

INSPECTION REPORT

JOHN SPENCE COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL

Preston Road, North Shields,
Tyne and Wear. NE29 9PU

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108644

Headteacher: Mr. B. Davison

Reporting inspector: Mr. T. Hemsley
1609

Dates of inspection: 24th to 28th September 2001

Inspection number: 190935

Full inspection carried out under section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Comprehensive
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	11 to 16 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. M. Shortreed
Date of previous inspection:	20 th May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
1609	Mr. T. Hemsley	Registered inspector		What sort of school is it?
				How high are standards?
				How well is the school led and managed?
				What should the school do to improve further?
11358	Mrs. V. Lamb	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development
				How well does the school care for its pupils and students?
				How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
1549	Mr. T. Robshaw	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils and students taught?
1622	Mrs. L. Aers	Team inspector	English	
22083	Mrs. K. Hinton	Team inspector	Science	
			Equal opportunities	
18955	Mrs. C. Earlam	Team inspector	Art	
8009	Mr. J. Forsythe	Team inspector	Music	
1608	Mr. R.B. Higgs	Team inspector	Geography	
			History	
16359	Mr. J. Farrow	Team inspector	Special educational needs	
			English as an additional language	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
17765	Mr. J. McElwee	Team inspector	Modern Foreign Languages	
24062	Mrs. D. Anderson-Cryer	Team inspector	Physical education	
1590	Mrs. M. Potter	Team inspector	Religious education	
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			Design and technology	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

This recently designated specialist Sports College and established Community School is of average size with (890) boys and girls aged 11 to 16. It also has an adult education base. The school is benefiting from extra funding as part of the national Excellence in Cities (EiC) programme. There are few pupils (21) from ethnic minority groups and few (7) are learning English as an additional language. The school serves an area of North Tyneside which overall is socially disadvantaged but which includes a wide socio-economic variety. The characteristics of the school's intake are changing. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (21%) is above average but has fallen recently. The attainment of pupils beginning school has been below average but newer pupils have standards around average. The proportion of pupils with special educational need (SEN) (20%) is average. Around half of those pupils have been identified as having emotional and behavioural difficulties. An average percentage of pupils (2%) have statements of SEN.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a successful school that provides well for its pupils in a hard working environment of very good relationships. The strengths in teaching, leadership and management ensure that the school makes good use of its resources and consequently pupils achieve well academically and in their personal development. The school is continuing to improve and provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Standards are mainly at least as good as similar schools and frequently high.
- Pupils achieve well in English, mathematics, science, art, physical education (PE), religious education (RE) and the food and textiles aspects of design and technology (DT).
- Teaching is good, often very good. It is especially good in English, science, PE, and art.
- Provides very good curriculum enrichment opportunities and has good provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- Makes very good use of community links.
- Challenges and supports pupils to do their best, including those with SEN.
- Provides a positive environment in which all individuals are cared for, particularly through the ethos and systems for pastoral support and guidance.
- Ensures an orderly and hard working community with very good relationships.
- Communicates well with parents.
- Very good strategic leadership supported by very effective senior management teamwork.
- Department self-review processes.
- The school is well supported by a very effective governing body.
- The school makes good use of its resources, including specialist funding.

What could be improved

- Pupils do not achieve as much as they should in music and there are weaknesses in the provision for and management of the subject.
- Pupils do not achieve as much as they should do in modern foreign languages (MFL).
- The achievements of pupils, particularly higher attainers, in the minority of lessons where they are not given sufficiently challenging work.
- The use of assessment data in identifying how individual pupils can be taught better and by managers and teachers to judge the progress of individuals and groups of pupils.
- Provision and planning for cross-curricular numeracy and information and communication technology (ICT), and aspects of cross-curricular literacy.
- Accommodation deficiencies in PE and sport.

The areas for improvement will form the basis of the governors' action plan.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in 1996 and since then has made good improvement. By the end of Year 9 standards have risen largely in line with national improvements. Apart from a dip in overall GCSE standards in 2001, standards at the end of Year 11 in core subjects have improved faster than nationally and the proportion of pupils gaining at least five higher grade (A*-C) GCSEs has been maintained.

In response to the key issues of the last inspection the school has made very good improvement in strategic planning, curriculum development and its management structures. Good progress has been made in monitoring, evaluating the use of data and in developing study skills. The school satisfactorily dealt with the identified safety issues. Although the school still does not meet the requirement for the daily act of worship, there is a programme for pupils to consider themes in tutorial time. Since the last inspection standards and provision for music have declined.

The school is quickly making good use of special funding, as a specialist Sports College and from the EiC initiative, to improve facilities, educational provision and learning. Initial indications are that these initiatives are helping to improve pupils' standards.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved at the end of Year 11 based on average point scores in GCSE examinations.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1998	1999	2000	2000	
GCSE examinations	D	D	C	A	well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E

Pupils achieve well in this school. Standards at the end of Year 11 in 2000 were well above similar schools because so many pupils gained at least the minimum GCSE grades. In 2001, GCSE attainment fell but mentoring arrangements resulted in a higher than originally expected number of pupils attaining at least five higher grade GCSEs. This was a good outcome given the attainment of pupils when they started school. Pupils currently studying GCSE are reaching overall standards that are average and above. Standards at the end of Year 9 in statutory tests are average, but well above the standards of similar schools. They have shown good improvement in recent years. Standards in English, mathematics and science overall are average, except that pupils reach above average standards in Year 9 in English. Across the school, boys and girls have standards typical of the national picture although there are annual and subject variations. Pupils achieve well across the school in English, mathematics, science, art, PE, RE and the food studies and textiles aspects of DT. Pupils do not achieve as much as they should in music. This is also true of MFL although there has been good improvement in provision since the last inspection. Pupils need to make more progress in working with resistant materials in DT. Many higher attaining pupils achieve well in many subjects but this is not consistent across all areas of the curriculum. Pupils across the school show strengths in their knowledge of recent work. A few pupils, particularly girls, are not very confident when discussing and expressing opinions. The school sets suitably challenging targets for individual pupils and for GCSE attainment and has reached suitable standards in relation to past targets.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good, pupils are positive, work hard and are keen to join in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good, often very good in lessons. Pupils are orderly and respect each other. No permanent exclusions in the past year.
Personal development and relationships	Good, mature attitudes to school and a willingness to take responsibility. Very good relationships.
Attendance	Above average.

This is a friendly school. The positive response of pupils to the opportunities provided by the school is significant in helping to raise standards. Pupils show particular strengths in the relationships they have with each other and adults and they are very interested and involved in school. The number of pupils whose behaviour is disruptive is small and they are well managed by teachers.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 7 – 9	Years 10 – 11
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Much of the teaching is good, and is often very good. Teaching is particularly good for all year groups in English and science and in mathematics it is sound. Regular good and very good teaching is also seen in art and PE. The many strengths of teaching, based on very good relationships and seen in the quality of planning, high expectations, subject knowledge and well-paced lessons, all contribute to the good achievement of pupils. In a minority of lessons, teachers do not expect enough of pupils, especially higher attainers. Better use could be made of assessment data to help teachers judge the standard of work best suited to pupils. Teachers are particularly inclusive in their approach and treat pupils very well as individuals. Pupils with SEN are well taught. The teaching of literacy and numeracy within English and mathematics lessons respectively is good overall, but the contribution of other subjects, while satisfactory, is at an early stage in planning. The school can build on the work already carried out in cross-curricular literacy. Pupils respond well to the teaching, making good progress in subject knowledge and understanding, they show good interest and have positive attitudes to work.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Satisfactory in Years 7 to 9, good in Years 10 and 11. Very good curriculum enrichment, many and wide opportunities for pupils. Weaknesses in the provision of music. IT across the curriculum inadequately co-ordinated.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good, needs identified well and good co-ordination of specialist support.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good for the small number of pupils involved.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good, clear aims and values translated into practical opportunities which pupils make the most of. An orderly and hard working community.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good, significant strengths in the ethos and systems for pastoral support and guidance. Teachers know their pupils very well, support and challenge them to do their best.

The school has good communication with parents, particularly through the annual report, which is very good, and the use of planners, which support pupils' learning. Parents are supportive of the school but do not play a strong active part. The school has particular strengths in its inclusive ethos, extra-curricular opportunities, work with the community, provision for pupils with SEN, and programmes of mentoring, support and guidance. Curriculum provision for English, art, food studies and textiles and PE is particularly good. There are weaknesses in the provision for music and planning for IT. Health and safety arrangements need full implementation.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	Very good. Very effective strategic leadership by the head teacher, supported by an experienced, skilled and knowledgeable senior management team.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Very good strategic leadership and direction, governors know the school very well and hold the school to account. Collective worship requirements not yet met.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. Department self-reviews particularly effective. The use of data and performance management are areas to develop further.
The strategic use of resources	Good overall. Very good financial planning related to specific funds.

There are sufficient suitably qualified and experienced staff, except in music where the school has had difficulty in ensuring continuity of teaching. Accommodation is sufficient except that the quality and range for PE and sport restricts opportunities for pupils. The limited school dining facilities cause management difficulties. Resources are sufficient in most subjects and good for IT, but DT and library resources limit some learning.

The aims and values of the school are very evident in its work. Teamwork and leadership are particular strengths of management with a clear strategic approach coupled to practical detail. These strengths are also evident through much of middle management. Financial planning is very good and the school applies well the principles of best value. The school needs to continue to identify the ways in which it adds value to groups of pupils and to tackle the identified weaknesses in order to ensure that the impact of management is fully reflected in high academic achievement across all areas.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their child likes school and makes progress. • Behaviour in school is good. • Information for parents is good. • How the school can be approached and works with parents. • The school's expectations about children working hard and doing their best. • The leadership and management. • How children are helped to mature and become responsible. • The interesting range of extra-curricular activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A minority believes homework to be either too much or too little. • A very small number of parents would like better arrangements for parents' meetings.

The inspection team supports the very positive views that parents have of the school. The amount of homework that pupils do is typical of other schools. The school is continuing to review its arrangements for parents' meetings.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Standards in this school are mostly average and above and pupils achieve well because of the good quality teaching, strengths in management and the positive attitudes of pupils.
2. At the end of Key Stage 4 pupils have standards around and above the national average in most subjects. Where national comparisons are available, from 2000 GCSE results, standards were overall average. This was a good achievement for those pupils, since they had begun secondary school with standards below average. Results were well above those of similar schools and progress from Key Stage 3 was at least as good. Standards in English, mathematics and science overall were relatively higher than in other subjects in the school.
3. Since the last inspection, GCSE standards have been rising faster than the national average. Results from 2001 GCSE examination dipped but, given pupils' initial standards on entry to school, achievement was at least satisfactory. Mentoring and support worked particularly effectively for those pupils. Pupils currently in Key Stage 4 are reaching average and higher standards.
4. The school has set suitably challenging targets for improvement in standards for succeeding years and has shown satisfactory success in reaching a number of previous targets.
5. At the end of Key Stage 3, pupils reach standards that, taken overall, are at least average. Results in 2000 national assessments in English, mathematics and science were average. This was a good achievement given pupils' standards on entry to school and well above the standards in similar schools. Standards since the last inspection have been rising at least in line with national trends. Achievement continues to be good. Results in 2001 increased significantly in English, although they fell slightly in mathematics and science. Pupils currently in Key Stage 3 are reaching similar, average and higher standards and are achieving well.
6. The standards of pupils entering the school has risen in recent years and is now at the national average, with an increasing number of pupils starting at the school with standards above average.
7. Pupils' achievement varies between subjects. They achieve well in English, mathematics, science, art, PE, RE, and the food and textiles aspects of DT. Achievement is good in ICT in Key Stage 4 GCSE courses, and in geography and history at Key Stage 3. These achievements are based upon a combination of the strengths in teaching and management of those subjects.
8. Pupils do not achieve enough in MFL because the teaching styles and activities for pupils do not ensure sufficient progress, despite good improvements in provision since the last inspection. In music, standards are too low because of weaknesses in management of the subject and because of the school's difficulty in ensuring continuity of teaching. Pupils need to make more progress in DT when studying resistant materials. This effects the standards of boys particularly.

9. A small number of pupils study non-GCSE courses and they are generally successful in these. A further small group is following work-related curriculum activities as part of their overall curriculum. These courses are having a positive effect upon attainment and attitudes. The small groups of pupils following GCSE courses beyond the school day achieve good results. For instance, in 2001, 51 of 57 pupils in Year 10 gained 5 A*-C grades in statistics, demonstrating the positive attitude of staff and pupils to learning.
10. Standards in literacy are at least average. In oral skills, some pupils express themselves fluently and can justify their opinions. Less confident pupils tend to give short answers and some are reluctant to contribute to discussion. In reading, higher attaining pupils are accurate and perceptive readers. Middle and lower attaining pupils show understanding of texts they read and have good recall of basic facts. In writing, higher attaining pupils have a good grasp of language and can adapt style to audience and purpose. Middle and lower attaining pupils enjoy using language and can write at length, but there are weaknesses in spelling and sentence structure. Boys' presentation of work is sometimes poor, although good when they use ICT. The work already done by the school in developing cross-curricular literacy is having a positive impact on standards, but it is still at an early stage.
11. Standards in numeracy are average. Numeracy is being developed in mathematics lessons and the pupils' answers to questions, particularly in the mental/oral sessions, demonstrate satisfactory achievement and sound standards with recall of facts, and the selection and order of operations to solve problems. The school now needs to extend numeracy across the curriculum.
12. Standards in ICT when used across the subjects are around average but vary between individual pupils, some pupils being particularly effective in using ICT to support their work. However, the school's cross-curricular planning, particularly for Key Stage 4, does not provide enough opportunities across the range of subjects for pupils to develop and demonstrate higher levels of attainment. They are able to do so because of the good access to computers.
13. The relative standards of boys and girls vary each year and often between subjects, but overall differences are currently similar to the national position with girls attaining higher standards than boys. The school recognises the differences in attainment, and boys and girls are usually equally provided for in lessons and through personal support.
14. In a minority of lessons, pupils, particularly higher attainers, do not achieve as much as they could, because they are not given sufficiently challenging work. A few pupils, frequently girls, are not very confident when discussing and expressing opinions, however, this is an area that has improved since the last inspection. In a minority of lessons this is linked to over-direction by the teacher. The pupils that the school recognises as being gifted and talented make similar progress to other pupils in lessons. Because this identification is recent and the school does not collate information in a way that could confirm progress, it is too soon to make full judgements about overall achievements of this group distinctly, but initial indications are positive.
15. A particular strength of pupils' work currently is their knowledge of recent work. This reflects their positive attitudes to work and the level of interest that they show in lessons.

