers.

81 Despite constraints within the accommodation it is used effectively to support learning. Good use is made of the technology area. Effective use is made of external resources such as the local secondary school for art, a college of further education for science and local primary schools for swimming to enhance the accommodation and enrich the curriculum. Resources are used well to support learning.

82 Financial control and school administration are very good. Clear systems have been established to monitor expenditure. The head teacher, very well supported by the office manager, has a clear view of the pattern of expenditure. Governors have an understanding of patterns of expenditure and priorities. There has been no external audit since the school opened. Routine school procedures and administration are very effective and as a result the school functions smoothly.

83 The pupils enter the school with low attainment, they make good progress in many subjects and in relation to personal development and have positive attitudes to learning. The quality of teaching is predominantly good. Costs are low. As a result the school provides good value for money.

(2) **PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**

(2) **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

(2) **English**

84 Progress in English is good in Key Stages 1, 2 and 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 3.

85 Pupils in Key Stage 1 are making very good progress in the development of their speaking and listening skills. They listen attentively to stories and most speak out clearly when answering questions during the 'big book' session. In Key Stage 2 pupils continue to make good progress. They pay close attention when others are speaking, and most wait their turn to answer questions. They speak clearly and use relevant vocabulary. In Key Stage 3 pupils' progress is sometimes hindered by poor concentration. Whilst most can express their views clearly and logically, they do not always listen carefully to other people's ideas. Pupils at Key Stage 4 prepare and deliver short talks on a topic that interest them. They listen carefully when something is read to them, and show by their subsequent answers to questions that they have grasped the main points. Some Key Stage 4 pupils have a tendency to give very short answers and need encouragement to extend their responses. A small number of higher attaining Key Stage 4 pupils ask searching questions, and see speaking and listening as a way of organising their ideas as well as transmitting them.

86 Pupils' reading skills are developing well in Key Stage 1. They understand book language such as 'title', 'page', and 'illustration'. They follow the plot of a big book story by interpreting the pictures. By the end of the key stage most pupils recognise and know the sounds represented by a number of letters, and some combinations such as 'sh', 'th' and 'ch'. Some high-attaining pupils can blend sounds to read single vowel words such as 'big' and 'red'. This good progress is maintained in Key Stage 2 where pupils join in the shared reading session enthusiastically, using intonation for emphasis as in 'Here Come the Aliens'. When reading independently pupils make good use of picture cues, and most recognise familiar words in simple texts. Some are beginning to understand how to use the 'magic e'. By the end of the key stage high-attaining pupils are using their knowledge of letters and blends to read unfamiliar words, and are observing the pauses indicated by full stops and commas. They are gaining enough meaning from their reading to predict the outcome of a story.

87 In Key Stage 3 most pupils recognise many words, and use pictures and their knowledge of letter sounds efficiently in their reading. High-attaining pupils are beginning to use the sense and grammar of a passage to make sensible 'guesses' when reading new texts, and their fluency is increasing. However, many pupils are not routinely using all cueing systems and are still dependent on adult help for unknown words. Poor concentration hinders the progress of a small number of Year 9 pupils, and they have difficulty in reading to the end of a story or remembering what it was about. By Key Stage 4 many pupils read reasonably fluently, and can identify their favourite stories, for example, 'The Railway Children' or 'Anne of Green Gables'. They are beginning to use research and retrieval skills in extracting and organising information from texts, such as the small advertisement columns in a newspaper. Although many pupils are able to read independently, a significant minority continue to need the extra support they are having in developing their basic word attack skills.

88 The development of pupils' writing skills is well promoted by the daily literacy sessions operating throughout the school. At Key Stage 1 pupils copy over or under words with increasing confidence. High-attaining pupils can write their own first names independently, and can sequence up to five word cards correctly to make a sentence. In Key Stage 2 pupils are developing greater awareness of sentence structure, and the function of full stops and capital letters. By the end of the key stage pupils' handwriting is mainly consistent in size, but letter formation and the spacing of words is often erratic. The spelling of short, phonically regular words is improving, and some high-attaining pupils can spell a number of high frequency words accurately.



89 In Key Stage 3 pupils' handwriting maintains the standard reached in Key Stage 2, and spacing becomes more regular, but most pupils continue to write in print script. Pupils know that sentences begin with a capital letter and end with a full stop, but often need reminding to use these in their independent writing. Most pupils steadily increase the range of their writing styles and become more confident in putting their ideas on paper. They can draft and redraft their work to improve it, often with the aid of information technology, and the majority work hard to present their work well. A small minority of pupils in the key stage have significant difficulty in settling to written work, and this impedes their progress. In Key Stage 4 most pupils' work shows increasing awareness of different forms of writing, including poetry, letters, diaries, book reviews and narrative. Work is usually well laid out and many pupils use commas, speech marks and question marks with growing confidence. A small number of pupils are still very reliant on adult support for written work, and their creative writing is limited.

90 In most lessons pupils show interest in their work in English. Many find it difficult to sustain concentration on one activity for an extended time, and respond best when lessons have a balance of listening, speaking and writing. This is well seen in the enthusiastic response of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 to their work in the daily literacy sessions. Pupils throughout the school enjoy listening to stories and extracts from books read to them. With the exception of a small number of pupils in Key Stage 3, behaviour in lessons is good, and relationships between pupils and adults are positive. This contributes significantly to the productive atmosphere in which most lessons take place.

91 The quality of teaching is never less than satisfactory and in the majority of lessons it is good or very good. This makes a significant contribution to the progress made by pupils. Most teachers have good subject knowledge, and plan their lessons effectively, matching the tasks and activities to the pupils' abilities. When teaching is very good, expectations for learning and behaviour are high, and lessons are briskly paced so that pupils' interest is maintained. Teaching is less effective when there is an over-dependence on routine tasks which do not challenge pupils sufficiently.

