

# INSPECTION REPORT

## MAPLEWOOD SCHOOL

Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 180880

Headteacher: Mrs. Jo Wilson

Reporting inspector: George Derby  
25349

Dates of inspection: 10<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> July 2000

Inspection number: 191610

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Special
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	5 to 13
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Redcar Road Sunderland Tyne and Wear
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Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs. June Fawkes
Date of previous inspection:	3 <sup>rd</sup> February, 1997

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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George Derby	Registered inspector	Modern foreign languages	The characteristics and effectiveness of the school
			The school's results and pupils' achievements
			Teaching and learning
			Key Issues for action
Norman Shelley	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			Pupils' welfare, health and safety
			Partnership with parents and carers
Mary Cureton	Team inspector	English	
		Personal, social and health education	
		Equality of opportunity	
		Special educational needs	
Susan Hails	Team inspector	Information technology	Quality and range of opportunities for learning
		Geography	
		History	
Ann Heakin	Team inspector	Science	
		Music	
Mike Marra	Team inspector	Mathematics	Leadership and management
		Physical education	
Linda Wolstencroft	Team inspector	Art	
		Design and technology	
		Religious education	

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## **PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT**

### **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Maplewood is a community special school for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties. A small number of pupils have additional special educational needs such as autism, reading and language difficulties. The number of pupils with additional learning difficulties has increased since the last inspection. There are currently 90 pupils on roll aged between five years (Year 1) and 13 years (Year 8), but plans are in place for school re-organisation in the City of Sunderland and Maplewood is to become a special school for primary age pupils (5–11 years) in the near future. These plans also include extending and re-modelling the current building. A significant proportion of pupils (almost two thirds) are entitled to free school meals. Many pupils have a history of poor attendance at their previous school, have been excluded and / or have spent a considerable amount of time out of school prior to admission to Maplewood. There are just four girls on the school's roll. One pupil has English as an additional language.

### **HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS**

This is a very good school where pupils' achievements are substantial. Despite the pupils' previous histories of severe and challenging behaviour, they behave exceptionally well. The school's excellent ethos and its commitment to high achievement by pupils, means that pupils try their hardest and do their best. Contributing to this is the excellent way in which teachers manage the pupils' behaviour and the very good quality of teaching in general. The teaching is lively and stimulating and teachers challenge pupils to think, explore and research. The very good leadership by the headteacher has resulted in a highly effective staff team, extremely supportive of pupils' academic achievement and personal welfare. Due to all these positive features and the low cost of educating a pupil at the school, the school gives very good value for money.

#### **What the school does well**

- Pupils' behaviour is excellent. The school is highly vigilant in checking pupils' behaviour – there are very good systems in place for this and staff place great emphasis on and expect high standards of behaviour. Pupils are polite, take a genuine interest in visitors and are strongly motivated in their lessons. They leave the school confident and well prepared for their next placement. The very strong provision for pupils' moral and social development supports pupils' greater understanding of right and wrong, an impressive ability to deal positively with difficult situations and a growing sensitivity to others' needs. Pupils respect and care exceptionally well for each other.
- The headteacher's very strong leadership has resulted in a staff team with a considerable commitment to high standards and to improving the school. As a result, the school fulfils its aims very well.
- The commitment to personal, social and health education is very strong. Through the daily life of the school and in lessons pupils have very many opportunities to develop personally, to move on in their social understandings, in citizenship and in the promotion of healthy living.
- The very good teaching results in pupils making very good progress. Staff have very good levels of expertise; the support staff make a very significant contribution to lessons and the management of pupils.
- The provision for literacy and numeracy is very good and, together with the high level of very good teaching in English and good teaching in mathematics, results in pupils applying these skills well, not only in English and mathematics but also across the curriculum. Significant improvement has been made in the quality of the provision of information technology (IT).

### What could be improved

- Pupils' progress in French; although there is an adequate programme of work, not all pupils who should, study the subject and teachers express a lack of confidence and knowledge in how to teach it.