16. Progress of pupils with SEN is good at both key stages. During Key Stage 3 pupils on the SEN register make particularly good progress developing their literacy and numeracy skills because of the effective support they receive from members of the learning support team. At Key Stage 4 the majority of pupils with SEN continue to make good progress as a result of sensitive yet challenging teaching which is well matched to their prior attainment. The school is also effective in supporting most pupils with challenging behaviour. Staff hold high expectations for these pupils and use the pastoral and mentoring systems well to help pupils with behaviour difficulties face up to their problems and try to achieve their potential. Consequently, most of these pupils successfully follow GCSE courses and gain appropriate results.
17. Pupils for whom English is an additional language are also making good progress because of the close work of the subject specialists and language support teachers.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

18. This is a friendly school, where very good attitudes and relationships, supported by good behaviour and personal development are evident and make significant contributions to the good achievements of pupils. The attendance rate is above average.
19. Pupils' attitudes towards school are very good and show a mature approach. They work hard and often show that they are very keen to take part in activities, in lessons as well as during breaks and after school. They look after materials and equipment. They are trustworthy and show pride in their school, evident in the good quality wall displays around the school and absence of graffiti.
20. Behaviour around school is good. Pupils move in an orderly way through the school and make good use of the opportunities provided during breaks and lunchtimes to spend time socially with their friends. They are polite and helpful to visitors. The school's expectations of behaviour are clear, understood and agreed with pupils. There is a small minority of pupils who occasionally display unsatisfactory behaviour and the school manages them well. Pupils are confident that unsatisfactory behaviour of others is dealt with. The school did not permanently exclude any pupils during the last academic year. The rate of exclusions is falling and the school has improved on its own target, linked to the EiC initiative, in reducing the number of temporary exclusions.
21. Pupils' behaviour in lessons is good overall and often very good and has a positive impact on pupils' learning. Attitudes in lessons are very good. Pupils pay attention, are good listeners and concentrate well. They work hard and are willing to share their work when appropriate. They are respectful and often help each other, displaying patience and tolerance, being able to work well together in groups. Pupils respond well when teachers encourage them to share views and opinions. There is no evidence of racism or of groups of pupils being treated badly.
22. Very good relationships are found amongst pupils and between pupils and staff. Relationships are characterised by a good balance of humour and firmness that enables pupils to enjoy themselves and remain interested. Very positive responses from pupils were seen in many lessons and across a range of subject areas. For example, pupils clearly enjoy PE and are well prepared with a high standard of kit. They co-operate well and rise to the challenges posed. In Year 10 PE, pupils are

particularly keen to take on the roles of coach and offer positive praise to one another.

23. Pupils' personal development is good and supported well by the ethos and systems for pastoral support and guidance. They are keen to consider their own and other's attitudes, values and beliefs. In the vast majority of lessons pupils and staff get along together well and this encourages mature attitudes and raises self-esteem. Pupils demonstrate a willingness to take initiative and responsibility and make good use of the opportunities provided. The school council, for instance, is instrumental in providing a forum for pupils to express their views and promotes the personal development not only of those chosen as representatives, but those who take part in the election process and in using the service. Pupils with specific responsibilities take their duties seriously and carry out their role conscientiously. The wearing of uniform is well promoted by the school and the vast majority of pupils take care to dress appropriately. Pupils are generally suitably equipped for lessons.
24. The above average attendance rate reflects the positive approaches to school of pupils and the interest taken by staff. Close attention to absences and links to home have helped the unauthorised absence level, although average, to continue to fall.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

25. Teaching throughout the school is generally good. Nearly all teaching is at least satisfactory across both key stages and there is a significantly high proportion of teaching that is good or very good. This is particularly the case in English, science, art and PE. The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching has many good features and leads to pupils making good progress with their learning.
26. The main strengths of the teaching are the way that teachers manage the pupils, the care they show to them and the quality of relationships they establish, resulting in good learning. Most lessons progress at a good pace. This results from a number of factors, including good behaviour management when necessary and lesson planning that is mostly good, with teachers being clear on the objectives and the lesson prepared well to meet these. With the exception of some non-specialists or temporary staff, teachers have good subject knowledge. Where subject knowledge is not so good, opportunities are sometimes missed to fully develop questions or thinking, for example within religious concepts, or to give a clear sound explanation of the vocabulary or terminology for a subject.

27. In many whole-class sessions questioning is used well to develop and explore pupils' understanding. This information, and information gleaned from observation of ongoing work, is not always well used to maintain a good pace to pupils' learning by adjusting the work pupils are asked to do. Therefore, in a minority of lessons, pupils are insufficiently challenged. Partly this is because the work that has been given is too easy. On other occasions it is because the teacher expects all pupils to do the same task and be judged by the outcomes. This means that some pupils are not being challenged enough by the difficulty of the work, the level of the questions that teachers ask or the pace that pupils need to work at. This was evident in some mathematics and some RE lessons. However, in a number of lessons, particularly in science, geography, PE and English, teachers' high expectations encouraged pupils to participate and do their best to address the task set. In science, expectations are usually high with good attention being paid to detail. In PE, good opportunities are planned for evaluating and improving performance. In art, the teacher's enthusiasm and commitment often resulted in high quality discussions, depth of understanding and good progress and achievement within the lesson. Art teaching has some excellent, inspiring and outstanding features. Projects which are set are open and challenging and elicit creative responses. A high level of instruction and demonstration of techniques help pupils to learn. In RE the teaching promotes mutual trust and respect enabling pupils of differing abilities to work confidently and learn from each other. Well-chosen activities and illustrations are used and teachers use their summarising skills well to reinforce and consolidate lesson objectives.
28. Teachers throughout the school are developing a range of appropriate approaches to the teaching of their subject and activities that can promote good learning. In mathematics, teachers are developing the methods from the national numeracy strategy that pupils have been successful with and familiar with in primary school. In science, demonstrations are very effective and ICT is being used well to promote learning. The range of teaching styles and effectiveness of presentation is a weakness in MFL. In this and other subjects areas there is sometimes over-direction, leading to pupil dependence and there are fewer opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and methods. For example, in science there is sometimes too much time spent by the teacher talking or demonstrating to pupils as opposed to pupils being in discussion and finding out through their own experiments and observations.
29. When teaching in MFL is good a significant reason is teachers' good knowledge of the language they are teaching. The weaker aspects of teaching are the limited range of teaching styles and effectiveness of presentation. Pupils need to be given more strategies to become independent users of the new language in the early stages of the course. These are the reasons that pupils do not achieve as much as they should, despite other strengths in the subject.
30. It was not possible to make a full judgement about the quality of teaching in music since the subject was taught by a short-term temporary teacher, the school having had difficulty in ensuring the continuity of teaching in that subject.
31. A small amount of teaching was seen in subjects beyond the National Curriculum. Teaching of drama varied between good and unsatisfactory, with weaknesses in focus and the attention of pupils. Teaching in business education was very good and well targeted and prepared.

32. Although improvements can be made to match of work to individuals in lessons, in general groups of pupils are given work at levels appropriate to them and their higher attainment, regardless of the band they are placed in for organisational reasons. For instance, Year 9 mathematics pupils are placed in a band and then taught in a set that follows a scheme of work in line with their mathematical prior attainment.
33. The assessment of pupils' work is mostly sound and used to give informative feedback. However, a minority of the teaching, for instance in mathematics, does not take full account of pupils' previous attainment. Better use of assessment data about what pupils already know, understand or can do, will lead to better quality teaching. This is a significant factor in the minority of lessons where pupils are not given sufficiently difficult work.
34. As a consequence of the good teaching, pupils of all abilities make good progress with their subject knowledge and their understanding of it. Irrespective of the set or band they are being taught in all pupils work at a good pace and their behaviour and attitude to learning are good. Pupils are interested in learning. They are able to work co-operatively to good effect, particularly within whole-class, question and answer, or discussion sessions. Homework is used well and supports learning sensibly, good habits of work being promoted through the pupils' planners.
35. Support for Key Stage 3 pupils with SEN is good when individuals or small groups, with well below average reading, writing and numeracy skills, are supported in class. Where the subject teacher and support teacher have been able to plan together beforehand, as for example in a Year 7 mixed ability English lesson consolidating instructional writing, they are able to play complementary roles well. All pupils, regardless of their level of ability, benefited from this carefully structured lesson with its explicit, clearly articulated learning objectives. Consequently, all pupils made very good progress and those with SEN experienced a real sense of achievement.
36. Pupils with SEN also make satisfactory progress in most of their lessons even where no additional support is available, as a result of good direct teaching. This teaching is characterised by planning and teaching approaches designed to involve all pupils in appropriately challenging work. For example, in another English lesson Year 8 pupils with limited literacy skills were challenged to recall and then extend their knowledge and understanding of the use of prefixes and suffixes. The lesson went well and pupils made satisfactory progress, but this could have been better if the teacher had taken account of the pupils' radically different levels of prior reading attainment, which ultimately limited some of their progress and restricted the pace of the lesson. Subject teaching is also enhanced by high quality support provided by learning support assistants. In one science lesson this additional support was used effectively to maintain a brisk pace as pupils with limited ICT skills were introduced to a new database as part of the teacher's strategy to consolidate their understanding of the energy value of food. However, such help is not always used this effectively. Support staff occasionally spend too much of the lesson sitting passively by the targeted pupil, their role limited to pupil management and while the teacher is talking, opportunities for small group work with an additional adult are missed. In the minority of lessons where the progress of pupils with SEN was unsatisfactory, teachers were too dependent on setting arrangements, did not build as well on what pupils already knew, or took insufficient account of the implications of their SEN.

37. Learning support staff work well with mentors and LEA language support teachers to provide and develop good opportunities for bilingual pupils to speak and listen (in English) and to feel welcome, confident and valued. The school has developed an appropriate range of teaching strategies to use in support of these developing bilingual learners which were clearly evident in both whole-class and withdrawal lessons. In one Year 8 lesson for example, spoken English was being used very effectively to extend and deepen a pupil's understanding of the use of written mathematical vocabulary during a lesson on angles. The language support teacher and mathematics specialist worked closely to use the pupil's strengths in mathematics to help reinforce his understanding and use of more formal written subject specific language. This provided a powerful dimension to a good lesson. The potential to use pupils' existing academic strengths to help their development of English is clearly recognised and used to good effect to provide access to models of spoken and written English for these pupils.
38. The teaching of literacy and numeracy within English and mathematics lessons respectively is good overall. Both departments develop and focus on appropriate strategies to develop oral skills and to be able to express themselves in words or in number. Within mathematics lessons their use and recall of number facts and appropriate operations is being developed. The contribution made by subjects across the curriculum to the teaching of literacy and numeracy in a planned, co-ordinated way is at an early stage. Some departments, beyond English, already include literacy objectives in their planning as a result of the school's previous cross-curricular planning. Opportunities are made available for pupils to apply their mathematical knowledge within some subject areas. For instance, pupils were observed using measurement within art, as well as their understanding of angle when looking at perspective. They made good use, and showed sound knowledge, of interpretation of graphs within both science and geography lessons. The school has appropriate plans within the nationally developing Key Stage 3 strategy to develop and co-ordinate its work in literacy and numeracy across the curriculum, an appointment has been made for literacy and a working group set up.
39. There has been an improvement in the use of ICT as a learning resource in a number of subject areas and related to the school's recent heavy investment in ICT hardware. In several subjects such as science, English and art pupils are benefiting from ICT provision to improve their learning. However, in subjects such as geography, history, MFL and RE this aspect of work is weaker and teachers do not make sufficient use of ICT. The co-ordination of ICT across the curriculum is not sufficiently developed to ensure that all pupils gain effectively from its use in learning across the subjects they study. There are few opportunities for teachers to support pupils in developing their understanding and skills at the highest levels.
40. Permanent exclusion is rarely used.

HOW GOOD ARE THE CURRICULAR AND OTHER OPPORTUNITIES OFFERED TO PUPILS OR STUDENTS?

41. At the time of the last inspection the curriculum was found to be broad, but the balance was being jeopardised by overcrowding at both key stages. Since then, the school has successfully improved the balance and maintained the breadth at both key stages, by reducing the causes of this overcrowding. There are now many opportunities for pupils through a range of curriculum enrichment approaches. The

inclusive and supportive nature of the school is supported by curriculum arrangements that promote equality of opportunity.

42. At Key Stage 3 the curriculum is satisfactory, it is well organised and meets statutory requirements. All of the subjects of the National Curriculum and RE are firmly established and receive an appropriate amount of time. The school has rationalised arrangements for pupils to study one of two MFLs, and consequently their opportunities to successfully complete the course at GCSE have improved significantly, although this has not yet been fully translated into sound pupil achievement.
43. Since the last inspection, curricular improvement has been particularly effective at Key Stage 4, where the curriculum has achieved good breadth and balance. Pupils now follow an appropriate number of GCSE courses with sufficient time to cover each programme of study properly. Pupils receive clear guidance to help them select from a carefully and aptly grouped range of options; this preserves their curricular entitlement in relation to National Curriculum requirements well. In order to improve the relevance of the curriculum for all pupils the school offers GNVQ business studies (part 1) at intermediate level and has recently introduced GNVQ IT within the options programme. A small number of pupils also attend a work-related option at North Tyneside College, along with pupils from another nearby local school. The school enables a small number of pupils to follow GCSE courses beyond the school day, such as in statistics, a second MFL, art and PE. This has had some notable successes, for instance in the statistics course. The school is generally using the increased flexibility available at Key Stage 4 very effectively to provide appropriate and positive learning opportunities that are well matched to the interests and aptitudes of all of its pupils.
44. Mixed ability tutor groups have been organised into sets for much of the teaching in Key Stage 3 and in Key Stage 4 pupils are mainly taught in sets. Apart from a minority of lessons, this works well and allows teachers to plan work that is well matched to the appropriate range of pupils' ability. The school has good opportunities for developing further its analysis of data to inform teachers of how the curriculum and teaching can provide for the range of interests, aptitudes and abilities of pupils.
45. Across the school, ICT and drama are taught as separate subjects but are intended to make significant contributions to pupils' development in other parts of the curriculum. It was not possible to judge the impact of drama across the curriculum. ICT across the curriculum has many positive features within some individual subjects, but is not sufficiently well co-ordinated to ensure that all pupils make best use of it to support learning overall.
46. Music is organised within a department for the performing arts. The combination of management arrangements for the subject, linked to difficulties in ensuring continuity of teaching and weaknesses in the Key Stage 3 scheme of work, have resulted in the school not being able to run a music course for Key Stage 4. Pupils with an interest in music at Key Stage 3 do not see it as a viable option choice at Key Stage 4. Provision for music beyond taught courses is well supported by a range of teachers who enable pupils to be involved regularly in school productions.