(2) 92 The school benefits from the co-ordinator's good subject knowledge and strong leadership. The subject policy and the guidelines for literacy provide a strong basis for future development. An assessment and recording system are in place, and are being consistently implemented to track pupils' literacy development and progress. The raising of literacy standards is a priority for the school, and the co-ordinator has begun to systematically monitor the curriculum in order to identify targets for improvement. The school does not have a consistent approach to the teaching of handwriting, that would enable pupils to develop a faster and more mature style by the time they leave school. The school has a growing stock of good quality fiction and non-fiction books, currently supplemented from the local education authority's central supply, and is aware of the need to improve the library facilities in order to promote pupils' independent learning and investigative skills.

## (2) **Mathematics**

93 In Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in mathematics and in Key Stage 2, progress is very good. Progress for pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory although for a small number of lower attaining pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 3 and the end of Key Stage 4, it is unsatisfactory. This is because teaching does not take proper account of pupils' abilities and their rate of learning.

94 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress. They begin to understand concepts such as "more than" and "less than" and use the terms correctly to describe quantities. They begin to understand that numbers are related to each other and they fill in missing numbers in sequences up to five. They begin to understand the concept of time and correctly identify activities they would undertake before and after breakfast. They use simple two-dimensional shapes such as squares, triangles and circles to make pictures.

95 Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress and in the lessons observed, their progress

was very good because of the quality of teaching. They successfully build on their work in Key Stage 1. They add and subtract correctly to twenty, sometimes mentally, but more often using number lines or counters. Their mental work becomes increasingly quick and accurate and higher attaining pupils work accurately with three figure numbers. Pupils begin to measure length accurately, sometimes using plastic cubes and sometimes in centimetres. They also become increasingly accurate in estimating the length of objects before they measure them. Higher attaining pupils begin to record their work in the form of tables and are just beginning to turn these results into graphs. Work in pupils' exercise books shows that they extend their understanding of two-dimensional shapes and are beginning to work with three-dimensional shapes such as cubes and spheres.

96 In Key Stage 3, progress for a small number of higher attaining pupils is good but for the majority, it is satisfactory. Higher attaining pupils in Year 8 work accurately with simple fractions such as halves, quarters and thirds. Their exercise books show that a few then begin to work in tenths. However, lower attaining pupils at the beginning of the key stage do not understand the work they are given on fractions and their progress is unsatisfactory. They do not have enough practical activities to help them to understand the concept of a fraction as part of a whole. They fold a sheet of paper into four but they do not understand that one half consists of two quarters and when they are asked to label the sheet they are confused. Other pupils develop their ability to add and subtract sums of money up to twenty pence. The majority of pupils understand that estimation needs to be done quickly. Lower attaining pupils are not yet secure with mental addition, saying for example that  $7+5 = 14$ . Pupils become more secure with the language for two and three dimensional shapes and begin to describe them with increasing accuracy. Lower attaining pupils for example say that a triangle has no curved sides but still confuse a square with a cube. Higher attaining pupils are confident to describe the end of a cylinder as a circle.

97 Progress for pupils in Key Stage 4 is good for some higher attaining pupils but for the majority of pupils it is satisfactory and for a small number of lower attaining pupils, progress is unsatisfactory. A scrutiny of the work of higher attaining pupils shows that they calculate money problems based on the charges of parking meters. They develop their understanding of the terms "clockwise" and "anti-clockwise" recording their work accurately using diagrams. They develop their understanding of how to use their mathematical skills by answering questions about the number of free seats on a bus when it carries different numbers of passengers. Progress for lower attaining pupils is unsatisfactory when they are asked to work through the problems in the text book which has recently been introduced for older pupils in the school. Lower attaining pupils do not have the skills of independent working to work through the exercises without considerable help. They cannot find their place and do not have enough practical activities or materials to help them with the problems. For example, they do not have a secure enough understanding of mathematical language. One pupil confuses "subtract" with "distract" and when asked by the teacher to explain what subtract means, says; "You musn't subtract somebody when they're working".

98 Pupils have good attitudes to learning in Key Stages 1 and 2. In Key Stage 1 their response in lessons is very good. They are enthusiastic and they enjoy and applaud their own and others' success. They volunteer for work, asking for example, "Can I do the next one?". A small number of pupils in Key Stage 2 are very immature. They enjoy their own success but sometimes accuse others of cheating. In general they settle quickly to their work and the teacher manages the minor interruptions very well so as not to disturb the majority. Pupils' response in lessons in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory. Occasionally it is very good and occasionally unsatisfactory. Their attitudes are best when they understand what they are doing and find the work challenging but within their capabilities. For example, in Year 11 the teacher has adapted the game of Monopoly to develop pupils' skills in handling money. A group of pupils play the game independently, observing the rules without needing to be helped by the teacher. When pupils do not understand what they are doing, they become restless and uncooperative. In a lesson on fractions for example, the teacher spends too long in verbal explanations. Pupils become bored and one says, "When are we going to do some work?".

99 The quality of teaching in Key Stages 1 and 2 is never less than good and in the majority of lessons it is very good. Lessons move briskly but at a pace which pupils can follow. Teachers manage

pupils well and encourage them to think of themselves as learners. One teacher for example says, "I can see bright eyes and thinking brains". Resources are well used and teachers ensure that pupils have lots of practical activities which will help them to understand what they are learning. For example, in a lesson on measuring, pupils enjoy using "Alien" shapes as objects to measure. Teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4 is satisfactory but in a few lessons is unsatisfactory. In a small number of lessons, teaching is good. The best teaching shows a good understanding of pupils' learning needs and ensures that activities are well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils improve their skills in mental arithmetic through taking part in games which they try hard to win. In a game devised by the teacher pupils pretend they are lobster fishers and calculate their profits or losses at the end of each day and at the end of the week. This involves them in using the four rules of addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in a practical context where they are motivated to succeed. They record their work in the form of a table which shows their overall position at the end of the week. Information technology is underused by teachers. For example, pupils did not use it to record the results of their lobster fishing game. Teaching is unsatisfactory where pupils are asked to use materials which they do not understand or when teachers spend too much time talking to pupils without giving them the opportunity to practise the skills they are intended to learn. For example, the school has recently introduced a new text book for older pupils. Pupils cannot use the book without considerable help and teachers have to spend a lot of time in lessons explaining to pupils what they should do. In the meantime, other pupils do nothing until the teacher has time to give them some attention.