*The areas for improvement will form the basis of the action plan prepared by the appropriate authority.*

### HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good improvement since it was inspected in February 1997. The quality of teaching has improved markedly. The quality of the curriculum has improved at Key Stage 3 due to teachers improving their skills, appropriate programmes of work being developed throughout the school and taught mainly by subject specialists. The school has made as much improvement to the accommodation as is currently feasible, to rectify the weaknesses previously identified. The building is now due to be significantly improved as part of the local education authority's change of age range of the school. Health and safety issues are now well managed by a representative of the governing body and school staff. Design and technology is fully taught and progress is good throughout the school. There has been satisfactory improvement in the provision of pupils' IEPs and the quality of pupils' personal targets is mainly good. However, IEPs usually contain personal and social development targets and while this is appropriate initially, not enough pupils who need them have academic targets, especially as the number of pupils who have additional learning difficulties is increasing. The governing body has produced a satisfactory special educational needs policy. Taught time has increased. The school is very well placed to make further improvement.

### STANDARDS

The table summarises inspectors' judgements about how well pupils achieve in relation to their individual targets by the time they leave the school.

Progress in:	by age 11	by age 13	Key	
speaking and listening	A	A	very good	A
reading	A	A	good	B
writing	A	A	satisfactory	C
mathematics	B	B	unsatisfactory	D
personal, social and health education	B	B	poor	E
other personal targets set at annual reviews or in IEPs*	A*	A*		

*\* IEPs are individual education plans for pupils with special educational needs.*

Pupils' achievements in English, science, IT and religious education are very good; they are good in mathematics. This is because these subjects are mostly very well taught and the programmes of work are very good. Pupils make excellent progress towards their personal and social development targets. Many pupils improve by two National Curriculum levels in Key Stage 2 in maths, science and English – a significant achievement for many. The school does not set whole school targets apart from the statutory targets at Key Stage 2.

### PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES



Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Excellent. Pupils listen very well, are very attentive and are exceptionally interested in their lessons. They ask interesting questions, exploring ideas and considering differing views. Older pupils are developing the ability to 'debate' and 'argue' their case.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Excellent. The school expects very high standards of pupil behaviour. Staff are caring but firm and help pupils to understand the consequences of their actions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Some pupils are beginning to take on responsibility and some positively seek it. They respond very well to requests or 'jobs' and are keen and eager to please. They persevere at their work well, through some quite long lessons. They form supportive and caring relationships, spontaneously helping each other.
Attendance	Attendance is good compared to similar special schools although below 95 per cent.

## TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged 5-11	aged 11-13
Lessons seen overall	Very 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.*

The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is particularly strong at Key Stages 1 and 2 where it is very good. At Key Stage 3 it is good. All the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. This represents a considerable improvement since the last inspection when nine per cent of teaching was unsatisfactory. Ninety per cent of teaching was good or better and 38 per cent very good or excellent. In two lessons in science the teaching was excellent. The teaching of English (including literacy) was very good overall, and in mathematics (including numeracy) was good. It was also very good in science and across the school for all aspects of personal, social and health education. A significant strength is the exemplary way in which all staff (teachers and support assistants) expertly manage the pupils. They work extremely closely together as a staff team, and the high quality support staff prepare themselves well for lessons, intuitively respond to the pupils' needs and often record pupils' responses and make assessments. They make a significant contribution to the work of the school and the progress of pupils. The staff use computers well to enhance pupils' learning and record what they are doing, as well as improve their capability. Pupils put great effort into their learning and try their hardest to succeed. This results in pupils learning very well.

## OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. The curriculum is broad, balanced and highly relevant. The careful links between subjects and the good emphasis on using information technology helps pupils to learn very well. However, not all statutory requirements are met as French is not taught to all pupils who should study it.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The support is very good and aids pupils' development and understanding of English well.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. It is particularly strong for moral and social development, good for spiritual and cultural development. Pupils' personal development is very well supported through the school's ethos and informal programme, although the planned programme for this area is still being developed.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Pupils' behaviour is monitored exceptionally well and there is no evidence of any bullying or intimidation; quite the contrary, pupils go out of the way to help each other. Teachers know their pupils well and the personal guidance given to them, both academically and personally, is very good. There are good procedures for checking on, and improving, attendance.

Parents have very positive views of the school and its links with its parents are good. The school endeavours to work extremely closely with parents, making frequent contact with them and encouraging frequent contact by them. Procedures for child protection are very well managed and provision for pupils' health, safety and general welfare are good.

## HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Very good. The headteacher's very strong leadership ensures all staff are included in decision-making, where appropriate. The very cohesive staff team has a high commitment to improving standards.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	Good. The governing body has a good understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of the school and monitors the work of the school well. It is strongly led by the chair who is well supported by other governors.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school evaluates pupils' progress well. The school development plan is regularly checked and evaluated but its organisation and success criteria are not always clear - this makes it difficult for governors to judge the cost effectiveness of their spending.
The strategic use of resources	The school uses its finances well to promote pupils' academic and personal progress. Budget management and financial monitoring are good.