47. Arrangements for the development of pupils' literacy and numeracy skills are satisfactory within the English, mathematics and learning support departments. The impact of the support provided for pupils with below average literacy and numeracy skills is carefully monitored and test results confirm that these pupils make good progress in comparison with their standards of achievement upon entry. However, the development of effective whole-school strategies for teaching literacy and numeracy skills in other areas of the curriculum is in a very early stage of development, although some co-ordination work has already begun in literacy.
48. As part of EiC, the school has identified a number of pupils across the school for being particularly gifted or talented. Good moves have been made to provide opportunities for these and other pupils to extend horizons, for instance through university links and a summer school, and links to a beacon school. The effect on standards and progress is as yet too early to judge overall. Even though there is this specific identification, the school continues to pay close attention to the needs of all pupils beyond this group.
49. The school does not meet the requirements for a daily act of collective worship. However, in form tutor time, pupils do discuss moral and social issues associated with weekly themes for personal reflection and worship. There are regular assemblies for all pupils, but these are not daily.
50. There is a wide range of extra-curricular activities, which effectively extend pupils' interests and provide additional academic challenge and reflect the voluntary extra work of so many teachers. Several departments run well established and popular lunchtime clubs, including opportunities for pupils to access study support. They also organise visits to local theatres, museums, factories, offices and sites of historical, geographical and scientific interest. A popular camping week in Year 8 is organised every summer in the Lake District, and many pupils have learned to ski under the auspices of the Ski Venture week at Voss in Norway. The school also organises regular foreign trips to Europe and beyond, last year for example some pupils visited the United States and others China. The creative arts department provides extra art classes, and along with the English department, organises successful theatrical productions at various times throughout the year.
51. The school also provides a wide range of good quality extra-curricular sporting activities and successfully encourages many pupils to participate in a range of competitive team sports, outdoor pursuits and dance, during evenings and weekends. The school has recently been awarded Sports College status and as such is already beginning to widen its already very good range of activities within and beyond the taught curriculum in PE and sport. The school holds the Sport England Sports Mark Gold Award, which required 60% of pupils to be involved in out-of-hours sport. The LEA school sports co-ordinator's programme is also led from the school. The sports programme also encourages positive links with members of the local community with particular expertise in soccer, netball and tennis, while the most talented pupils are encouraged to compete in local cricket and netball clubs at a more advanced level still.

52. The school has recently overhauled its arrangements to deliver personal, social and health education (PSHE) and is planning its approach to introduce new national requirements for citizenship. PSHE is no longer taught as a discrete subject, but is within subjects through the school and added to by timetable suspensions when whole days are spent on specific topics. The school has conducted a comprehensive audit of existing cross-curricular opportunities in which they intend to deliver the PSHE and citizenship elements, including sex education and awareness of drug misuse. The new programme has been carefully planned and is intended to build seamlessly upon curricular objectives already embedded in subjects such as science, RE, and in tutorial sessions. It is too early to judge the impact of this new approach on the quality of PSHE, but the planned changes do complement existing approaches, which support the individual personal development needs of pupils well. Requirements for teaching about sex and drugs are being met by the current provision.
53. A comprehensive and detailed programme of work-related education, including careers education, is provided by the school in conjunction with Tyneside Careers Partnership. The programme is delivered jointly and develops pupils' work-related awareness in Year 9 well in readiness for informed option choices. A wide variety of teaching and learning opportunities is well established and the pupils appreciate the structured support they receive. This year pupils were assessed to judge the impact of the first two years of the programme on their readiness for transition to the next phase of education or training. Analysis of the 'Getting connected' questionnaires suggest the programme is very successful with 70% of pupils being well prepared and less than 8% of the pupils needing to be prioritised for higher level support in their final year of the programme. Careers officers from the Tyneside Partnership are central to the delivery of the programme and are available to provide interviews, guidance and support to individual pupils. Pupils have good access to a soundly resourced careers library area which would be improved further by provision of reference materials related to higher education progression routes and requirements.
54. Involvement with the local community in supporting pupils' learning is also very effective. For example a group of Year 11 pupils enjoyed and benefited from working alongside volunteers from Age Concern and the 'Bridging the Gap' project on a visit to the local Linskill Community Education Centre. They successfully investigated aspects of domestic life during the Second World War by questioning older people responsible for planning a reconstruction of a 1940's living room.
55. The school has very good partnership with primary schools and receives detailed information about pupils in Year 6. The special educational needs co-ordinator (SENCO) works closely with primary schools to undertake a comprehensive assessment of pupils before transfer, which is valued by these schools. Staff from both phases then use this combined data effectively to manage the pupils transition to the High School as smoothly as possible.
56. The school meets the needs of the pupils on its SEN register effectively and they are integrated particularly well into the life and work of the school. The system of setting by prior attainment is generally effective for these pupils but specific information about their past achievements, for example in literacy and numeracy when entering school from Key Stage 2, is not always used effectively to plan the next stage of their learning. Nevertheless, they generally achieve well, for example when working towards GCSE qualifications.

57. Pupils with statements of SEN have individual education plans based upon the objectives and provisions set out in their statements; these are of variable quality. This is because many statements are old and out of date and do not provide a useful starting point for teachers' planning. More recent statements are much better, highlighting pupils' strengths as well as their learning needs. The SEN co-ordinator has worked successfully with colleagues to develop complementary planning and review arrangements, which are more effective in ensuring that individuals' needs are addressed, whilst enabling pupils to have full access to the curriculum.
58. Pupils with SEN are well supported in lessons by learning support assistants and teachers from the SEN department working in the classroom alongside the subject teachers. In the best lessons these staff have been able to plan together how best to support pupils on the SEN register. In one English lesson for example, both teachers followed a clearly negotiated support plan which enabled the pupils with SEN to consolidate their understanding of instructional writing, keep up with their peers and make good progress. Provision for pupils with English as an additional language for the small number of pupils involved, is good on most occasions.
59. The work of the SEN team has been enhanced by the initiatives introduced under the EiC. In particular the work of the learning mentors and the learning support unit (LSU) are also successfully supporting the learning of pupils who are at risk of underachieving. Staff from these various teams collaborate very effectively and enhance the curricular experience of their pupils well.
60. The provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education overall is good. The school's aims and values are evident throughout, not only expressed in clear, accessible language on the walls of each classroom, but reflected in the very good relationships between members of the school community, in the work ethos and the respect shown by all members of the school community for each other. The mission statement for the Sports College "pride, participation, performance, passion, praise" is displayed around the school and reflects aspirations that arise from the whole-school ethos. The statement is clearly exhibited in practical opportunities in school to which pupils respond very well.
61. Regular year group assemblies provide a focus for the exploration of a theme for the week, which is also discussed during registration and sometimes followed through in lessons, such as art and RE. During the week of the inspection the theme of 'helping others' was sensitively discussed in a Year 11 assembly and related to topical events in another country. Frequent visiting speakers help pupils reflect on issues, as in a Year 7 assembly where the local minister explored the importance of everyone using gifts and talents to the full. Opportunities for spiritual reflection are built in to the RE lessons, where pupils explore values, beliefs and purposes in relation to their own lives. In art, pupils are helped to think about their own feelings and communicate a personal response visually. Very successful whole-school events such as the "Tech on Tour" project help pupils celebrate and share their achievement across a range of subject areas, including food technology, fashion, English and performing arts.

62. The school provides a good basis for pupils' moral education and promotes principles that enable pupils to distinguish right from wrong. Discipline is well implemented through an assertive and positive approach, and helps pupils take responsibility for their own actions. Moral issues are explored in lessons. For example in history, Year 9 pupils studying the Holocaust look at how conditions for intolerance, exploitation and bigotry developed. The learning mentor scheme, established through EiC, builds on a previous successful mentoring scheme and is a good example of the sensitive and supportive work with individuals, which helps their personal and academic development.
63. Opportunities for pupils' social development are good. The pupils are involved in many projects in the local community and the integration of adult education into the life of the school has a positive effect. In art, groups of pupils take part annually in the community Fish Quay Festival and are often involved in working with local hospital and feeder schools. The wide range of extra-curricular activities, particularly in sport, helps children to work together co-operatively and develop socially. A school council has been established and pupils' views are taken into account on a range of issues. The Total Learning Project involved the use of drama to help develop pupils' 'emotional literacy'. Through the Millennium Volunteers Scheme, Year 11 pupils work in the local community, linked to the Community Sports Leadership Award. Pupils are encouraged to explore social issues such as divorce, drugs, crime and poverty through lessons in drama and RE. In registration the thought for the day is considered, often provoking a good response, such as when a Year 7 pupil contributed "walls keep people apart and bridges join people together" to the discussion. In one assembly, a visiting speaker helped Year 7 pupils enjoy trying out the use of sign language to accompany a Michael Jackson song, effectively developing their understanding of universal communication and the wider community.
64. The development of pupils' cultural education is good. Pupils are involved in a wide range of extra-curricular activities and in annual performances such as the recent "The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe", linking aspects of music and performing arts. This is another indication of the hard work put in by many teachers across a range of activities. In this case musical activities continue despite the difficulties about the subject noted elsewhere. The contribution of the local community to pupils' cultural development is good as pupils learn to understand the background to their own society. There are many school trips abroad, most recently to China and Spain, and visitors from other cultures, such as the Yimimbolo music group, who performed in assembly and spent time in lessons. In PSHE pupils think about what life in another culture might entail and explore issues such as the survival of the Bororo Indians. In history the study of different civilisations is put into context, linking, for example, with the experiences of Islamic pupils. In art, the work of non-western cultures, such as Aboriginal art, provides an inspiration for pupils' own painting. While these particular examples of understanding other cultures beyond the local and national are good, the school needs to consider how to develop pupils' multi-cultural knowledge and understanding across the subjects of the curriculum, an area of work which is currently satisfactory but could be improved.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

65. The steps taken to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety and to support their personal and educational development are good overall, with some very significant strengths in the ethos and systems for pastoral support and guidance. Teachers know their pupils very well. The school is inclusive in its nature, all individuals are valued for their achievements. Some lapses of health and safety were reported to the school.
66. The pastoral system is very effective. The formal system is led by an assistant head teacher supported by heads of year and form tutors along with staff, such as mentors and learning support teachers and assistants. These members of staff have a strong role in promoting the personal and academic standards that the school expects and facilitating support for those who need extra help. Beyond this formal system, all teachers show concern for pupils' welfare in a supportive ethos. These approaches mean that pupils are well known and have staff they can readily turn to. Pupils and parents respond positively to this supportive, secure environment.
67. Form tutors have a major role in delivering PSHE through effective use of the time that they spend with their tutor group and some good examples of this aspect of the school's work were seen during the inspection. There are formal procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development that provide them with personal support programmes, access to mentors, clear targets and development of study skills. The mentoring systems have been particularly effective in raising standards.
68. The systems for monitoring pupils' academic performance are good. Individual teachers and departments keep good records of progress, subject teachers know pupils very well and tutors are very aware of pupils' strengths and weaknesses, both academically and in their personal development. This close knowledge of individual pupils is a positive influence in pupils' good achievements. The information has been useful in the support and guidance for pupils, for instance in choosing options, careers guidance and choosing of courses for post-16 education. It has also been useful in identifying how individual pupils can make use of education beyond the school day. The school's systems for identifying the progress and achievements of different groups of pupils are not so well developed, partly because the ICT systems are not yet fully in place to do this efficiently.
69. Good systems are in place to monitor and improve attendance. These are helping to achieve a good level of whole-school attendance and improvements for most pupils who are identified for extra support. Registers are taken at the beginning of each morning and afternoon as well as during each lesson. The registers are generally well maintained and are supplemented by computerised data for use by heads of year in obtaining an up-to-date overview of form and individual rates. Pupils receive rewards as individuals, for instance for excellent attendance, that work as a good motivator for success. Associated support procedures are in place which enable staff and support workers to liaise with each other, parents and pupils to reduce unauthorised absences and help pupils improve their personal attendance record. Punctuality is given a high profile and prefects record the names of those pupils who arrive late each morning to enable heads of year to instigate appropriate responses.

70. Staff take care that pupils learn right from wrong and monitor their conduct well. Clear guidance is provided for parents and pupils on how the school expects pupils to behave and these are reinforced throughout the school. Staff work hard to establish and maintain very good relationships with pupils based on friendliness, care and mutual respect. Staff act as good role-models and this has a significant impact on the quality of behaviour in lessons and around school. The school has adopted an assertive discipline approach that rewards positive attitudes and generally this is well used by teachers and support staff. Throughout the school pupils receive merit points for good work, effort and conduct, including willingness to take on personal responsibility. A range of sanctions and support is used in response to challenging behaviour with the aim of guiding pupils towards acceptable conduct. A supervised room is set aside where pupils are sent should they need to be removed from class to enable other pupils to work. Other instances of poor conduct that require action lead pupils to detention after school or, in extreme cases, to exclusion from school for a short time. These measures work well in the majority of cases. Permanent exclusion is rarely used.
71. Procedures for monitoring and eliminating oppressive behaviour are implemented well. These are supported by the tutor systems and staff who maintain a high profile around school during breaks. Pupils consulted during the inspection were satisfied that instances of bullying in school were few and that they are able to seek help if needed. A particularly strong feature of pupils' support is the variety of means at the disposal of pupils for obtaining help from staff in complete confidence, either for themselves or other pupils. Pupils are sure that all concerns are responded to appropriately.
72. Arrangements for the supervision of pupils entering and leaving the school and during breaks are good overall. The school has established clubs and drop-in areas that enable pupils access to indoor facilities with activities that they often help to organise. These make a valuable contribution to their personal development.
73. Child protection procedures are satisfactory. Locally agreed procedures are in place and members of staff with designated responsibilities have received appropriate training. Other teachers and support staff are guided by senior managers but the school has not yet provided them with specific training.
74. The school has a very good policy for managing health and safety, but this is not fully implemented to ensure a systematic annual risk assessment and prompt, effective response to identified hazards in all areas of school activity. A small number of lapses in ensuring health and safety arrangements were evident during the inspection and reported to the school. Some of the lapses were associated with the problems of the quality of the accommodation for PE. The governors have recently established a committee with specific responsibility for responding to health and safety issues.
75. A teacher is trained in first aid and able to be contacted quickly, although he is unable to leave the classroom until another adult can replace him. First aid boxes are strategically placed around the school. The arrangements for managing the day-to-day medical needs of pupils are satisfactory. Although there is no sick bay, supervision is provided for pupils waiting to be collected if they need to go home. A weekly confidential counselling and advice service is provided on site.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

76. Parents are very positive about the work of the school and the education it provides for their children. They are pleased with all of the various aspects of the school's work. Parents are particularly happy that the school expects their child to work hard and do their best, that their child is making good progress, and that the school is very approachable. This strong support for the school coincides with the positive attitudes to school of the pupils and their associated good achievement. A small number of parents were not as happy about the level of homework, some wanting more, some wanting less, although the school's provision is typical. A very small number would like a better system for parents' meetings, the organisation of which the school is reviewing. The arrangements for formal consultations are similar to those in other schools but some parents would appreciate a system that would allow them to speak to all teachers in the allotted time.
77. Links with parents are effective. The school values parents' contributions and good procedures are in place for actively involving parents as partners in support of their children's academic and personal development, for instance through the use of pupils planners which parents check frequently. The school has a particularly well developed range of links with parents which help their child prepare for secondary school. Parents are encouraged to contact school whenever they feel the need and the school endeavours to work closely with parents of pupils who experience difficulties. There is a good response from parents when pupils require extra help.
78. The information provided for parents is very good overall. The school prospectus provides a range of useful information on school procedures and events and the results of public tests and examinations are provided each year. Information in the prospectus on what is taught is a simple list of subjects and the amount of time devoted to them, with additional specific information on the school's arrangements for sex education, collective worship and RE. However, annual reports to parents on how well their child is doing are of an extremely high quality and include good detail on aspects of each subject area and associated pupil progress, with targets for further improvement. They report on pupils' attendance and responses to a wide range of aspects within their school life. Teachers are available for formal consultation and informally should parents require more information. Pupil planners also indicate to parents how well their child is attending and how many merits they are achieving, as well as indicating what homework is set each week. This homework diary was satisfactorily used during the inspection.
79. The school enjoys effective links with parents of pupils with SEN and is endeavouring to bring its procedures in line with the requirements of the revised SEN code of practice. Staff hold high expectations of the parents' contribution in supporting the learning of their children, mainly through supporting the regular completion of homework, attendance at annual reviews and effective partnership in response to pupil needs identified through the individual tracking arrangements.