100 The mathematics curriculum is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Key Stages 3 and 4. Pupils' work in Key Stages 1 and 2 is based on the National Numeracy strategy which has recently been adopted by the school. This is giving pupils a firm grounding in mathematical skills and is ensuring that they develop these skills through lots of relevant practical activities. It is also providing a good framework to assess the progress being made by pupils. The information being collected during lessons and over time is being carefully used to plan suitable future work. The curriculum has recently been revised and the school has introduced a commercial scheme which contains material which it considers is more suitable for older pupils. This scheme also allows pupils' progress to be assessed as they finish each section. At present, the school is relying too heavily on this scheme and is not ensuring that older lower attaining pupils have other activities which will help them to understand what they are learning. The recently appointed co-ordinator has had some opportunities to monitor the teaching of mathematics but these have not been sufficient to ensure that work is properly matched to the abilities of all pupils.

101 Pupils' numeracy skills are well developed in other subjects with the exception of information technology which is underused in the teaching of mathematics. In English, pupils list their likes and dislikes in lessons about advertising. They begin to list their findings in the form of a table which will help them to organise the information they collect. Pupils' work in science makes a good contribution to the development of pupils' skills in the collection and handling of data and in measurement.

## (2) Science

102 Progress in science is satisfactory. It is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. In Key Stage 3 and 4, progress is satisfactory overall. However it is consistently good within lessons, and over time in the aspects which can be covered in detail. Progress is very good against both science and personal and social targets in college link courses. This is a considerable achievement considering the limitations on the curriculum imposed by the lack of specialist accommodation in the school for science in Key Stages 3 and 4.

103 In Key Stage 1 pupils increase their awareness of themselves as human beings, gaining an increased understanding of their similarities and differences. They can select some of the key conditions required by beans if they are to grow. They also begin to recognise and colour parts of simple diagrams.

104 By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils have assembled substantial folders of carefully presented work. They recognise sources of light around the home, distinguishing between those you see during the day and at night. They learn to predict the shape of shadows thrown by simple three-dimensional objects. They

show gains in understanding of the relative sizes of the Earth, the moon and the sun, knowing which are bigger and smaller despite appearances. They explore the idea of planetary movement and rotation, but some find this a difficult concept to grasp. Examples are seen of pupils responding well in second attempts to things not understood first time round.

105 During Key Stage 3 pupils extend their investigations to the properties of materials, weighing rocks and testing their porosity. They demonstrate the use of good observational drawings, and tables of results, as part of their recordings. They explore the domestic and commercial use of familiar materials such as coal, slate, pumice, and diamonds. Pupils use fossils as examples when considering the formation of some types of rock. Pupils make good progress as in a lesson on the boiling point of water, designing an experiment and selecting the equipment they will need, putting them in a good sense of readiness and anticipation for the practical session to follow.

106 By the end of Key Stage 4 pupils recognise and name a number of pieces of scientific equipment used in experiments. They make good gains in understanding how to record the impact of additional mass on floating objects, or on the length of elastic bands. Observational drawings and labelling is used to identify the differences between slugs and snails. Pupils show good understanding when identifying push/pull forces from a picture of domestic and farm life. They make gains in knowledge of the form and function of parts of the human body.

107 During college link courses pupils successfully complete the building of vehicles and gearing systems, develop experience and understanding of animal husbandry and the growth of plants. There are examples of good extended narrative diaries recording these events. The recorded evidence in pupils' folders supports a judgement of good progress over time in this subject, and also of good or very good progress against targets for their personal and social development.

108 Pupils show good and sometimes very good attitudes towards science. They are often excited by their discoveries, and as they get older they show more confidence to ask questions as well as to offer answers, and, as in a lesson on the boiling point of water, they show good gains in understanding how to plan an experiment. In a carefully recorded investigation into the means of testing the acidity of a range of familiar liquids, Year 9 pupils show a good scientific approach to the requirements of fair testing, and begin to predict outcomes of further tests. They behave very sensibly when using unsuitable accommodation with a large degree of independence, sharing space and equipment well.

109 Teaching is good in Key Stage 1, often very good in Key Stages 3 and 4 and satisfactory in Key Stage 2. The best teaching pays careful attention to planning, particularly of the learning. Lessons are founded on experimentation and investigation or direct experience. Subject knowledge is good and is used to good advantage when helping pupils comes to terms with difficult ideas. Knowledge of pupils and the quality of teamwork between teachers and non-teaching assistants is a strength and results in good levels of participation by pupils of all abilities. Adapting the tasks set at the outset to provide appropriate challenges across the ability range is not always as well done. Assessment is both a continuous process during lessons, where questions are well used to ensure pupils understand and can move on, and a carefully recorded compilation of evidence and evaluation used both for reports and to inform the pace and design of future learning. On the rare occasions where teaching is only satisfactory, the match of subject knowledge to pupils' ability has not been quite so successfully achieved, for example in Key Stage 2 when exploring the solar system. Where work was not appropriately presented to allow pupils of different levels of attainment to make progress.