Staffing levels and expertise are very good overall. Except for the IT room, accommodation is good overall. Resources are good. The school makes good use of computer technology and teachers are developing the range of specific software to support the curriculum. Best value principles are satisfactorily employed. The school is a highly reflective organisation that constantly seeks improvement.

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

<b>What pleases parents most</b>	<b>What parents would like to see improved</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being able to comfortably approach school with questions or a problem.</li> <li>• Information provided about pupils' progress.</li> <li>• The management and leadership of the school.</li> <li>• Good quality teaching and high expectations of pupils</li> <li>• Pupils' all round improvement.</li> <li>• The very good support, guidance, care and supervision provided.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The amount of homework set.</li> <li>• Closer working with parents.</li> <li>• Improved behaviour in the school.</li> </ul>

Inspectors agree with almost all of the parents' positive comments. Parents receive generally good information about pupils' progress via daily diaries, annual reviews and school reports. However, annual school reports do not always state what pupils know, understand and can do. Given pupils' strong progress inspectors have no reason to believe homework policy and practice is inappropriate. The school endeavours to work extremely closely with parents and always tries to meet parents' requests and comply with their wishes, if these are in the best interests of pupils. Inspectors judge that pupils make substantial improvements in their behaviour and in their ability to exercise self-control while at the school.

## **PART B: COMMENTARY**

### **HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?**

#### **The school's results and achievements**

1. The characteristics of the pupils for whom the school caters make it inappropriate to judge their attainment against age-related national expectations or averages. The report does, however, give examples of what pupils know, understand, and can do at the end of key stages. Judgements about progress and reference to attainment take account of information contained in pupils' statements and annual reviews. References to higher and lower attaining pupils and those with additional needs are made within the context of the school's population.

2. Pupils achieve very well overall. Pupils' achievements in Key Stages 1 and 2 are very good, while at Key Stage 3 these are good. Overall, the pupils' attainment is below the national average although some produce work within the expected level for their age. The number of pupils achieving this varies from year to year and is dependent on a number of factors prior to their admission to Maplewood. Many pupils, over the time they are in the school, improve by at least two National Curriculum levels (many during Key Stage 2), a significant achievement, given their attainment on entry and their educational history of often poor school attendance, difficult behaviour and exclusion.

3. The school sets individual targets (as part of individual education plans) for pupils, with good, clear, objectives which aim to improve pupils' emotional and behavioural development. These are formulated with, and well understood, by the pupils and, often, prominently displayed in classrooms. Pupils' make excellent progress towards these. Not only are these regularly reviewed and updated, the culture of improved behaviour, raised self-esteem and the building of pupils' confidence pervades the whole ethos of the school. Although some pupils' individual education plans contain academic targets, not enough do, especially as the school's population of pupils with additional and more complex needs is increasing. Pupils' progress could be enhanced further by the adoption of such academic targets.

4. Despite the school's considerable success in raising pupils' achievement and improving their personal development it does not set a wide range of challenging targets to raise pupils' achievements even further. For example, although a small number of pupils each year achieve Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2 in their National Curriculum tests, the school sets a statutory target of zero percent for this. Pupils can enter the school at any point during the school year and the school has found it hard to predict the amount of progress pupils will make because of this. However, it recognises the need to set more challenging targets and is now examining a range of possibilities for identifying these and raising achievement even further.

5. Pupils with additional special educational needs make very good progress overall, largely because of the very good teaching, and the way that the needs of all different groups of pupils are planned for and considered. This is particularly strong at Key Stages 1 and 2. The school is responding positively and appropriately to the increased range of pupils' needs and the school's plans for training take this well into account. Equality of opportunity in the school is good. The school has a comprehensive equal opportunities policy, which is kept under constant review. The progress and well-being of pupils from ethnic minorities is carefully monitored and well supported. The comparative social isolation of the four girls in the school is systematically monitored and ameliorated where possible.

There is no difference in the progress of pupils of boys and girls and the pupil who has English as an additional language has made good progress and is returning to mainstream school.