80. The impact of parents upon the work of the school beyond their individual child and supporting main school events is satisfactory overall. The school acknowledges the working life of parents and that the school is at one end of its catchment area. The school welcomes the support of parents in its work but a very small number help, for example with individual pupils or with sports coaching from time to time. At the time of the inspection the previously active parent/teacher association had lapsed because there were too few volunteers. Special events, such as ceremonies and concerts are very well supported by parents. Very few parents attended the meeting arranged for them before the inspection, although a significant number of questionnaires was returned.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

81. Leadership and management are very good, having been effective in maintaining and raising academic standards and achievement, and very effective in developing a positive ethos in which pupils attitudes to school are very good. The school's aims, crystallised in the mission statement, are evident in the daily life of the school and pupils and staff live up to them very well.
82. Effective strategic leadership from the head teacher working with an experienced, skilled and knowledgeable senior management team provides teamwork in which the strengths of the individuals complement each other and are well used. The team, made up of the head teacher, deputy, three assistant heads and the senior manager (administration) has both broad and detailed knowledge of the school. The breadth of responsibilities is particularly useful. The team is cohesive, hard working and committed to providing a good education for all pupils. Individual responsibilities are defined, and levels of overlap allow the team members to cover for each other as needed. A recently appointed director of community sport has now joined the team to support sports college development.
83. The governing body is very effective in providing strategic leadership and direction, in being a critical friend, and in holding the school to account. Individual members of the governing body come from a variety of complementary backgrounds, for instance in business, local government and politics, and education. Further to this, many have taken part in governor training. Their wide experience and skills have enabled the governors to take a very positive role in the strategic development of the school. A recent example of this was the decision to invest heavily in IT, which has resulted in an above average provision of computers for pupils. Governors are well aware of what is happening in school, receive regular reports from the head teacher and individual departments, and have systems for linking with individual developments in school. As such they are well placed to make decisions. They have fulfilled their responsibilities for setting challenging targets for pupils' attainment, and set appropriate objectives through performance management arrangements.
84. The governors meet all statutory requirements except for collective worship because all pupils do not have provision for a daily act of collective worship. This was a key issue at the time of the last inspection. However, the school provides regular assemblies for pupils, many based upon well-organised themes, but not all assemblies include an act of worship.

85. The school's development planning is very good, because it is having significant effects upon provision and the school's successes. The strategic plan, developed in response to the last inspection, has proved to be a useful tool for guiding the school forward. Rather than translate every priority into detailed and costed activities each year, the school's approach has been to choose a small number of priorities each year for detailed work, and then work through department plans for other school priorities. This approach has been very effective, for instance during the past year, in the good approaches of the EiC work, the excellent and successful Sports College application, and the provision of ICT equipment. The school has made effective use of national, local and LEA advice in its developments.
86. The strengths of the leadership and management in many subjects are because of individual teachers' qualities, but also because there are clear systems in place for planning, delivery and review. The quality of leadership in subjects is directly affecting the standards achieved by pupils and their attitudes to the subjects.
87. The management of the provision for SEN is good. The school complies with national requirements. Delegation of funds to the school from the LEA for this aspect is low and much support is held centrally. However, the school manages the wide-ranging support to good effect and this enables pupils to make good progress. This has also been true for most of the pupils who have been learning English as an additional language. The well experienced co-ordinator works closely with other key staff under the direction of a member of the senior management team and these arrangements add coherence to the various support strands now embedded in the school, such as mentoring and the learning support unit. The head teacher and governing body provide clear and firm strategic leadership in relation to the promotion of inclusive practice with an appropriate emphasis upon the achievement of high standards for all pupils, including those with learning difficulties. They make effective use of the comparative performance data available about pupils with SEN to help them judge the overall impact of their provisions and despite their improving record manage to avoid complacency.
88. The school has developed a number of good systems for self-review, including documentation, approaches and monitoring of teaching, meaning that managers have a good view of the school's strengths and weaknesses. This has helped to focus both whole-school and department priorities. A particularly effective approach has been the detailed self review and monitoring carried out by departments, which has led to specific improvements in provision, the review by the English department being an example of one which is particularly detailed and incisive. This approach will be useful in tackling weaknesses in individual departments.
89. There are also areas for development in school self-review. The school has access to a great deal of data about its performance, from data analysis provided by the LEA and internal procedures. At the moment these do not have an overall plan for collection and use. As a result the school is not able easily enough to compare the performance of the whole school or groups within the school which would help in its decision-making on curriculum and academic decisions. The school has made a sound start in the introduction of performance management systems and this has helped to raise the quality of teaching and overall provision in some individual subjects. However, senior management rightly recognises the need to tackle all areas of weakness in teaching by improving the systems of monitoring and support for improvement.

90. Information technology is increasingly being used to support the school's efficiency. This is effective in the day-to-day management systems, such as collating and analysing attendance data, holding general records about individual pupils, and preparing the school timetable. Individual teachers are making increasing use of ICT to support their own work and the school is rightly planning training for teachers in the use of ICT. The school needs to make more use of electronic data transfer systems to effectively track pupils' progress, particularly for groups of pupils.
91. The school has made good progress since the last inspection. The strengths of the school have been retained, weaknesses eliminated or reduced, the quality of provision and standards improved. Progress in the key issues from the last inspection has been good overall. Very good progress was made in developing the strategic plan, improving the curriculum and school management systems. All of these have helped to improve provision for pupils and the progress that they make. Good progress has been made in developing monitoring and evaluating systems, particularly at department level, and in the use of data, even though there are still developments to be made beyond the original intentions. Good progress in developing study skills has helped to raise attainment. The safety considerations identified were satisfactorily dealt with, although others have since arisen. The school still does not meet the requirements for collective worship, but tutorial time is now used satisfactorily.
92. School financial procedures are very good. The deputy head teacher has a clear overview and detailed knowledge of spending decisions. The school is therefore able to make sensible decisions and spend its budget wisely. This is a good achievement, given the complications that have arisen as a result of the funding from EiC, from Sports College status and other funding sources. The governors have wisely taken decisions about monitoring of separate budgets that will enable them to make decisions based upon good analysis. The senior manager (administration) is also a member of the senior management team. This is an important decision, given the high level of self-management in which this school is involved. It means, for example, that decisions about such aspects as building developments can be made in light of full knowledge about the school's financial position and educational priorities. The school uses almost all of its funding with little kept in reserve. This is appropriate given the changing nature of the school with its increasing numbers and new funding sources. The school's other administrative procedures are good, supported by an effective office team. The school is well placed to be able to respond to the requests for information from parents and a wide variety of local and national government and independent organisations. The management information systems still need further improvement to allow all teachers to make full use of appropriate data and to transfer information efficiently.
93. The school management and governors are very aware of the need to ensure best value in their operations and do so well, particularly in decisions about purchasing. They have made decisions about developments such as Sports College and ICT facilities that will have a positive effect on standards. It is clear that the school has challenged itself to think beyond traditional approaches. The school should now consider looking to ways to compare itself with others, for instance in pupils' standards and achievements, and comparative expenditure on different aspects of the school's provision of which it was not until recently aware. Although leadership and management are very good, this will need to be fully reflected in all areas in high pupil achievement given rising standards of pupils on entry and increased funding.

The school therefore needs to continue to develop ways to judge improvements and to tackle identified areas of weakness.

94. There are sufficient teachers to cover the curriculum and few teachers are working out of their area of specialism. The school has a detailed and well-planned approach to staff development and new staff are well inducted into school procedures and ethos. The school is rightly developing the ability to act as an initial teacher trainer. Although the school has worked hard to ensure appropriate specialist coverage for absent staff, this has not been successful all of the time, particularly in music. The school has changed and expanded its complement of teachers through natural turnover and increased numbers of pupils.
95. The school is well served by its non-teaching staff across a range of duties, they contribute well to the efficiency of the school and its ethos.
96. There is sufficient accommodation and the quality is mainly good. It is clean and well maintained and is overseen by the site manager who works closely with the governors' finance committee. The school foyer is welcoming to visitors and works of art in this and other areas help pupils to develop pride in their surroundings. Facilities for ICT are good. The accommodation generally meets curricular needs except in PE, where the lack of a sports hall restricts Key Stage 4 games and the gymnasias and changing rooms are in urgent need of repair and refurbishment. The dining room is inadequate for the numbers of pupils. This has led to pupils choosing to go off-site during lunchtimes, resulting in some increased litter and local concerns which the school has worked hard to address. An asset management plan and suitability survey has been carried out and priorities identified including expansion of the dining area and upgrading of the electrical system, which will be dealt with on a rolling programme within the LEA and school's asset management plan.
97. Resources for learning in most subjects are adequate. The school is very well supplied with computers, with a computer-pupil ratio much better than the national average. However, in DT, there is insufficient computer aided design and making equipment and control technology equipment, and some problems with work benches, causing difficulties for teachers in managing coverage of the National Curriculum. There are shortages of books in the library and stock is under review.
98. In judging the school's value for money a number of different aspects need consideration because of the school's changing nature. The older pupils in school began their secondary school career with standards below average, although the youngest pupils now have standards around average when they start. Pupils achieve well overall, and in some aspects their achievement is very good, for instance in their achievement in 2000 national assessments compared with similar schools. By the time pupils leave school they reach standards which are mostly around the national average and in some respects better. Pupils' attitudes to school, their behaviour and their personal development, are very well supported by the school, within an orderly and hard-working atmosphere. The school is successful in meeting its own aims. The quality of education, particularly teaching, that pupils receive is good and there is a significant amount of very good teaching. The school's budget, not taking into account recent initiatives, is above average. There is considerable new funding for the school and first indications are that the school is using this funding effectively to improve provision, even though it is rather early to judge the overall effect on standards. Considering all of these factors, the school can be judged to provide good value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

99. In order to continue to improve standards and educational provision, the governors, head teacher and staff should:

- (1) In music:
 - (i) provide consistency of teaching;
 - (ii) strengthen management and schemes of work;
 - (iii) develop opportunities for pupils to study the subject in Key Stage 4. (Paragraphs 8, 30, 46, 189)
- (2) In MFL, to allow pupils to achieve at least satisfactorily, widen the range of teaching styles and activities. (Paragraphs 8, 29, 183, 184)
- (3) Improve the achievements of pupils, particularly higher attainers, in the minority of lessons where pupils are not given sufficiently challenging work:
 - (i) by developing teachers' knowledge and skills through performance management systems;
 - (ii) making full use of the strengths of department self-review. (Paragraphs 14, 27, 88, 89)
- (4) To improve the use of data:
 - (i) develop methods by which teachers can use assessment data to choose learning activities suitable for different groups of pupils;
 - (ii) develop improved ICT based systems of data collection, analysis and transfer to help managers and teachers judge the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. (Paragraphs 33, 89, 90)
- (5) To improve cross-curricular provision in ICT, numeracy and literacy:
 - (i) ensure that cross-curricular planning and provision for ICT is effectively co-ordinated so that all pupils have the opportunity to achieve high standards;
 - (ii) continue to develop the work already begun in developing cross-curricular literacy;
 - (iii) ensure that cross-curricular numeracy is effectively planned. (Paragraphs 10, 11, 12, 38, 39, 45, 47).
- (6) Make arrangements to ensure that the accommodation deficiencies in PE and sport do not limit pupils' achievements. (Paragraphs 96, 204).

100. In addition to the key issues above, the following less important areas for improvement should be considered for inclusion in the action plan resulting from the inspection:

- progress in resistant materials in DT; (Paragraphs 8, 152)
- the confidence of some pupils, particularly girls, in expressing opinions; (Paragraphs 14, 137)
- health and safety lapses; (Paragraphs 65, 74)
- dining facilities; (Paragraph 96)
- DT and library resources; (Paragraph 97)
- relative standards of boys and girls; (Paragraphs 8, 152)
- provision for collective worship; (Paragraphs 49, 84)

- multi-cultural education. (Paragraph 64)

[OTHER SPECIFIED FEATURES]

Community Links

101. Community links are very good and have a significant impact upon the school. The school values its place in the community and enjoys a wide range of links with individuals and organisations which provide pupils with valuable opportunities to help them develop an understanding of social institutions and conventions, their role as citizens and possibilities for their future within the world of work. For example, links with local businesses and colleges are used to provide pupils with work experience. Members of local churches make valuable contributions to RE and collective worship. Representatives from local sports clubs provide coaching. Representatives of charities give presentations to pupils on the work that they do in the community and how pupils can support them. There is a particularly well-developed link with Age Concern that has a very positive impact on areas of study as well as pupils' personal development. Access to the Internet and developing skills in ICT enable many pupils to link with others around the world.
102. Links with parents and primary schools as part of the induction of new pupils are very well developed and have a positive impact on pupils settling into school. Staff visit the primary schools to meet pupils and parents and outline what they can expect from the next stage of education. In addition, pupils are able to question Year 7 pupils about the school and their experiences when they visit their former primary school with their new head of year. Parents and pupils are invited into school to look around the departments and facilities and to see sections of the school in action. They have the opportunity to meet form tutors and contribute to future friendship groupings if they feel there is a need. There are well-established procedures to enable the school to become well informed about the pupils it is receiving. Teachers in the English department have visited primary schools to learn about the work pupils are covering in the national literacy strategy.
103. A very good feature of provision is the summer school, which is literacy-based and provides a very good further opportunity for some pupils to get to know their peers and some of the staff in readiness for entering the school. This summer school makes good use of the region to provide enjoyable outings, for example to museums and landmarks locally, and opportunities for pupils to produce account of their visits. This makes a very good contribution towards developing literacy and social skills and appreciation of local heritage and popular culture.
104. The school has good links with local post-16 providers of education and is beginning to develop stronger higher education links, for instance to support the gifted and talented group of pupils. These links are helping to improve staying on rates for further education. Strong curriculum links, for instance in work-related curriculum, mathematics, science and art, with the adjoining special school (Southlands) support pupils' progress well. Pupils' positive attitudes to community are enhanced, for instance by Year 7 pupils from the special school being timetabled for PE with John Spence School.