110 The curriculum meets statutory requirements with good attention to the general requirements of the subject, and to investigation and experiment despite the limitations caused by the lack of a specialist room for Key Stages 3 and 4. The curriculum is however enriched for these students by planned experiences at two nearby colleges where pupils undertake units covering electricity and magnetism, life processes and living things, in particular via animal husbandry and horticulture. The school is now embarking on a nationally recognised certificate of achievement that will replace or complement the youth

award scheme units currently available. The curriculum has been carefully thought out. It is relevant and interesting, but without laboratory access it is difficult to teach a balanced course with particular respect to materials and their properties, and physical processes. There is a well thought out and argued policy document which includes useful guidance on the contribution of information and computer technology. Assessment procedures are good and varied and teachers assess pupils against the criteria for the national curriculum tests, although the national tests themselves are not currently administered. Regular review, often supported by detailed note taking by support staff is a strong feature of assessment. It is routinely used to reflect on progress and the pace and planning of future lessons.

111 Science contributes significantly to pupil's increasing awareness of the world around them, their own health and well-being and the care required by wild and domestic animals or plants. They begin to see that humans have particular responsibilities to the world around them. The direct experience of working with animals during college link courses produces excellent responses from young people.

112 Science is strongly and vigorously led. Policies and schemes of work are well developed and thoughtful, and there is a clear sense of how the subject should develop in the future. For example the plan to not involve pupils directly in national tests is seen as dependent on progress resulting from the development of the literacy and numeracy strategies in the school. The science students and department have established a very strong reputation with link colleges as reliable, committed and enthusiastic. Science has a very positive ethos in the school and demonstrates some of the most effective contributions that computers make in the school to investigation and recording strategies.

113 The number and expertise of teachers is good. It is supported very effectively by non-teaching staff. Accommodation is unsatisfactory to support the full range of experience in the senior part of the school. The science room is 'L' shaped making supervision of all areas difficult. It has no sinks or gas supply, partly overcome by a laboratory trolley suitable for demonstrations and practical work in small groups. To rinse equipment between each part of an investigation, pupils have to leave the room and move out of sight of staff. While this is well managed and pupils behave sensibly, it is a limiting factor in the range of practical work that can be safely managed. Resources are carefully stored and recorded, and reviews provide evidence of where money should be spent. Very efficient use is always made of support staff time. This has a very positive impact on both pupil's progress and the safety of investigative work.

## (2) OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### (2) Art

(2) 114 Progress in art is good through all key stages. No lessons were seen in Key Stage 1, and judgements are made after scrutiny of work, examination of teachers' planning and discussion with the co-ordinator, staff and pupils.

115 During Key Stage 1 pupils learn to name primary and secondary colours. They make steady progress in printing, sticking and cutting. Their portraits show they can effectively mix colours and apply paint with large brushes. By the end of Key stage 2 pupils are beginning to make careful observational drawings of hands and fruit, and are developing an understanding that there are great artists, such as Picasso and Degas. An awareness of texture and facial proportions is becoming apparent in their work.

116 Key Stage 3 pupils further develop their observational skills, and have a growing understanding of perspective and shading. This is clearly seen in their still-life drawings, and depictions of solid geometrical shapes. Most pupils make good progress across a broadening range of skills and media, including wax and chalk crayons, charcoal, collage and acrylics. By Key Stage 4 pupils have developed a good understanding of figure drawing, effectively show light and atmosphere, and have a sound knowledge and appreciation of the work of artists from different periods and cultures. They depict subtleties of texture using a range of media, use clay creatively in modelling and produce well-designed and attractive

fabric prints.

117 Pupils enjoy art lessons and respond well to challenging ideas. They try to solve problems independently, contribute their ideas to discussions and handle materials and share space well. Pupils following art courses at local colleges and a school, respond very positively to the opportunities provided, behave responsibly and relate very well to other students. The use of sketch books in Key Stages 3 and 4 enables pupils to refine their work and reflect on their own progress.

118 The quality of teaching in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 is good. Teachers are knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and teaching is clearly focused on intended learning outcomes enabling pupils to make progress. At all stages pupils are introduced to an artistic vocabulary that helps them to form and express their own ideas, and learn from those of others. Pupils are given good choice of media, as for instance in Key Stage 3 where there is creative use of fabric and found materials to produce collages. Classroom assistants give good support to pupils to help them achieve their desired effects. Pupils' work is regularly assessed and they are given useful feedback. Good use is made of information technology to extend pupils' understanding and encourage creativity.

119 Pupils' art work is valued by the school, and there are attractive displays of children's work in classrooms and communal areas. Particularly eye-catching is a large stained glass panel in the hall, the result of pupils working with a local artist to improve their school environment. Cross-curricular links are well planned and art is effectively used to support learning in literacy, history, religious education, music, information technology and multi-cultural study. Pupils following art courses at further education colleges and a local school, benefit significantly from access to very good facilities and an extended range of project work.

120 A well-structured policy and scheme of work are followed throughout the school and provide clear guidance for staff. However, whilst the co-ordinator liaises with colleagues over planning, and discusses the work to be covered, there is no monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms. This limits the identification of targets for development. Resources for art are of a satisfactory quality and range, but the art room is restricted in size and has no hot water installed. The art curriculum provides good support for the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils.

### **Design and technology**

121 Progress in design and technology, including food technology, is satisfactory in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4. It is good in Key Stage 1, and within the making aspects of many food and some design and technology lessons. There is relatively little long term first-hand evidence, as until recently little written work was kept to support the making activities. Both food and artefacts made by pupils go home.

122 Pupils in Key Stage 1 select from a good range of materials when making party hats. They select materials and elements of design when preparing to make Christmas baubles. Key Stage 2 pupils make satisfactory progress when using templates to make costume decorations around a theme of wizards, however there are few opportunities for the most able to extend their skills or understanding of the design process.

123 Progress is satisfactory in Key Stage 3, with good progress in the making skills in food technology, and in extending their ability to use manual and powered tools safely. The recently introduced use of design briefs, or opportunities to evaluate and compare commercial food products or toys is beginning to show progress in the short term and is an optimistic development for the future. Pupils are rightly pleased with the snacks or meals they make, model toys such as boats, toys involving simple battery operated bulbs or buzzers, and fridge magnets. They are making progress with joining skills using glues, solders or nails.