6. Pupils' achievements in English, including literacy are very good. They are good in Key Stages 1 and 2 in the speaking and listening, reading and writing elements of the subject. In Key Stage 3 they are good. This is largely because the subject is well taught and because of the positive way the school has developed its literacy strategy across the school. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' listening skills have improved so that they listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They speak quietly and confidently to others. They particularly enjoy having stories and poems read to them and attend very well in these sessions. Pupils copy over the teachers' model of writing and some are beginning to write words independently. Higher attaining pupils, with some help, read very simple texts with understanding. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils listen carefully to each other in discussions and are beginning to present their views and opinions. Their ability to listen carefully to stories has improved further and they gain a great deal of pleasure from the stories that are read to them. Most can read and enjoy very simple fiction and know which books are non-fiction. They are gaining skills in locating information from books such as from the contents page and index. Writing, which is narrow in range (but includes diaries, accounts, letters and poems) still, however, contains major errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar. These improve with redrafting and pupils use IT support effectively to help them spell check, re-draft and present their work in interesting ways. By the time they leave the school, at the end of Year 8, pupils debating skills are beginning to develop well. These are well promoted through other subjects such as history and geography. Pupils make good oral contributions to lessons and confidently read their work aloud in class. They are able to use simple dictionary skills and read simple texts for interest and pleasure. Pupils write to inform, explain and entertain. Written work includes some interesting and lively poems, which are beautifully presented using IT. Pupils write imaginative mystery stories, using vivid vocabulary as well as articles for the front page of a newspaper.

7. Pupils' achievements in mathematics (including numeracy) are good overall and at each key stage. The introduction of the National Numeracy Framework is giving a sharper focus to planning and assessment. At the end of Key Stage 1 they know the names of the order of objects, such as first, second, third..... and that  $2 + 3$  is the same as  $3 + 2$ . They can name simple two-dimensional shapes and are gaining a good understanding of the language of space. Pupils at Key Stage 2 consolidate their oral and mental mathematical skills. Lower attaining pupils are able to double numbers to 50 and construct simple bar graphs and have a good grasp of simple geometric terms. Higher attaining pupils can draw equilateral triangles and circles accurately using a compass, measure obtuse and acute angles and are able to estimate them with a very good degree of accuracy. By Year 8 pupils have a good understanding of fractions, are able to use these in everyday situations and convert vulgar fractions into decimals. Lower attaining pupils have further developed their understanding of number and place value, understand simple fractions such as halves and the value of a range of coins. They can complete simple money sums and can extract information from a tally chart. They are able to calculate the frequency with which numbers occur when rolling a dice. Higher attaining pupils can identify axes of symmetry.

8. Teachers build in many opportunities for developing pupils' literacy and numeracy into their lessons and, as a result, this enhances pupils' progress in these areas.

9. In science pupils' achieve very well. The very good teaching and practical nature of the subject coupled with a strong emphasis on experimental and investigative work engages pupils very well. Pupils make very good progress in Key Stages 1 and 2; in Key Stage 3 their progress is good. At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils can identify hard, strong and 'bendy' materials. They know how to identify plants and animals, and to recognise vegetables. They understand that plants will not grow if they are deprived of water, light or soil. Pupils learn basic recording skills that are systematically supported and developed as they progress through the school. This ensures that they make very good progress in the skills associated basic scientific principles of observation and collecting information. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils demonstrate good understanding of the force of gravity, make accurate predictions about objects that will float or sink and confirm their predictions with experimental work. They improve their recording skills as they make diagrams to show their findings. Pupils make very good progress in understanding that friction hinders movement and use prediction, observation, and measurement to identify the effects of different surfaces on movement They use IT very effectively to present their data graphically, reinforcing their IT skills as well as their scientific understandings. The recording skills which pupils learn at this key stage are applied throughout the school in other contexts and enable pupils to make good progress in their ability to hypothesise, predict and infer. By the end of Year 8 pupils are able to explain that the moon does not give off light but is reflective and can see the relationship between the sun, moon and earth. Pupils have developed a good understanding of photosynthesis; they carry out experiments into the germination of seeds, recording the growth of seeds kept in test conditions competently. Pupils make good progress in their use and understanding of scientific vocabulary.