105. The school has recently achieved Sports College status that, in partnership with a range of organisations and individuals, will provide greatly enhanced facilities for pupils and the wider community. This is a major aspect of the school's commitment to community education and is a further means of establishing the school within the local community especially and the region in general. As well as the potential for developing sporting skills and promoting excellence in PE amongst pupils during school hours, it is intended that the facility will provide greater opportunities for extra-curricular activities as well as links with other subject areas, for example through a sports focus in curriculum developments.
106. Adult education provision at the school has a positive effect on the opportunities for pupils to develop lifelong learning as part of a wider community. The school is designated by the Learning and Skills Council as an external institution provider of adult education. It recruits its own staff and pupils in partnership with the LEA's community education function. The school is committed to meeting the needs of the community, for instance by responding to the demand for greater ICT course provision it has introduced the European Computer Driving Licence. Many of the 550 adult pupils follow vocational courses using ICT, an example of how the school is making effective use of its good provision of computers. Leisure courses involve an additional 100 pupils, resulting in some voluntary progressing to examination courses. This demonstrates how the school's commitment to lifelong learning is supporting the community. Further to this the school has family learning opportunities, for instance in Spanish, for parents and children to learn together. This is a very positive approach but still at an early stage of development. Adult education provision is well organised by an experienced and able administrator.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	150
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	58

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	5	24	64	47	9	1	0
Percentage	3	16	43	31	6	1	0

The table gives the number and percentage of lessons observed in each of the seven categories used to make judgements about teaching

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils on the school's roll	890
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	190

Special educational needs	Y7 – Y11
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	21
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	183

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	7

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	30
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	14

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	6.9
National comparative data	7.7

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.7
National comparative data	0.4

Both tables give the percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 3 (Year 9)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 3 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	91	74	165

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	56	65	63
	Girls	53	44	44
	Total	109	109	107
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	66 (47)	66 (57)	65 (43)
	National	63(63)	65 (62)	59 (55)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	22 (16)	40 (26)	26 (8)
	National	28 (28)	42(38)	30 (23)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 5 and above	Boys	25	57	76
	Girls	42	42	57
	Total	67	99	133
Percentage of pupils at NC level 5 or above	School	41 (42)	60 (62)	81 (55)
	National	64 (64)	66 (64)	62 (60)
Percentage of pupils at NC level 6 or above	School	18 (18)	39 (25)	35 (21)
	National	31 (31)	39 (37)	29 (28)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 4 (Year 11)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 4 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	78	79	157

GCSE results		5 or more grades A* to C	5 or more grades A*-G	1 or more grades A*-G
Numbers of pupils achieving the standard specified	Boys	24	75	77
	Girls	40	77	79
	Total	64	152	156
Percentage of pupils achieving the standard specified	School	41 (37)	97 (93)	99 (98)
	National	47.4 (46.6)	90.6 (90.9)	95.6 (95.8)

Percentages in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

GCSE results		GCSE point score
Average point score per pupil	School	36.1
	National	38.4

Figures in brackets refer to the year before the latest reporting year.

Vocational qualifications	Number	% success rate
Number studying for approved vocational qualifications or units and the percentage of those pupils who achieved all those they studied	School	12 91.7
	National	n/a

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	3
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	9
Chinese	1
White	875
Any other minority ethnic group	2

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y7– Y11

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	51.9
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	17.2

Education support staff: Y7 – Y11

Total number of education support staff	8
Total aggregate hours worked per week	277

Deployment of teachers: Y7 – Y11

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	71.7
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Average teaching group size: Y7 – Y11

Key Stage 3	24.8
Key Stage 4	24.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	10
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	16

Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	0
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	1

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage		
Black – African heritage		
Black – other		
Indian		
Pakistani		
Bangladeshi	3	
Chinese		
White	63	
Other minority ethnic groups		

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	2,393,234.00
Total expenditure	2,430,246.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,842.39
Balance brought forward from previous year	66,965.00
Balance carried forward to next year	29,953.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	860
Number of questionnaires returned	374

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	31	58	8	2	2
My child is making good progress in school.	45	46	3	0	6
Behaviour in the school is good.	36	48	7	1	8
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	25	52	12	3	7
The teaching is good.	34	58	3	0	5
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	38	46	9	1	6
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	56	36	3	1	3
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	63	34	0	0	2
The school works closely with parents.	33	51	9	1	6
The school is well led and managed.	36	50	3	1	9
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	40	49	5	1	5
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	42	8	2	13

Other issues raised by parents

A very small number of parents expressed a wish for better arrangements for parents' meetings.

PART D: THE STANDARDS AND QUALITY OF TEACHING IN AREAS OF THE CURRICULUM, SUBJECTS AND COURSES

ENGLISH

108. Overall, the quality of provision in English is good.

Strengths

- Results at Key Stage 3 are above national averages, and GCSE results are above those of similar schools. Pupils' achievement is good.
- The quality of teaching is consistently good.
- The department is very well managed and keen to try initiatives to improve standards and quality of provision.
- Pupils are well-prepared for tests and examinations.
- There is a good range of opportunities in the English curriculum, including ICT:

Areas for improvement

- Occasionally over-directed lessons and some lengthy starter activities do not yet reflect the new national Key Stage 3 strategy.

109. Standards in English are improving and are around average. Pupils achieve better than might be expected, because of the good teaching and management of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

110. At Key Stage 3, results in 2000 were just above the national average at Level 5 and above. In 2001, results were significantly above average. Girls achieved particularly high results in this year, significantly above those of boys, although rates of pupils' progress in the key stage were similar.

111. In GCSE in 2000, standards were below average but above the average for schools in similar circumstances. Results in 2001 were much the same in English and slightly down in English literature, but this is a good outcome given the prior attainment of this cohort of pupils, who have made good progress in English during their time at school.

112. The standard of written work seen during the inspection is now in line with national expectations, this shows improvement since previous assessments. There is a full range of ability in the school. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 3 use a wide range of vocabulary. They can adapt style to audience and purpose. They are already developing GCSE skills, especially in response to poetry. Middle attaining pupils tend to make spelling errors and to have difficulty with sentence construction. Lower attaining pupils do not use capital letters and full stops accurately. Pupils at the end of Key Stage 4 who will attain the highest grades can write detailed and sophisticated analysis of literary texts. Middle attaining pupils produce careful coursework, although some (for example, on media) tend to be descriptive rather than analytical. Lower attaining pupils write at length and show a vivid use of language (for example, in creative work responding to war poetry), but sentence construction is still insecure.

113. There is no longer under-achievement in reading, which was mentioned in the previous inspection report. Pupils at all levels of ability have a good understanding and recall of texts they have read in school. Pupils in Year 7 are enthusiastic about their own independent reading, as was shown in a discussion about their favourite books. At both key stages, higher attaining pupils read aloud fluently. Lower attaining pupils are more hesitant in their reading, but they are willing to try. The level of skill in speaking varies from pupils who are confident and articulate, to pupils who are only prepared to give very short answers.
114. The quality of teaching is particularly good, at least satisfactory in every case, and 80% of lessons are good, some very good. This is a high level of consistency and an improvement since the last inspection. Staff in the English department now teach to clear objectives. They have adopted techniques to help pupils structure their writing carefully, for example, pupils were asked to analyse some letters to newspapers before going on to write their own on a different topic.
115. All teachers prepare materials carefully for lessons. Questioning is well-used to draw responses from pupils at all levels of ability, and when classes are given the opportunity to engage in group discussion, this is well organised. In one GCSE group, pupils were given responsibility for the task of preparing commentaries on different speeches in a play, and they then presented these confidently to their peers. This provided a good level of challenge to higher attaining pupils. Boys and girls are equally supported.
116. The department has worked hard to prepare for the new national Key Stage 3 English strategy. Planning has been very good and teachers are trying out new approaches. As yet, the short “starter” activities are somewhat lengthy. Pupils at Key Stage 4 are well prepared for the GCSE coursework, and in literature teachers guide classes to play close attention to the writer’s choice of language and its effect. Occasionally, lessons are over-directed.
117. In lessons where extra support is provided, teamwork between the class teacher and the support teacher is good. Pupils with SEN make good progress and pupils who have English as an additional language make rapid improvement in their language skills.
118. Pupils respond well and often very well in lessons, contributing to discussions and participating in tasks willingly. They listen carefully to their teachers and pupils at all levels of ability listen appreciatively to each other’s work. Teachers have good relationships with their classes and are very good role-models.
119. The last inspection report said that further development in ICT was needed in the English department. This has been remedied. The department now has its own computer suite, which is regularly used by classes. Pupils have the opportunity to word-process their work or to create posters and newspaper pages. The English computer suite is used each week for a homework club and a newspaper club.

120. The department is very well managed. It is a reflective department that constantly reviews its practice in order to raise standards. Curriculum provision is particularly good. Pupils' work is carefully assessed and there are systems for monitoring teaching. Assessments are standardised to ensure consistency. All English staff have detailed data on their pupils, which helps them to see how progress is being maintained. Teamwork among all members of the department is very good.

MATHEMATICS

121. Overall, the quality of provision in mathematics is good.

Strengths

- Standards attained at the end of each key stage are well above the average in similar schools.
- Teaching of mathematics is sound and has a number of strengths. In particular the development, to provide continuity, of teaching approaches used in primary schools.
- Management of pupils is good, consequently the attitudes and the behaviour of pupils are good.
- High attaining pupils make good progress; they make good progress with statistics work in Key Stage 4.
- The mathematics department is well organised and led, bringing about good improvement since the last inspection.

Areas for improvement

- The range of introductory and main activities in lessons is limited.
- Assessment is not used well enough to set all pupils work that is sufficiently challenging.
- Key Stage 2 assessment information is not used well to inform curriculum progression and continuity from Year 6.
- Direct formal monitoring of teaching is not undertaken as the department intends.

122. Standards in mathematics are average and pupils are achieving well, because of sound teaching approaches that have some strengths, and the good management of the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

123. Standards attained in national tests in 2000 at both key stages are in line with those found nationally, and in comparison with similar schools are well above average. At Key Stage 4 the proportion of pupils entered for GCSE and also the percentage achieving a qualification is creditably high. A significantly high proportion of pupils gained a B or higher grade, although none an A*. Relative to their performance in other subjects, pupils performed well in GCSE mathematics. Results from 2001 show Key Stage 3 percentages are not as high as they were in 2000. GCSE results in 2001 show an increase in the schools proportion of A*-C grades.

124. Standards achieved by all pupils in lessons and as seen in their work are good, given their prior attainment. High attaining pupils make good progress over Key Stage 3; they make good progress with statistics work in Year 10 and as a consequence with their mathematics overall in Year 11. They work confidently and accurately with cumulative frequency, lines of best fit and the calculation and implications of standard deviation. Lower attaining pupils consolidate their Key Stage 3 work on mean, median and mode and develop this to calculating averages for grouped data. All pupils understand and know about the properties of 2 and 3-dimensional shapes and how to use formulae to find volume and area. Middle and higher attaining pupils use algebraic techniques to evaluate equations derived from physical situations. The high attaining pupils work confidently with techniques to solve simultaneous and quadratic equations. In Key Stage 3 high attainers have a sound understanding of sequence and can find the expression to give any term. For example, in a good Year 9 lesson pupils moved at a pace, from generating sequences from the pattern, then by substitution into a formulae, then onto finding the expression for the “nth term” ($40-5n$). Earlier in the key stage they have developed an understanding of basic algebra, properties of 2-dimensional shapes and approximation, estimation and rounding. This shows good progress has been made.
125. Teaching is sound and has a number of strengths that support pupils’ learning and achievement in lessons. These strengths outweigh the weaknesses identified. Teachers’ knowledge and understanding of mathematics and their teaching of basic skills are good. All teachers’ expectations of pupils, teaching methods, planning, use of time and homework are sound. Their management of pupils is good. Most lessons start with a short but brisk mental oral activity. These result in pupils thinking about and working with number. The department has rightly introduced and is developing this aspect of mathematics teaching, because as yet teachers are using a limited range of activities. In one good activity with Year 7 pupils all were actively involved in answering questions related to the number 20 through the demanding pace of questioning and the use of individual whiteboards to ensure that all provided an answer to every question. The introduction to the main activity usually moves with good pace as a result of effective questioning and on occasions the setting of appropriate time-scales. In a lesson with a Year 11 group the teacher challenged the pupils to see how many non-integer answers to a question they could find in 1 minute. Assessment is not used well enough, sometimes pupils do a lot of calculations that are too easy because they have not been directed to the questions suited to their level.
126. In all lessons the attitude and the behaviour of pupils is at least satisfactory and in half of them it is good or very good. Pupils are attentive, show interest in their work and concentrate well. Pupils respond well to the teaching approaches and management of behaviour. They are involved and answer questions during whole-class introductions. They work effectively without being dependant on the teacher but in Key Stage 3 are given few opportunities for independent work in which they make decisions about the mathematics and resources they will use. They work at a good pace, and many put a good amount of effort into their work. In a small number of lessons some individual pupils were observed to use strategies to avoid engaging with their work quickly, for example by writing out all questions before attempting the first one.
127. All pupils are provided with the breadth of the National Curriculum for mathematics. Computers as well as textbooks and worksheets are used satisfactorily alongside whole-class teacher-led sessions to provide a range of learning opportunities. High

attaining pupils are given the opportunity to follow a statistics course very successfully to GCSE and are supported in this and, as are all pupils with their preparation for GCSE mathematics, in lunchtime sessions.

128. The mathematics department is well organised and well led. This has brought about changes to curriculum and the development of teaching to improve standards. Teaching methodology is being developed to support continuity of the pupils' experience in primary school. However, Key Stage 2 statutory assessment information is not used well to inform curriculum progression and continuity from Year 6 to Year 7. Department documents show what is to be provided, how it will be provided and what will be developed. The department has a shared commitment to improve. Direct formal monitoring of teaching is not undertaken as stated in the department handbook. At the time of the inspection staff absence was having a negative impact on the work of the department and on the quality of teaching.
129. Since the last inspection there has been improvement in: GCSE and Key Stage 3 results; the pace of lessons; the proportion of satisfactory teaching; curriculum provision; teaching resources and teaching methodology. However, there are still some over repetitive exercises.

SCIENCE

130. Overall the quality of provision in science is good.

Strengths

- Results at both key stages have improved. They now reach national averages and are very good compared to those from similar schools.
- Pupils achieve well, develop sound understanding and produce above average quality written work.
- Many aspects of the teaching are good, with clear explanations and high expectations.
- Good leadership and management reflect the school's aims.
- A good start has been made in using ICT to support learning in science.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching styles are often over-directive and there are too few opportunities for pupils to develop their own ideas and to take initiative or carry out practical activities to develop further their investigational skills.
- Little use is being made of the recent staff training in accelerated learning.
- There are no plans for the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the new scheme for Key Stage 3.
- The inappropriate furniture in the science ICT room is reducing the effectiveness of lessons using ICT.