124 Pupils show very positive attitudes towards food and design lessons. They have established a

very positive working ethos in a few weeks in the food room showing good concerns for hygiene and safety, and a good ability to share space and contribute to clearing and cleaning. In the workshop although they are keen to use tools and are aware of the safety rules, their behaviour remains occasionally impulsive. Behaviour is generally good, and relationships with staff are often very good.

125 Teaching is predominantly good. It is based on very good relationships with pupils, supported by secure behaviour management skills when needed. It has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. Teachers create interesting and imaginative projects that capture pupil's interests, and there is a positive ethos for learning. Food lessons are conducted at good pace and with attention to health and hygiene. Subject knowledge is good and pupils are provided with opportunities to explore a good range of electrical equipment, tools and materials. Occasionally more rigour is needed in the planning of the research and design elements and in the adherence to the detail of careful workshop practice. The team work between teachers and support staff is very effective where the roles are well planned. Homework is routinely set after food lessons.

126 The curriculum, though currently taught as two discrete strands of food technology, and design and technology, meets statutory requirements and provides a good breadth of experience and media. Aspects of the curriculum are in the process of further integration and development in order to achieve greater balance between the elements of the curriculum, particularly 'knowledge and understanding'. The curriculum is both relevant and enjoyable. The development of the new nationally recognised certificate of achievement is now well placed to benefit from having these developments running through the school. The curriculum is now taught in modules which are to be assessed against National Curriculum levels. Teacher assessment is regularly used to provide useful information to pupils on how they might improve their skills knowledge and understanding.

127 Design and technology is providing pupils with good opportunities to consider health and safety issues in their home and for the work place. Hygiene and safety are given good attention and pupils are responding well. They learn to share space and equipment sensibly, and to manage their behaviours well in potentially hazardous areas of work.

128 Staffing levels and expertise are at least satisfactory and are well supported by frequent interventions by support staff. The specialist rooms have undergone review and are well presented. Resources are sensibly stored and labelled to support pupil independence. The safety guidance displayed is too hard for pupils to read and does not support safe practice.

129 The staff team have a good range of experience between them and have drawn up a first audit and development plan for moving the department forward. A positive common ethos is being developed, designed to lead to a strong and agreed approach to the subject across the school.

## **Geography**

130 No geography was taught in Key Stage 1 during the week of the inspection. However, scrutiny of pupils' work and the teachers planning shows good progress. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of directions and locations through planning and following routes around the school. They learn to identify focus points to plan their route to places such as the kitchen and the heads' teachers' office.

131 Pupils make good progress in lessons in Key Stages 2 and 3. At the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils demonstrate progress in their knowledge of the local area. A number have some understanding of the processes involved in coal mining. Some have a good knowledge of the living conditions of miners. Some pupils display a knowledge of the impact of the mines in the local area. At the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils demonstrate an understanding of aspects relating to tropical rainforests. Some understand the consequences of deforestation upon the environment. Most pupils have some idea of the life-styles of the people living in the rainforest; their houses and the food they grow. Many demonstrate progress in their

understanding of how volcanoes are formed. Some use the correct technical terms and can explain 'magma' and 'lava deposits'.

132 Pupils respond well to geography lessons. Through a very practical approach, often involving research and enquiry pupils are well motivated and interested. They work hard to complete the practical tasks, but find recording their work more difficult. Most pupils are well focussed, but a small element of poor behaviour sometimes causes others to be distracted. Occasionally, significant challenging behaviour dominates the lesson, diverts the attention of the teacher and progress is unsatisfactory. Students enjoy practical tasks. For example in a Year 9 class students were involved in the building of model volcanoes. They were particularly absorbed in their work. They were astonished and surprised by the reaction of bicarbonate of soda and vinegar, which was used to illustrate lava flow.

133 The quality of teaching was good in the lessons observed. It impacts significantly on the progress pupils' make in their learning. Lessons are well planned and organised to meet pupils' individual needs most of the time. Lessons are enterprisingly presented in an interesting way offering pupils the chance to be involved in a range of practical tasks. For example, in their work on tropical rainforests, they made model huts and tasted a range of fruits and vegetables. Occasionally tasks involving recording skills are inappropriate for those with particular learning difficulties. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge and strategies are used well to develop pupils' research and investigative skills. The use of information technology features in teachers' planning. Opportunities to further promote pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are under-developed.

134 The management of the subject is good. This has a positive impact on the progress made by pupils. The geography curriculum in all the key stages is well planned, broad and balanced. Day-to-day assessment is good and the deployment of adult support staff in Key Stage 2 is good. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural awareness. The erupting model volcanoes caused a reaction of awe and wonder. Pupils develop their understanding of different cultures through their studies of the South American tropical rainforest. However, the links with history are not always exploited to the full. The resources are not easily accessed by staff and pupils. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards and the quality of what is being taught.

## **History**

135 Pupils make good progress in history at Key Stage 3 and satisfactory progress in Key Stages 1 and 2. At the end of Key Stage 1 many pupils demonstrate some understanding of the concepts of 'now' and 'a long time ago'. Some pupils have begun to show some understanding of family trees. Some know that their grandparents are the parents of their 'mums' and 'dads'. At the end of Key Stage 2 many pupils display progress in their knowledge of the lifestyles of those working down the 'pits' during the 1930s. Some pupils illustrate a grasp of the concept of 'unemployment' and how it affects family life. Some pupils have great difficulty in recalling any details of mines, mining and mining communities. At the end of Key Stage 3 most pupils demonstrate a good knowledge of the North American Indians; their culture, habits, lifestyle, landscape and diet. Many pupils can talk about how 'tepees' are constructed. Some know the location of different tribes. A number illustrate some understanding of what it might have been like to live through the 'Blitz' during the second world war.

136 Pupils respond well to history lessons. As a result of the way in which topics are introduced, in an exciting and often dramatic way, pupils progress quickly. They are enthusiastic to learn and are highly motivated. During the set practical tasks pupils collaborate well together. For example, when pupils were involved in constructing an air-raid shelter and setting out an Indian trail they were very sensitive towards one another. Pupils listen attentively to the teacher. Behaviour is often good. Relationships are warm and supportive both between pupil and pupil, and pupils and teacher.

137 The quality of teaching is consistently good throughout all the key stages. It significantly enhances the progress pupils make in lessons. Planning and organisation is good and tasks are structured



to meet the individual needs of pupils. Much of the teaching encourages pupils to carry out investigations through enquiry. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and poor behaviour, when it arises, is dealt with swiftly and effectively. Teaching makes a good contribution to pupils' moral and spiritual development. Both the building of the air-raid shelter and the setting out of the Indian trail inspired the pupils. Through practical tasks they make good progress in their knowledge and understanding.

138 The management of the subject is good. This enhances the progress pupils make. The co-ordinator works hard with colleagues to ensure the appropriate activities are developed for pupils of differing abilities. The curriculum is well planned and provides breadth and balance. Assessment is good and the deployment of additional staff to support pupils in their learning is well managed at Key Stage 2. However, links with geography are not always exploited to the full. Access to resources and artefacts for pupils and teachers are just satisfactory, particularly access to the library. There are no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor standards and quality of what is being taught. Information technology and links with literacy and numeracy are under-developed.

(2)

### **Information technology**

139 There was little opportunity to observe the direct teaching of information technology during the week of the inspection. Judgements are based on talking to pupils and staff, a scrutiny of pupils' work and school documentation and the observation of a small amount of teaching in Key Stages 3 and 4.

140 In Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology. They develop their skills in using the mouse to move the cursor around the screen. By the end of Key Stage 2, they use the mouse to select and click on a desired object on the screen. Higher attaining pupils learn to move objects around the screen and place them where they want them. They develop their use of the keyboard and become more familiar with the location of letters and numbers. Pupils begin to use a word processing programme to help them in their writing and an art programme to draw pictures. Pupils of all abilities are aware that their work can be printed out. Pupils also become familiar with other forms of technology such as tape recorders which they use to record and play back music and speech. School records show that pupils develop increasing independence in their work and do not need to rely so heavily on the teacher.

141 Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 develop their skills in information technology and make good progress. In Key Stage 3, a pupil uses a programme to help the spelling of words containing "e", "ee" and "ea". She uses the mouse to choose the correct spelling and put the letters in the correct place. She is not confident at first and relies heavily on a classroom assistant but as she continues, she becomes more independent. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils use a data-base to search for information on volcanoes in their geography work. Other pupils use an art program to create landscape pictures. They learn how to cut out some sections of their pictures and paste them into others. By the end of Key Stage 4, many pupils are confident to use information technology for a variety of purposes. In science lessons, pupils record information about the nutritional content of different yoghurts. They then use this information to print out graphs which, show for, example which yoghurts have the highest fat content. Many pupils in Key Stage 4 use the internet confidently. They are familiar with the school address and they send and receive messages with increasing confidence. The use of information technology for this purpose makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual development. One pupil was clearly delighted to receive a message which contained an animated cartoon. Another pupil with significant behaviour problems was very keen to use the digital camera to record a good piece of work in design and technology.

142 Most pupils show at least good and often very good behaviour and attitudes when using information technology. They try hard to become independent. They listen carefully to instructions and treat all equipment in a mature and respectful manner. In the examples above pupils gain a great deal of enjoyment when they use information technology successfully. Pupils are keen to use computers and they come in before school and stay in at lunchtimes for this purpose.

143 In the very small amount of direct teaching observed, the teaching of information technology is very good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils and ensure that they develop their independence as much as possible. Those teachers using computers and digital cameras have a good understanding of how the equipment is best used to promote pupils' progress. Teachers also give up their own time to allow pupils to develop their interest, making themselves available before school and at lunchtimes. The co-ordinator for information technology has very good relationships with pupils which increases their motivation in the subject. Teachers also use information technology to assist pupils' progress in other subjects as in the examples above in design and technology and science. In a French lesson, pupils used a floor robot to navigate their way around an imaginary town in France.

144 The curriculum for information technology is now very good and there are good arrangements to assess pupils' progress in the subject. However, the schemes of work for the subject are very new and are not yet systematically in place for all pupils. They carefully identify what pupils are expected to learn and give good suggestions as to how information technology can be used in other subjects. The present co-ordinator is continuing the very good work started by her predecessor. The school now needs to ensure that she is able to monitor the teaching of information technology across the school to check that all pupils build effectively on the skills they learn. The school has ensured that information technology is well resourced with a good range of hardware and software which will support pupils' learning.

### **Modern Foreign Languages (French)**

145 Pupils in both Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 make satisfactory progress in French.

146 In Key Stage 3 pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of vocabulary which they use with increased confidence during lessons. In Year 7 pupils develop their ability to count to 10 using rhyming games and card games. They learn to match numbers with the correct word and spelling with real enjoyment, celebrating the successes of one another. By Year 9 they have extended and developed their knowledge, playing games to add and subtract numbers. They develop their knowledge of the names of colours and use this vocabulary in creating simple sentences.

147 Satisfactory progress continues throughout Key Stage 4 and by the end of Year 11 the majority of pupils are able to listen carefully to instructions given totally in French and to follow them. They use a plan of a French town to programme a robot to find different places such as the theatre or the railway station. Their pronunciation has improved and they are increasingly able to answer questions in complete sentences.

148 Pupils of all ages have very positive attitudes to French. They enjoy the lessons and participate with enthusiasm, working co-operatively in games, helping each other to count or programme the robot. Behaviour is good.