131. Standards in science are average. Pupils' achievement is good, because of good quality teaching within a well-led department. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

132. Over the last few years results in the National Curriculum tests for Key Stage 3 have generally risen and by 2000 were in line with national averages and very good compared to those in similar schools. 2001 test results were similar to 2000. Both boys and girls achieve well, given their attainment on entry to the school.

133. At Key Stage 4 all pupils take double award science at GCSE and gain an award. Over the past few years, results have improved, with an increasing percentage gaining an A-C grade, so that by 2000 standards were average. Pupils' results in science compare well with their results in other subjects. 2001 GCSE results showed a slight increase in the percentage of pupils who achieved higher grades, with lower attainment by boys than girls, however, these results represent good achievement given pupils' prior attainment.

134. Standards of work in lessons and in pupils' books largely reflect the results from national assessments. The majority of pupils develop average knowledge and understanding in all branches of science, whilst higher attaining pupils have particularly good understanding of the subject's abstract ideas and mathematical calculations. Written work is generally well presented and many books show a standard of work above average. Written reports of investigations carried out as GCSE coursework are also above average quality. Little practical work was seen during the inspection and experiments were usually over-directive through very precise instructions. This limited evidence suggests that pupils are able to use apparatus with care and accuracy. Pupils are able to use ICT to extend their scientific understanding, such as through the use of spreadsheets and data-loggers. Research projects about the work of scientists show that pupils are able to extract relevant information from books and the Internet and are learning about important scientific developments.
135. Almost all pupils are well behaved and work hard. They pay attention to the teacher, follow instructions and maintain concentration. They treat books and equipment with care, are trustworthy and co-operate well with each other. Overall pupils make good progress from the end of one key stage to the end of the next and achieve well.
136. Teaching is particularly good, most is satisfactory or better and much of it is good or very good. The strength of the teaching is a major factor in the success of the department, although the limited range of styles limits pupil development in some aspects of the subject. Teachers have good subject knowledge and regularly use this to give very clear explanations of abstract ideas. For example in a Year 11 lesson about chemical reactions, the teacher gave a very good explanation of the behaviour of electrons, which enables pupils to work out how atoms of different chemicals combine. Demonstrations are sometimes used very effectively to illustrate a concept. For instance, in a Year 9 lesson a group of pupils was used to illustrate the difference between continuous and discontinuous variation in a simple but accurate way, which made good use of ideas from the class. Expectations are usually high, with good attention being paid to detail. For example, in a lesson with Year 8 pupils, the teacher was very particular about the way pupils wrote out a chemical equation, which helped them to understand the main principle of equations. Good use of time helps pupils to make good progress within a lesson, such as when the teacher rapidly organises a practical activity in the second half of an assessment lesson, so that pupils are well prepared for the next lesson. In a few lessons ICT is used well to extend scientific understanding and to practice previously learned ICT skills, such as when a spreadsheet was used by Year 7 pupils to work out the energy derived from different meals. In a lesson with Year 8 good use was made of a self-assessment test so that pupils were very clear about what they need to revise for the end of unit test next lesson. End of unit tests, along with teacher assessment of pupils' work, are used to track pupil progress. Marking is thorough and often includes advice for improvement, although this is not always followed up by the pupils. The small amount of unsatisfactory teaching is caused by slow pace, lack of appropriate materials for a wide range of attainment and missed opportunities to explore pupils' understandings.
137. Despite these and other examples of good teaching, teachers often do not give pupils enough opportunities to practise and experiment independently using first-hand experience of enquiry. A few pupils, frequently girls, are not confident when expressing opinions.

138. The department is well managed and led by the head of department and second in charge. The department is well organised and runs smoothly on a day-to-day basis, benefiting from good staffing, including the work of two technicians, and good teamwork. The department reflects the aims of the school and clearly expects pupils to work hard and do well. Since the last inspection curriculum time has been improved and now matches the recommended allocation. Schemes of work have been improved and a new commercial scheme bought for Key Stage 3. Recent staff training on accelerated learning is a positive move, although little use is yet being made of it. The department now has its own ICT room, which provides good access to computers but the furniture reduces the effectiveness of lessons. There is clear educational direction for the subject and good use of resources. The current priorities for development are largely appropriate, but place insufficient emphasis on systematic evaluation, especially of initiatives.

ART AND DESIGN

139. Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is very good.

Strengths

- Standards of work are often above average and the quality of personal response is high.
- Teaching is good, with some outstanding, inspiring features, which help pupils achieve very well.
- Pupils are encouraged to work in groups and as individuals on large and small scale projects.
- The quality and range of the curriculum at both key stages is good and ensures pupils use a good balance of approaches.
- The excellent leadership in the subject provides a strong educational direction.

Areas for improvement

- The assessment system does not help the department to identify where pupils make most progress.

140. Standards in art and design are above average and pupils are achieving very well because of the inspiring teaching and excellent leadership in the subject. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

141. By the end of Key Stage 3 the majority of pupils reach the expected standard, with some above average attainment. In Year 9 they are able to draw with confidence on a large scale from life and develop these figure drawings into paintings which show character and originality. They can select images of drapery and costume from the work of artists of the Renaissance and this century, transcribe into a range of media, scan into the computer and manipulate sections of images in the "Artists' Washing Line" project. The Year 9 extended research project encouraged pupils to visit public sculpture and was completed well by the majority of the year group, who produced factual reports based on information from publications and the Internet. They expressed in writing what they felt about the work they chose, often explaining why they liked or disliked it, and presented the work well using ICT. Pupils across the ability range put a great deal of effort into the project and achieved a standard in line with and often above that expected.

142. GCSE art and design results in the past three years have improved considerably and in 2000 they were average. In 2001 more pupils gained higher grades. There was some very good attainment, with almost a third of pupils gaining A*-A grades in 2001. Boys' attainment was much below that of girls and the difference was greater than the national difference. Low numbers of pupils have taken art and design in Key Stage 4, and very few of these have been boys. However, the number of pupils choosing to take the subject in the present Years 10 and 11 has increased to around the national average, and the gender balance has improved.

143. The standards of work in Key Stage 4 are currently above average and often high. In Year 10, pupils who have only been doing the course for a few weeks have already amassed a good range of research for their book cover design. They have experimented with different media, tried out ideas for logos, collected images and typefaces for their designs. The most able pupils have scanned their own textural drawings into the computer and are able to add text and manipulate the images to try new effects. In another group, pupils have responded well to the idea of creating work based on a “cocoon”, or a place where they feel safe, by taking photographs using SLR and digital cameras, enlarging images, adding colour and texture and collecting examples of other artists work which relates to the theme. In Year 11, pupils have produced a range of original responses to the “BBC2 logo” graphics brief, some using dry media and paint to blend colour and others building up a textured relief using sand and papier mache. The more able pupils have incorporated lively observational studies into their ideas. Most have completed an impressive variety and amount of coursework at this stage and can talk with confidence about how they developed their ideas and describe the processes, using the appropriate technical terms. Attainment is similar amongst both boys and girls. A small group of girls explained how they had devised and produced a short video together and a group of boys enthusiastically showed a storyboard and photographs they had taken and processed for a time-based piece entitled “dead birds can’t fly”. Pupils have developed large scale, textural work based on photographs of rock strata and developed their ideas further into ceramics by making slab pots which are effectively decorated with coloured glazes, pattern and representational images. The work produced shows good technical skills in mixed media, card construction, batik, silk painting and printmaking, but most notable is the quality of personal response, which is imaginative and often original.
144. Pupils in Key Stage 3 make good progress across the full range of the National Curriculum. In a Year 7 lesson, pupils responded well to the high expectations of the teacher and were able to select, mix, and apply colour with good control and some blending of wet into wet, using the double primary colour mixing system. The teacher encouraged pupils to consider different solutions by helping one pupil demonstrate to the class the changes of hue and saturation of colour on the computer screen, on to which his carefully shaded drawing homework has been scanned. This is a typical example of how the high quality teaching extends the knowledge and understanding of pupils resulting in good progress. In Year 8 pupils collect and select patterns and fonts for their illuminated letters and incorporate relief printed borders into effective “old” manuscript pages. Their imaginative response to the idea of “realms” or “mini-worlds” is developed into 3-dimensional acetate constructions and ceramic pieces
145. Teaching is particularly good, it is often very good, with some outstanding features. The projects set are open and challenging, devised to elicit a creative response. Lessons are very carefully planned and structured, resources good and well prepared. The language used by teachers is stimulating and vivid, and introductions are delivered with obvious enthusiasm and commitment to the subject. The teachers’ good subject knowledge and expertise across a range of media and processes provide pupils with a high level of instruction and demonstration of techniques that helps them to learn. Good use is made of the teacher’s own work to exemplify the personal nature of art and design and it is clear that the response of every pupil is valued. High quality discussions take place between teacher and individuals about their work, which encourage and stimulate further progress.

146. The range of the curriculum, which is given coherence through the use of universal themes, is very good. It is broad and gives all pupils an opportunity to succeed and develop skills, knowledge and understanding. Pupils are encouraged to work in groups and have produced very attractive ceramic panels and mixed media collages. The ethos of the department is reflected in pupils' attitudes towards art and design which are very positive, and in the stimulating environment created by display of interesting, high quality work. The leadership is excellent and provides a strong educational direction for the department. There is a willingness to respond to contemporary art, build links with the community and feeder schools, visit galleries and work with artist-in-residence and external agencies. The close links with initial teaching training benefit the work of the department. The department does not use a baseline assessment for standards and therefore is not able to identify where pupils make most progress.
147. Issues from the previous inspection have been effectively addressed. Sketchbooks are used well in Key Stage 4 and in Key Stage 3, pupils have ring binders to collect their ideas, experiments with media, notes and source material. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and are appropriately related to the new National Curriculum levels. The ways in which the department challenges itself to improve and looks for advice are strengths that will continue to help to maintain and raise standards further.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

148. Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is good.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement and the quality of teaching in food and textiles are good.
- Good leadership and management have supported very good improvement.
- The IT suite is a valuable resource to support learning.
- Teachers' subject knowledge is very good and this expertise is used well.
- Accommodation is very good.

Areas for improvement

- Teaching of resistant materials is not challenging enough, this particularly affects the attainment of boys.
- Computer aided design/computer aided machining (CAD/CAM) and control is not sufficiently planned into the curriculum.
- Assessment is not used effectively enough to raise standards.

149. Standards have improved and are overall average. Achievement is good in Key Stage 3 and satisfactory in Key Stage 4. Pupils reach higher standards in food and textiles than in the area of resistant materials, because of the quality of teaching in those areas. Good leadership and management have supported very good improvements since the last inspection.

150. By the end of Year 9 standards are average across the department. Pupils make good progress generally in "making", in analysing design briefs, and in planning and evaluating. In one Year 8 lesson, pupils were adept at "mixing and mingling" ingredients to make small buns to a high quality. The department should consider providing more opportunities for pupils to analyse existing products and to use more forms of modelling to assist them in generating design ideas.

151. Standards of attainment in GCSE examinations are, overall, below national averages. 2000 GCSE results were below average, although 2001 results showed an improvement. Pupils currently studying GCSE are reaching average standards and achieving satisfactorily overall. In food and textiles pupils' achievements are particularly good. Pupils are quick to acquire the knowledge and skills of using tools and equipment correctly, and when joining and combining materials, they make good functional products. Pupils' portfolios at Key Stage 4 represent considerable progress in design skills across the whole department since the last inspection. Higher standards are achieved in food and textiles because a greater range of exemplar materials is used during lessons. Overall, girls attain higher standards than boys in GCSE examinations.

152. Information technology is used well to challenge pupils in systems and control, and some sound techniques are employed for illustration in graphics products, although a greater range of media needs to be used. In resistant materials, (taken mainly by boys), pupils' progress could be improved by teachers having higher expectations of their achievements, and pupils spending more of their time in the workshop environment. Strategies are needed to maintain boys' interest in their project work and raise their achievement.

153. Many pupils enjoy their DT lessons. They recognise their achievements in the standards of design work for their portfolios and have respect for their teachers' expertise and guidance. They are particularly enthusiastic when they are given the opportunity to do practical work, and are keen to share their progress and their products with others. Behaviour in lessons is mostly very good, as are the relationships between teachers and pupils.
154. Overall, teaching and learning across the department and key stages are good. One lesson was unsatisfactory, where expectations of pupils' achievements, (mainly boys), were too low. Teachers are proficient in planning their lessons and highlighting clear objectives. Good use is made of technicians for preparing materials and supporting individual pupils. Most lessons effectively used questioning methods to assess pupils' learning. The structure of lessons is well managed so that the planned activities can be completed within the time allocated. Teachers have very good subject knowledge and some use their expertise to assist pupils to identify target markets and to relate their planning to the needs of the customer. In one Year 11 food technology lesson, where the task was made very clear to the pupils by the teacher's use of group discussion strategies, pupils of all abilities were highly enthusiastic knowing they were going to create a new product. Teachers give good demonstrations to pupils on how to use tools and equipment correctly and safely, and how to saw, join and combine materials properly.
155. Leadership and management are now strengths of the subject when compared to the previous inspection report when temporary arrangements were in place. A thorough self-review has highlighted a clear direction for the department. Assessment is improved, although it is not yet being used effectively in all areas. Detailed schemes of work are in place for most aspects. The curriculum provision for food studies and textiles is good. Considerable efforts are being made to develop common and consistent approaches. The department has very good accommodation throughout, including a dedicated suite of computers. However, the curriculum does not yet have sufficient planning for using IT in designing and in controlling machinery. A lapse in health and safety arrangements was reported to the department. The workbenches in the workshops restrict the teaching styles.

GEOGRAPHY

156. Overall, the quality of provision in geography is good.

Strengths

- Pupils achieve well by the end of Key Stage 3, making good progress; those continuing to GCSE do as well as in other subjects they take.
- The standards of fieldwork in Year 9 and GCSE are above average, particularly among the most able pupils.
- Pupils have a secure knowledge of places and processes and a good range of basic geographical skills.
- Teaching is good overall; lessons are well prepared, have good relationships and firm discipline.
- Pupils are attentive and work hard, presenting their work carefully.
- The management of the department is a strength; there are good systems and teachers are well supported.

Areas for improvement

- Current use of ICT does not progressively build geographical skills and understanding.
- Teachers do not make as much use of an enquiry based approach to learning as they should.
- Teachers do not systematically share lesson objectives and outcomes with pupils.
- Pupils lack skills in undertaking extended writing.

157. Standards in geography are average in Key Stage 3 but below average in Key Stage 4. Pupils are achieving well in both key stages. Good teaching and management support these standards and there has been satisfactory improvement since the last inspection.