149 The positive attitudes to French is largely a result of the very enthusiastic and imaginative teaching by the co-ordinator, recently supported by a supply teacher. Lessons are very thoroughly planned with clear objectives and very good recording of pupils' attainments ensures that work is well matched to their needs. Very good teaching methods are used, including whole class discussions, individual work and team games which reinforce pupils learning. There is good management and control of the pupils although the shape of one of the rooms used for French makes this difficult.

150 The curriculum is broad and balanced and is enhanced by an annual trip to France which is much enjoyed by pupils and valued by parents. The co-ordinator has managed the subject effectively and with

enthusiasm.

151 Resources are adequate and imaginatively used. French makes a considerable contribution to pupils' social and cultural development. The nature of much of the work also contributes significantly to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

## **Music**

152 During the inspection it was not possible to observe music being taught in Key Stage 4. Judgements are made following scrutiny of work and planning documents, discussion with the co-ordinator and pupils, and performance in assembly.

153 Progress through all key stages is satisfactory. Key Stage 1 pupils listen attentively and can identify environmental sounds such as a car and birdsong. They sing familiar songs confidently and clap in time to simple rhythms. Most can name several percussion instruments and play these in a group. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils sing enthusiastically and maintain a tune well with a guitar accompaniment. Their sense of pitch has improved, and they are learning to vary the speed of their singing and percussion playing. They know the names of several orchestral instruments and understand that music can be written down. Pupils are becoming familiar with orchestral pieces such as 'The Sorcerer's Apprentice' and they recognise the tunes associated with their favourite characters.

154 By Key Stage 3 pupils know the outline stories and main melodies of a number of musical shows. They identify the sounds made by a variety of instruments and are beginning to express their feelings about music through their pictures and writing. They understand basic notation, can name the notes on a staff and are learning to record their compositions graphically. Key Stage 4 pupils know there are many different types of music and can make comparisons between pop and classical pieces, using the correct musical terms in their discussion. However, most pupils at this stage are reluctant to perform to an audience and this restricts their progress. Pupils in Key Stages 2, 3 and 4 benefit from regular music theory lessons. They are becoming familiar with a range of musical vocabulary and notation, and opportunities for writing their responses to music effectively reinforce their literacy skills. They are given well-focused guidance on how to improve their written work. A small number of pupils benefit from violin tuition from a peripatetic teacher employed by the local education authority.

155 Most pupils enjoy music lessons and join confidently and enthusiastically in all activities. They listen attentively and cooperate well in group work. Occasionally a small number do not understand what to do and lose interest, and this limits their progress. Choir members usually enjoy their weekly singing sessions, although they become noticeably less enthusiastic when they do not have a musical accompaniment for unfamiliar songs.

156 The quality of teaching ranges is satisfactory overall. When it is good it is characterised by careful planning and preparation to ensure that pupils receive clear instructions; class management is good; discussion time is used effectively and appropriate resources are introduced to reinforce and extend pupils' learning. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, instructions are not clear, the activities are too difficult for the pupils and a limited range of teaching strategies is used. This results in pupils losing interest and making unsatisfactory progress. Teachers in Key Stages 1 and 2 incorporate singing into many aspects of the school day. Naming and number songs are well-used to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy development, and this supports their good progress in these areas. However, many other opportunities for including music in the life of the school are missed as, for instance, in some whole school assemblies.

157 Resources for music are satisfactory and future priorities have been identified. The co-ordinator's subject knowledge is good, and there is a sound policy and a scheme of work which promotes continuity and progression within and between key stages. An outline assessment system has recently been introduced, and is a good basis for future development. However, there is no monitoring of teaching and learning in classrooms, and this limits the identification of targets for development. The music curriculum

provides good support for pupils' spiritual, social and cultural development.

### **Physical education**

158 Pupils in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 made good progress in physical education. During the period of inspection it was not possible to observe physical education lessons in Key Stage 2 and there was insufficient evidence to make a secure judgement.

159 Pupils in Key Stage 1 improve their ability to move around the hall responding to music. They listen carefully and begin to change the speed, height and direction of their movements when music changes. Most develop their ability to throw a beanbag with increased accuracy and many can catch it when they throw it in the air for themselves. Some improve their catching ability when the beanbag is thrown to them by others. Balance improves when pupils move around the hall with a beanbag on their heads.

160 In swimming pupils in Key Stage 1 are increasing their confidence in the water. For some they are able to move around freely without support, willingly picking up objects from the bottom of the pool. For others, given adult support they enter the water with creased confidence and begin to move around. One pupil successfully put his face under the water for the first time during the inspection.

161 Pupils in Key Stages 3 and 4 make good progress. They develop their badminton skills well. Some continue to have difficulty in co-ordinating their movements to hit the shuttlecock accurately but over time they improve. Higher attaining pupils attain at levels expected for their age, consistently hitting the shuttlecock accurately. They develop team game skills as they move through the key stages applying them in netball-type games. They learn to pivot and pass with increased accuracy and apply these skills in games situation. Good progress is also made in a range of outdoor activities such as cycling and rock climbing. Older pupils develop their understanding of fitness training, trampolining and badminton when they visit the local leisure centre. This also contributes to their personal and social development.

162 Pupils in Key Stages 1, 3 and 4 have positive attitudes to physical education. They enjoy lessons and try hard to improve. Good quality teaching raises pupils' interest and motivation. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and watch demonstrations to improve their skills, for example, when learning to co-ordinate swinging a badminton racquet to hit a shuttlecock with increased accuracy. They behave well and work co-operatively in pairs and in teams, celebrating the success of others when accurately hitting a shuttlecock into a hoop.

163 The quality of teaching is consistently good and contributes significantly to pupils' attitudes and the progress they are able to make. The teacher has good subject knowledge which he uses effectively when, for instance, demonstrating badminton skills. Subject knowledge is enhanced by the help of a subject specialist from a local secondary school when visiting the leisure centre. Lessons are always well planned with clear learning objectives identified so that pupils' progress can be evaluated. Relationships are very good and there is good use of humour to motivate pupils. Resources are clearly identified and are generally good, although they are limited in gymnastics. The teacher has high expectations of most pupils and challenges them to improve their performance when playing netball for example. Occasionally pupils with higher level skills are given insufficient opportunities to develop them, in badminton.