158. Standards in geography are in line with the national average at Key Stage 3 but this represents good achievement. Pupils generally make good progress through a well-planned scheme of work that covers all the appropriate countries and themes. Pupils receive good, well organised teaching through which they acquire a good grounding in geographical skills and build their knowledge and understanding of places and processes. GCSE standards overall are below the national average though pupils' achievement is satisfactory and in line with their progress in the school in their other subjects. Fieldwork standards in Year 9 and GCSE are above average. Pupils have a good range of basic geographical skills.

159. By the end of Key Stage 3, pupils have a sound knowledge and understanding of the features of places, as shown in their accounts of the Tokyo Bay Area and in their comparative studies of North Shields and Belsay. Many of these benefit from the use of ICT to present information, but sometimes explanations lack organisation and depth. In their lessons on world population growth, both higher and lower attaining pupils in Year 9 show an appropriate knowledge of demographic terms and describe and offer sensible explanations for changes that they observe from graphs of different kinds. Pupils in top sets do this with wider reference to economic and social factors and the impact of growth. Younger pupils in Year 8 can interpret historical and contemporary maps of Preston Village (near to the school) and in Year 7 have

begun to know about and understand the physical and human features of the north east region.

160. GCSE results in 2000 were below the national average, though most pupils do as well as in other subjects they take due to experienced teaching that takes good account of examination requirements. 2001 GCSE results showed a fall in the number of pupils attaining the higher grades, but their achievement was good given their previous attainment. Pupils studying for GCSE are conversant with different kinds of geographical sources such as Ordnance Survey maps and interpret them satisfactorily. Sometimes pupils lack confidence in giving explanations of why different geographical features are linked together. Lower attaining pupils do not know enough about where places are and why towns and villages grow in particular places. However, subject content is soundly understood by most and they have a wide framework of technical vocabulary and facts. Pupils in middle and lower sets can undertake at least satisfactory fieldwork of urban development in the local area. Higher attaining pupils produce reports of a high quality and depth showing an impressive range of analytical skills though often in normal class work their grasp of ideas and information is shown through paragraph or shorter length answers rather than through extended writing.
161. Pupils' learning in lessons is usually good amongst all groups of pupils because teaching is good overall. In Year 9, for example, lower attaining pupils made good progress when working in small steps through well structured questions about population growth. One group of top set pupils in Year 8 were quick to understand and share their observations after comparing two maps of Preston Village. However, another top set group made little gain in their understanding of settlement using a text book case study due to the low level of questions and the pedestrian pace. This is in contrast to the interest shown in Year 10 by a top set who were trying to work out and rank the most suitable site for an early settlement.
162. Pupils' behaviour in geography is consistently good. They have positive attitudes towards their work and try hard when presenting written work, drawings or graphs. This is due to the quality of teaching that is usually good. Teachers have good relationships with their pupils and apply firm discipline. Pupils of all levels of attainment are encouraged to participate and do their best.
163. Lessons are well prepared and concentrate on a framework of knowledge and understanding about places and processes. Teachers have clear aims but these are not systematically shared with pupils. Basic geographical skills are taught well and teachers are using a number of strategies to help pupils organise and structure their written work though these are not having the impact they should. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations for the pace of work and the capacity of pupils to use acquired skills. For example, in a Year 9 lesson pupils were quick to apply the demographic factors affecting population growth learned in a previous lesson. In the one unsatisfactory lesson, the teacher misjudged the degree of difficulty of a text book exercise which proved to be far too easy for a top set in Year 8. In lessons that are otherwise satisfactory, and sometimes in better lessons, pupils are not given enough opportunity to ask as well as answer questions and seek their own explanations using the information provided. Occasionally learning is not as good as it should be because the teacher does not allow pupils sufficient opportunity to develop individually and consider geographical questions in depth.

164. The department is well led and managed. There is a strong focus on improvement and staff work well together as a team. Marking is done conscientiously and assessments provide a clear picture of progress especially at Key Stage 3. The scheme of work for Key Stage 3 is planned in considerable detail with thought given to progression in places and skills, though as yet this does not extend to the use of ICT. A scheme of work is now being written for the new GCSE syllabus which builds well on the approach adopted at Key Stage 3. Opportunities for enquiry and the use of ICT have been extended since the last inspection though both could be developed more progressively to build on skills and understanding.

HISTORY

165. Overall, the quality of provision in history is good.

Strengths

- Pupils' achievement at Key Stage 3 is good and at GCSE most do as well as they do in other subjects.
- Higher attaining pupils produce good research based coursework at GCSE.
- In both key stages, pupils have a good knowledge of the subject.
- Teaching is good; lessons are varied and cater well for all pupils; relationships are very good.
- Pupils are interested in the subject and have good attitudes towards work.
- The department is well organised and has a clear view of how to further improve.

Areas for improvement

- Opportunities for learning using ICT are not systematic.
- There are no visits made to historic sites at Key Stage 3.
- Strategies for teaching extended writing at both key stages are not well enough developed.

166. Standards are average and pupils achieve well because of the good teaching within a well organised department which has made sound progress since the last inspection.

167. By the end of Key Stage 3, attainment is in line with national expectations, though pupils' achievement is good. Most pupils acquire a good knowledge of topics in British and world history from Roman to modern times. In lessons, Year 9 pupils accurately recall information about a number of main changes between 1750 and 1900 and use this to show their understanding of the Industrial Revolution. Younger pupils demonstrate their knowledge of the history of Islam or the campaigns of Hannibal with a good degree of accuracy. All pupils answer questions using documentary and pictorial sources of information from the past and pupils, in top sets in particular, show understanding of some problems of interpretation. Higher attaining pupils are beginning to write in some depth about such challenging questions as "Was appeasement a mistake?" but, overall, the skills of constructing extended answers are not well established.

168. At the end of Key Stage 4, attainment is average with a full spread of grades though GCSE results vary a little year-on-year due to the small number of pupils who usually take history. Achievement is good and most pupils reach standards as good as they do in the other subjects they take. Wider statistical comparison is not possible because of the small number of pupils who followed the GCSE course in 2000. Numbers opting for GCSE have begun to increase and Year 11 groups are on course to attain broadly in line with the current national average with a good proportion of high attainers. These high attaining pupils produce good course work and in lessons show their eagerness to learn and display their knowledge, for example, when discussing the significance of medical discoveries in the late 19th century. Average and lower attainers have a sound factual knowledge and have sufficient skills to tackle the range of expected tasks. However, they have more difficulty in writing extended explanations and interpreting sources other than at face value.

169. Pupils' learning in lessons is often good or better. In Year 10, for example, lower attaining pupils made good progress in understanding the beliefs and culture of the Plains Indians by concentrating well when sorting information and actively sharing their ideas. In Year 9, pupils displayed considerable interest about the range of changes in 19th century industry and politics building on their previous knowledge. Pupils in Year 8 with SEN were keen to show their knowledge and to volunteer to read aloud in a lesson on the life of Muhammad. These attitudes support good progress. Pupils' behaviour is consistently good, they work hard throughout lessons and relationships are very good. The good progress and positive attitudes to work are the result of teaching that is almost always satisfactory and often good or very good.
170. Lessons have clear and suitable objectives, a good structure of activities and are based on very good relationships. In the best examples, teachers set a good pace, ask challenging questions, encouraging participation and personal response. For example, in a Year 11 lesson, pupils rose to the teacher's high expectations, competing strongly with one another to explain how in medical research in 19th century Europe were linked to social development. The established specialist staff show good subject knowledge by the range of teaching strategies they use, their skilful questioning and good quality advice to pupils about how to improve. Teachers also have a good understanding of the needs of lower attaining pupils and pupils with SEN, are skilful in making the curriculum accessible and supporting their progress. Teachers often produce their own resources for lessons and these are carefully constructed and of good quality. Skills in constructing extended accounts are soundly taught but make use of a rather narrow range of strategies. In the one unsatisfactory lesson and the few that have some weaknesses but are otherwise sound, too little consideration is given to ensuring pupils understand the sources they are reading. Pupils also need to make more use of the teachers' marking.
171. The head of department was not present during the inspection but the quality of the schemes of work, organisation and teamwork show the department to be effectively managed within the humanities faculty. There are clear views, developed through self-review systems, as to how the department can improve. Good features are the well-structured assessment system that provides good evidence of pupils' progress, the range of learning activities and the critical self-review to ensure the curriculum is relevant. Temporary and non-specialist staff are well supported. Since the last inspection, attention has been given to providing more opportunity for studying and writing about topics in depth and using ICT for learning. There is scope for further improvement in each of these. Pupils in Key Stage 3 do not make a single visit to a historic site to practice related skills, even though this is an important feature of the course at GCSE. Though teachers have begun to use a newly established ICT suite, current provision does not amount to a systematic programme.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

172. Overall, the quality of provision in information and communication technology is satisfactory.

Strengths

- Results at Key Stage 4 have improved considerably since the previous inspection.
- The curriculum at Key Stage 4 for pupils following examination courses is suitable for the range of pupil abilities.
- The majority of subject areas use IT to support their teaching and learning.
- The accommodation is good and supports learning.
- The provision of computers is significantly above average.

Areas for Improvement

- Marking is unsatisfactory in Key Stage 3 and does not help pupils make progress.
- The links between planning and National Curriculum requirements are not established therefore pupils are not able to judge their standards.
- IT across the curriculum is not adequately co-ordinated.
- Interruptions by pupils slow the progress of learning in a minority of lessons.

173. Pupils' standards are average in Key Stage 3, and overall achievement is good. Standards in the examined courses in Key Stage 4 are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils not following the examined courses do not have enough opportunities to develop and demonstrate higher levels of attainment across other subjects. Satisfactory progress has been made since the last inspection and particularly good improvement in the provision of computers.

174. By the end of Year 9 pupils' standards of attainment are in line with national expectations. All Key Stage 3 pupils now have an extended time-tabled lesson in addition to the IT taught in many of their other subjects and this supports their progress. Pupils follow sections of a skills course. As a result they have satisfactory ability to use databases, to word-process and to present information. They are also adept at using the Internet. Pupils successfully use spreadsheets to enter data and formulae functions to do basic calculations. Many pupils become confident users of IT and by the end of Year 8 have progressed to become more independent learners. Pupils make good use of their IT knowledge and skills they have developed through their home experiences.

175. Standards in examined courses in use are above average. 2000 GCSE results were slightly above average overall, and above average for the number of pupils who attained higher grades, although this proportion reduced in 2001. There has been considerable progress since the previous inspection report. Boys and girls did equally well. Examples of good work were seen in lessons. In one taught GNVQ lesson pupils were successfully tackling the merging of three separate "fields" of a database to outgoing mail using Word, and in another lesson a GCSE class were working productively in small groups to design a web-site for a travel company. Pupils' experience of IT across the curriculum at Key Stage 4, however, is inconsistent and the department has not planned sufficiently to ensure that all pupils have opportunities to develop and demonstrate higher levels of attainment. Little has been done to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to consider the social implications of increasing use of ICT.

176. Pupils are mostly well behaved in their IT lessons and work hard to make progress. They are careful how they use equipment. In a minority of lessons they become so engrossed in what they are doing that they do not listen to the teacher's instructions. This causes some pupils to interrupt the teacher persistently leading to an increase in noise levels and slower progress of learning.
177. Teaching and learning is mostly satisfactory or good overall, although one lesson was unsatisfactory where the teacher's expectations of pupils were too low. In the better lessons teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge, plan and prepare their lessons well, and give good support and encouragement to individual pupils. Good demonstrations are given on methods for finding ways round the various pieces of software, and pupils are set time-scales that help them to maintain their concentration and give more pace to the lesson. Marking is unsatisfactory and does not support progress in Key Stage 3. The samples of portfolios of work in Key Stage 3 provided by the school for scrutiny had very little work that had been marked. Where there was marking it did not link to the National Curriculum, therefore pupils are not able to judge their standards against the national expectations. Within the school's overall provision of support, there also needs to be more assistance from adults working alongside teachers during lessons to support individual pupils, especially when classes are large as they sometimes are at Key Stage 4.
178. Leadership and management of the department are satisfactory. Significant capital investment has been made across the school in IT, although as yet there is little comprehensive co-ordination, for where IT enhances pupils' learning, the subsequent links to National Curriculum requirements, or the professional training needs of the teachers from the various subjects. The taught course at Key Stage 3 is not yet firmly embedded and the balance between this and using IT as a tool to solve problems, (especially those related to control), have not yet been achieved. The taught courses at Key Stage 4 are well planned and operate very effectively. The network manager is a valuable asset to the department and to the school. Accommodation is good. The provision of computers is significantly above average but Internet connections are too slow. The school takes reasonable steps to ensure pupils are protected from offensive materials or approaches on the Internet.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

179. Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is satisfactory.

Strengths

- The vast majority of pupils are included in the programme of study for MFL.
- Leadership and planning ensure that all teachers are in step with the programme.
- Regular marking of work is helping pupils to make progress.
- All pupils, regardless of ability, are expected to do their best.
- Pupils have good opportunities for pupils to experience the cultures of the countries where the languages are spoken.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils do not achieve as much as they should.
- The range of teaching styles and activities is limited and restricts good progress.
- Strategies for helping pupils to become independent users of language from the early stages of the course are insufficient.
- ICT is not used enough to support pupils' learning.

180. Standards are below average in both key stages. Pupils do not achieve as much as they should but improvements are being made as a result of a greater focus on standards. Good progress in provision has been made since the last inspection.

181. Standards in relation to National Curriculum levels at the end of Key Stage 3 are below average. Low level activities in the early stages prevent independent use of language and this is a major factor in determining whether pupils reach, and go beyond, Level 5. Work seen in Key Stage 3 shows that teachers are responding to the demands of the new programme of study and are aware that broadening the range of teaching styles and extending the use of ICT will help them maintain a rise in standards.

182. Standards at the end of Key Stage 4 are consequently also below average, but GCSE results have been improving. 2000 GCSE results were below average, 2001 results showed a significant improvement in both French and Spanish. However, boys' attainment is still well below that of girls. In lessons seen in Key Stage 4, boys were making good progress, evidence that the department has been trying to ensure that all pupils do as well as they can throughout the GCSE course. The department ensures that all but a very small number of pupils are able to achieve accreditation at the end of Key Stage 4.

183. Attitudes and behaviour are always good, and often very good. Pupils are attentive, and when challenged, respond well. They are not always confident about speaking at length, and, although they are being taught about how the language works, they do not always have enough opportunities to practise structures orally and in writing. Since the last inspection, there is a better allocation of time in Key Stage 3, and the department is making progress in devising ways of enabling pupils to develop independence in speaking and writing. Greater use of technology, such as the overhead projector, would enable teachers to use the target language more effectively in their teaching. Pupils need also to develop the confidence to ask questions in the target language as well as to answer them.