164 The curriculum is broad, balanced and well planned covering a wide range of activities. Assessment is well developed and used effectively to record pupils' achievements and plan future work. The curriculum is enhanced by the use of the community for cycling, the local leisure centre and visits to outdoor pursuits centres. These have a marked effect on pupils' progress.

165 The co-ordinator has worked hard to develop the subject. Monitoring arrangements are currently being introduced and a full audit of the curriculum is being undertaken on which to base future subject development plans. Gaps in his knowledge, for instance in relation to gymnastics, are being well tackled

through in-service training.

## **Religious education**

166 Pupils make good progress in Key Stages 1 and 4 and satisfactory progress throughout the rest of the school. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils make progress in their understanding of special events and special people. Some make progress in their understanding of special religious festivals. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make progress in their understanding of important festivals in the Jewish faith. Some display knowledge of Hannukah- a festival of light. At the end of Key Stage 3 many pupils demonstrate progress in their knowledge of the Jewish religion. Some use the correct technical language to describe places of worship and religious artefacts. At the end of Key Stage 4 many pupils make progress in their understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. Some offer explanations of why Jesus became angry with the moneychangers in the Temple.

167 Pupils behave well in lessons and all make attempts within their own capabilities to listen to the teacher. During set tasks pupils demonstrate sustained effort. They often contribute well in discussions when given the opportunity to do so. In Key Stage 1 some pupils offered explanations of events that are celebrated, for example, Christmas, Easter, Weddings and christenings. In Key Stage 4 many pupils are prepared to discuss their reactions to Jesus becoming angry in the Temple. Relationships and pupils' attitudes are consistently good.

168 Teaching is good at Key Stages 1 and 4 and satisfactory at Key Stages 2 and 3. There is a clear relationship between the quality of teaching and the progress pupils make. Planning is good and tasks are most often appropriate. The best teaching was observed when teachers encouraged pupils to discuss their responses to a story or a particular focus. In Key Stage 1, for example, the pupils were encouraged to talk about special events in their lives. In Key Stage 4 pupils articulated their response to Jesus becoming angry in the Temple. Teachers use assessment well in Key Stages 1 and 2. They deploy support staff well in this process. For example, in Key Stage 1 all reflection and assembly time is recorded in a book. Pupils' responses and progress are monitored and recorded by staff. Assessment is less developed in Key Stage 3. At this key stage tasks are sometimes too difficult, particularly for those with severe learning difficulties, and the pace of lessons is sometimes very slow. The deployment of additional support staff to assist pupils in their studies is well managed in Key Stages 1 and 2.

169 Religious education is taught in accordance with the 'Durham locally agreed syllabus'. The scheme developed by the school is unbalanced. There is insufficient time allocated to Christianity, the teachings of Jesus Christ and New Testament parables. Other faiths are well represented and provide pupils with insight into the traditions, beliefs and cultures of Jews, Moslems, Sikhs and Buddhists.

170 The management of the subject is as yet undeveloped although plans indicate good future developments in the subject. There are currently no opportunities for the co-ordinator to monitor the standards and quality of what is being taught throughout the school, and links with literacy, numeracy and information technology are under-developed. The resources for religious education are good. The school has developed a number of artefact boxes for each of the major faiths. The resources are well used. The subject makes a good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.

(2) **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

(2) **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

171 The school was inspected by a team of six inspectors for a total of twenty-five and a half inspection days over a four and a half-day period.

172 Prior to the inspection the registered inspector met with the head teacher, staff and governors, held a meeting attended by 4 parents and analysed the Parents' questionnaire returned by 35 parents.

173 The inspection team analysed all school documentation, including schemes of work, policy statements, the School Improvement Plan and minutes of Governing Body meetings, before the inspection began.

174 During the inspection 95 lessons or parts of lessons were observed covering all subjects, age groups and levels of attainment. Samples of work were also scrutinised. Additional documentation including teachers' planning and record keeping as well as pupils' statements, reviews and individual programmes, were analysed. Pupils were accompanied to local colleges, the leisure centre and work experience placements and a discussion was held about inclusion with a head of department from the local comprehensive school. Acts of collective worship and periods of registration were visited. Discussions were held with pupils in class and around school and pupils from every year group were heard to read. They were observed around school at lunch break times and their arrival and departure to and from school was monitored.

175 The registered inspector met with the head teacher daily. All members of the team interviewed the head teacher. A number of governors, including the Chair of governors, were interviewed. A meeting was held with non-teaching staff and the school office manager and clerical staff were interviewed. All subject co-ordinators were interviewed.

(2) **DATA AND INDICATORS**

(2) **176 Pupil data**

	<b>Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)</b>	<b>Number of pupils with statements of SEN</b>	<b>Number of pupils on school's register of SEN</b>	<b>Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals</b>
(2) <b>YR – Y11</b>	118	117	118	66

(2)

**177 Teachers and classes**

(2) **Qualified teachers (YR – Y11)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	12
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	10

(2) **Education support staff (YR – Y11)**

Total number of education support staff:	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	227.5

Average class size:

12

(2) **178 Financial data**

Financial year:	1998 – 1999
	£
Total Income	536,111
Total Expenditure	540,393
Expenditure per pupil	4,825
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,107
Balance carried forward to next year	26,825

(2) **179 SURVEY**

**PARENTAL**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	117
Number of questionnaires returned:	35

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	43	51	0	3	3
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	48	46	0	3	3
The school handles complaints from parents well	37	49	3	0	11
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	31	51	9	3	6
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	41	44	3	9	3
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	44	32	6	9	9
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	50	38	6	3	3
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29	44	3	18	6
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	40	49	3	5	3
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	46	34	8	6	6

My child(ren) like(s) school

56

35

0

6

3