184. Teaching was satisfactory or good in nearly all lessons seen. When the teaching is good, there is a brisk pace, a variety of activities, and the teachers have a good command of the target language. High expectations of all pupils help them to learn and use the language effectively. Where there are shortcomings in progress this is due to a restricted range of teaching styles and activities for practising and consolidating the structures of the language.
185. Work is marked regularly and homework is given in order to consolidate work done in class. Assessment helps teachers to plan for pupils' progress, although pupils themselves are not given short-term targets to help them reach medium-term goals, nor are they aware of their level of attainment at a given stage of the course.
186. The department is well led and managed, and there is a stable team of teachers who are committed to the progress of their pupils supported by consistency in planning. Pupils' work is displayed and celebrated, and the classrooms show a positive picture of the cultures of the countries where French and Spanish are spoken. Visits to France and Spain make an important contribution to the pupils' cultural education. The vast majority of pupils follow a course in MFL, this is a positive feature.

MUSIC

187. Overall, the quality of provision in music is unsatisfactory.

Strengths

- The time allowance for music in Key Stage 3 has been improved.
- Pupils show the potential to develop good standards in music.
- Some pupils benefit from the extra support for school productions provided by volunteers outside of the department.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are too low in Key Stage 3, pupils do not achieve as much as they should.
- There is a lack of continuity in teaching.
- There has not been enough progress in developing the curriculum.
- No pupils study the subject at Key Stage 4, although it is an option.
- Management of the subject is unsatisfactory.

188. Standards in music are below average and pupils are not achieving as much as they should because of the school's difficulty in providing consistent teaching and weaknesses in curriculum and management. Not enough progress has been made since the last inspection, in some aspects the subject is weaker, particularly standards.

189. The music department is under-achieving. The lack of continuity of teaching, resulting from periods of absence of the head of department and the general lack of availability of qualified specialist supply teachers, has meant that the curriculum and the department as a whole, has tended not to progress effectively. The disruption of teaching has affected the learning and attainment of the pupils, particularly at Key Stage 3. Standards therefore are lower than the national average, particularly in performance skills. In some classes, notably Year 9 groups, listening skills are satisfactory and pupils are able to focus on specific aspects and use musical language to describe what is heard. Pupils throughout Key Stage 3 are less adept at using keyboards and their pulse, beat and rhythm skills are too elementary for this stage of their musical development. The result is that in ensemble keyboard work, pupils find it difficult to keep together and therefore relatively simple musical tasks, which could produce very satisfying results, are rarely successful and pupils, on occasion, lose interest. This creates barriers to learning. The singing is lacklustre and progression of notation and musical literacy skills across Key Stage 3 should be given a much higher priority. There is no GCSE course, because pupils do not opt to take the subject. The GCSE course was a good feature of music at the last inspection.

190. The teaching was delivered by a supply teacher and therefore could not be described as typical for the department. Within the inspection period, however, the teaching seen was often good. The material, though not drawn from the department syllabus, was appropriate for Key Stage 3. It was varied in content and the teaching pace was, in most cases, suitable. On one occasion, the demanding pace encouraged a Year 9 class to achieve at a level beyond expectations. This clearly showed that there are very capable pupils who would be able to follow a GCSE course if there was a more stable learning environment at Key Stage 3. The teacher displayed good musical skills and lessons were very well prepared. Pupils were encouraged to take part in singing, listening, performing and analysing and pupils responded very well to an extra-curricular keyboard club. There were high expectations that were appropriate in most cases, although in two Year 8 classes, too much was expected of the pupils for their stage of musical development. Some difficulties arose for the teacher because records were not available to help choose the right level of challenge for pupils. Pupils with SEN were well supported.
191. Attitudes to learning are satisfactory at best. There is some disaffection in some pupils and the fact that music is the only subject in the school which pupils opt not to follow as a GCSE course reflects attitudes to the subject in Key Stage 3. Pupils tend to take it less seriously. During the inspection behaviour was good but the limitation of pupil skills meant that it was difficult for pupils to sustain qualitative work or become more engrossed in their tasks. This, in turn, tended to lead to pupils chatting and losing their focus. This was particularly evident in practical music making.
192. Taking into account the current standards of pupils, their positive reaction to good teaching and their response to new opportunities, it is clear that pupils have the potential to achieve average and above average standards in music. Pupils demonstrate some of the potential through the school productions organised through volunteers across the school.
193. There have been few gains since the previous inspection. Curriculum time is now adequate but the scheme of work still requires attention, especially for skills, singing, ICT and curriculum enhancement. The present keyboard room is too small and cramped and there are insufficient resources for some music work. The music department is part of a performing arts faculty, however, the musical expertise of teachers is not used effectively.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

194. Overall, the quality of provision in physical education is good

Strengths

- GCSE results show good improvements.
- Most teaching is good and a significant amount is very good or excellent.
- Strong teacher-pupil relationships have a very positive effect on learning.
- All teachers are specialists with high expectations of pupils.
- Teachers are skilled at planning and delivering lessons that are relevant and meaningful to pupils.
- The school provides an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities.
- There is a collective commitment to build upon what has already been achieved and to further improve.
- Leadership and management are good.

Areas for improvement

- Learning objectives are not always sufficiently clear or shared with pupils.
- The department's system of self-review does not include monitoring of written work.
- Indoor provision adversely affects the delivery of Key Stage 4 curriculum.
- Display is too widely spread and difficult for pupils to access.

195. Standards in PE are average and in some areas of work are above average. Pupils are achieving well overall and in Key Stage 4 pupils are now achieving very well, because of the strengths in teaching, the breadth of provision in the subject, and management. The department is already building on its existing strengths through the school's new status as a Sports College. Some accommodation problems restrict developments. Improvement since the last inspection is good.

196. At Key Stage 3 younger pupils achieve standards appropriate for their age in netball and gymnastics and better than that expected in football. Boys enjoy particular success working with a partner to beat a defender in limited space and girls balance well in a variety of ways in gymnastics. In hockey, girls can carry, send and receive the ball in practice situations. By the end of the key stage pupils achieve in line with national standards in netball and dance and above in football. Girls can perform dance actions of African origin and show good shooting technique in netball. Boys are able to cross and attack the football to score a goal. All pupils, including those with SEN, learn at a good rate throughout the key stage.

197. At Key Stage 4 pupils achieve standards above that expected in netball and football and standards are in line in gymnastic activities, specifically trampolining. Learning and the progress pupils make in lessons are very good. Girls gain knowledge, experience and confidence to lead a successful warm-up or netball skills session and to umpire. Boys learn to attack and defend as a unit in football and pupils improve routines in trampolining.

198. GCSE results in 2000 were below average in the number of pupils attaining higher grades. 2001 standards showed a significant improvement continuing a three year upward trend. There are two boys to every girl entered for the subject. The trend is for girls to achieve considerably better than boys but pupils overall performed better than expected. Indications are that pupils in Years 10 and 11 attain well above average in practical activities such as netball and badminton. Pupils successfully analyse peer performance through the use of video and enjoy learning tests for flexibility. The use of ICT, of which this is an example, is an area that the department will be able to extend through the Sports College status. In badminton pupils can rally using a range of advanced shots.
199. Teaching is particularly good and a strength. Pupils learn well as a result. There is no unsatisfactory teaching and much of it is very good or excellent. All teachers are subject specialists with high expectations of learners. Planning is good and shows well-structured and progressive lessons. Objectives, clear and few in number, feature strongly throughout the best lessons. Objectives are not always shared effectively or sufficiently clear. Pupils are organised efficiently which maximises time for learning and lessons have a good pace so pupils are kept active and interested. In a few lessons the learning of basic skills should be secured before moving on to more advanced work and lower attaining pupils do not experience sufficient variety of activity in a theory lesson. Good opportunities are planned for evaluating and improving performance. Pupils are encouraged to articulate their ideas which helps teachers evaluate learning, for example, in gymnastics pupils are helped to understand some basic principles of balance.
200. Teachers know pupils well and relationships are very good which impacts positively on pupils' behaviour and learning. Pupils with SEN learn well in a fully integrated system with appropriate support. Homework is used appropriately to extend learning.
201. Pupils learn well. There are excellent standards of kit and footwear across the department and pupils are largely self-regulating within the no jewellery policy. A few pupils are reluctant in dance and fussy in gymnastics but virtually all pupils are keen to improve and are willing to work hard. Older pupils show great interest and undertake roles of umpire and coach effectively and with maturity. The Junior Sports Leaders Award gives an excellent focus for pupils' work and develops a sense of giving back to the school community. There is much co-operative working, behaviour is very good and older pupils spontaneously applaud good work in netball and boys are able to organise their own football teams and positions quickly and amicably. Pupils are respectful and appreciative and enjoy their lessons.
202. The Sports College bid is of excellent quality and provides an action plan and targets for the school. The annual department plan is closely aligned to this. The department handbook is exemplary.
203. The department is well led and managed with good day-to-day administration. High standards of teaching result from a team of specialist teachers with complementary talents. There is a commitment to build on what has already been achieved and to further improve standards. Statutory requirements for the curriculum are met for both key stages. Schemes of work are being updated and this should be completed. Assessment to inform future learning is now secure. There is a schedule of classroom monitoring but scrutiny of work is not included.

204. Whilst outdoor facilities are good, the indoor accommodation has inadequacies that make it very difficult for the department, especially in providing all of the activities of the Key Stage 4 curriculum. The gymnasias and changing accommodation are in a poor state of repair and decoration. Some health and safety issues were reported to the school. Classrooms for the delivery of GCSE PE are not dedicated to use by the subject and are remote from the department. There are cramped conditions for lessons. There are insufficient GCSE texts for classes and texts in the library. Externally the access gate to the synthetic pitch is not well placed for school use. Display in long corridors of the department is widely spread, difficult to access and says little about pupil achievement.
205. The school provides an excellent programme of extra-curricular activities. A significant number of staff from across the school give freely of their time. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning and standards achieved. There are good and developing links with the wider community and the school plays a full part in local leagues and competitions. Several pupils achieve success in specific sports, mainly games, at various representative levels.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

206. Overall, the quality of provision in religious education is good.

Strengths

- Very good leadership and management underpin the work of the department.
- Mutual trust and respect gives pupils the confidence to learn from each other as well as from teachers.
- The subject is popular with pupils because teachers make it relevant.
- Good relationships and a high level of co-operation make significant contributions to pupils' progress.

Areas for improvement

- More able pupils, although supported well in other ways, are insufficiently challenged.
- Performance data is not yet used sufficiently to set appropriate targets.
- ICT skills are not developed enough in the RE curriculum.
- Comments used in teachers' marking are often limited to presentation rather than directed towards progress in the subject.

207. Standards are average and pupils achieve well, because of the good teaching and management. There has been good improvement since the last inspection.

208. Standards at Key Stage 3 meet the expectations of the local Agreed Syllabus. Most pupils are able to explain how values and beliefs influence moral choices and behaviour. They can explain soundly, using appropriate terminology, how religions respond to ultimate questions such as purpose in life.

209. Equally, standards at Key Stage 4 meet expectations. Most pupils are able to evaluate views on social issues such as divorce by knowing about the beliefs of up to three major world faiths. They are able to apply their knowledge and understanding competently in discussion of such issues when exploring real life situations. Their responses usually show appropriate maturity of thought, although less capable pupils have difficulty in expressing their views in classroom feedback.

210. At Key Stage 3 pupils have a sound grasp of factual detail surrounding religious practices and customs. Overall, their achievement is satisfactory, although the achievement of more able pupils is often capped, in particular in writing assignments that lack opportunity to extend their understanding and skills. Within lessons pupils often achieve well, for example a Year 7 class made rapid progress applying their knowledge of the Jesus narrative to a class time-line of key events.

211. Pupils at Key Stage 4 have a clear grasp of religious concepts and generally apply their understanding well in discussion and in writing. Overall, their achievement is sound. A Year 10 group, although only a little way into their course, achieved better than expected in their understanding of theories for the existence of God. The recent introduction of the GCSE short course to run alongside the present unit accreditation is a considerable improvement since the previous inspection and provides scope for older pupils of all abilities to achieve to their potential. The subject is popular with pupils.

212. Teaching is good overall. Lessons are well structured and conducted at a good pace. Teachers are skilled in gaining pupils' attention through well-chosen activities and illustrations that are relevant to everyday life and pupils' experiences. Teachers use their summarising skills well to reinforce and consolidate lesson objectives. Good planning and preparation give lessons a clear purpose benefiting, in particular, the confidence and achievement of slower learners. Younger pupils respond enthusiastically to the effective use of "fun" activities such as those used in a Year 8 class to develop thinking on values. Teaching is typically knowledgeable and interesting, although opportunities are sometimes missed in non-specialist teaching to fully develop religious concepts. Because of this, more able pupils are sometimes not given sufficiently challenging activities. In contrast, the drama experience used by one teacher in RE was used effectively to create a sense of awe in the classroom that contributed considerably to pupils' personal reflection in a Year 10 group.
213. Pupils learn well. They are attentive, interested and respond well to the range of activities introduced. There is no discernible difference in the effectiveness of the teaching or outcomes on boys and girls. In groups, they talk and listen to each other, although some pupils are not always confident in offering ideas in open discussion. They behave very well, largely in response to well managed lessons with a good balance of support and humour, in an atmosphere of mutual respect and good relationships.
214. Teaching style and content make an effective contribution to the promotion of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Well-integrated opportunities for pupils to explore beliefs and values and contemporary moral or social issues are frequent. The Youth for Christ Week and visit of a Congolese dance troupe raise awareness of their own and others' cultures. The activity of the extra-curricular group has profound opportunities for spiritual insight, in particular in the impressive Hunger Cloth wall hanging, and the Millennium Prayer Cross, painstakingly made by the pupils. All pupils are encouraged to contribute visual or written responses on mood boards, which this term have the evocative titles of tranquillity, hope and charity.
215. The curriculum fully meets statutory requirements. The North Tyneside local Agreed Syllabus for RE is well interpreted in the schemes of work, with a good balance of knowledge, understanding and reflection. Provision is enriched by regular visits from members of local and wider faith communities, although first-hand insights of traditions other than Christian are less frequently introduced. The good programme of visits supports pupils' learning well. Teachers do not use ICT sufficiently to support pupils' learning as part of the curriculum.
216. The good teaching and learning results from work in the subject being enthusiastically well led and managed. There is a high commitment to improving standards and the quality of learning, although this would benefit from more use of performance data to set targets, especially for more able pupils, and marking of work that focuses more on progress rather than on presentation. There is non-specialist teaching in both key stages but considerably reduced since the previous inspection. Moreover, they are willing volunteers with a declared aspiration to work as a team and build their expertise. The extensive support from the head of department for these teachers helps to ensure good quality provision for pupils. Time provided to teach RE is a clear improvement since the previous inspection. A recent review of the school's strategies to promote personal and social education has created more time to devote to religious concepts. This development is currently benefiting pupils' RE entitlement and furthermore provides a solid basis for future improvement to the curriculum.