10. In IT pupils achieve very well. This subject has been a priority for improvement and staff have worked hard to ensure that IT skills, which are very well taught by the school's technician, are applied in 'real' situations in other subjects. By the end of Key Stage 1 their achievement is satisfactory and as pupils move through Key Stages 2 and 3, building on this early learning, their progress and achievement are very good. The effectively planned step-by-step learning opportunities that exist for them to develop their skills ensure that the progress they make builds securely on their previous learning. They then transfer this learning to other subjects of the curriculum so that, for example, their knowledge of how to design using a desktop publishing programme is used to plan a design for the front of a T-shirt in design technology lessons. Pupils in Key Stage 1 confidently access, play and quit simple games, and use the mouse to click on and drag pictures and icons. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' achievements in IT are very good. They are confident users of computers and can demonstrate a good knowledge of the Windows environment and the use of icons, tool bars and scroll bars within word-processing programs. They open programmes and windows and save and find their work. They begin to understand the need to be precise in the information they use when searching a database. Secondary age pupils (up to Year 8) effectively build on their earlier learning, becoming much more independent and confidently using different programmes. Their achievements are very good and some pupils are attaining at the nationally expected levels in aspects of information technology. They use the more sophisticated possibilities of some software with minimal support.

11. Pupils' progress in personal, social and health education is very good overall and is considerably enhanced by the vast number of opportunities pupils have on a day-to-day basis. Support for these aspects of pupils' development permeates all aspects of the school's work and every subject that is taught. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils follow familiar classroom routines confidently, sometimes with support from others and co-operate with other pupils on simple tasks. They concentrate well, particularly when an activity catches their interest and imagination. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils willingly fulfil their

responsibilities and are generous in their recognition of each other's attainments in various subjects, commenting on it and enhancing their self-esteem. They work co-operatively to good effect, and are quick to help each other. By the end of the key stage, pupils have some strategies for handling conflict, know how to respond to anger and how to make an apology. Their level of social awareness and manners improve throughout the key stage. Pupils can adapt their talk appropriately to situation and are polite and courteous. By the end of Year 8 (Key Stage 3) pupils have studied citizenship and have discussed topical issues relating to football hooliganism at some length. They are developing an understanding about parenting and personal relationships.

12. Pupils' achievements in art, design and technology, geography, history, music and religious education are good. In design and technology pupils' achievements could be better at Key Stage 3 if the school's facilities were better matched to the Key Stage 3 curriculum. In religious education pupils' achievements could be better if they had more time to study the subject. Pupils achieve very well in physical education – the subject is a strength of the school.

13. In French, pupils do not achieve as much as they should and their progress is unsatisfactory. This is because not all pupils who should, study the subject and because of weaknesses in teachers' knowledge and confidence at Key Stage 3. The school has already begun to address this.

### **Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development**

14. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are excellent, their personal development is very good and their attendance is good. These findings represent a distinct improvement compared to the previous inspection. Parents are generally pleased with the standard of behaviour in school and how the pupils become more mature and responsible. The school receives letters from places visited by school groups that commend the behaviour of the pupils.

15. Pupils' extremely positive attitudes are reflected in their good level of attendance, their considerable enjoyment of all the experiences in school and by the high level of interest and effort that they apply to their learning. They concentrate very well and often make very interesting observations and comments in lessons. Some older pupils are developing very effective debating skills or skills in offering reasoned judgements and presenting opinions. In a Year 7 geography lesson on the destruction of the rainforest pupils demonstrated their increasing ability to present a logical argument, drawing on their past lessons effectively and taking their listeners' needs into account. They responded to each other in a very 'adult' manner, listened very well and took their roles very seriously.

16. During their time at the school pupils make extremely good progress in their ability to exercise self-control and to act appropriately towards others. They make most commendable efforts to meet the high expectations of their teachers. Misbehaviour, which occurs from time to time, is usually because pupils are affected by stressful situations, many of which are caused by influences outside the control of the school. Nevertheless, such instances do not interfere with the learning of others and do not detract significantly from what is almost always excellent conduct. Bullying is extremely rare and there is no evidence of any prejudicial attitudes amongst pupils. There was one temporary school exclusion during the last reporting year, the first since the school opened.

17. Pupils respond extremely well to adults in the school and are polite and courteous to visitors. They get on well together and, when opportunities are provided co-operate effectively, offer help and comment to each other. During the school sports afternoon, during the inspection, pupils behaved in an exemplary manner. They were very patient about waiting their turn and while others finished their events. They watched and enthusiastically applauded the efforts of others and were pleased with the success of their peers. During the weekly assembly of celebration pupils listened with complete attention to the reports about other's classes and took pride in their own and others' achievements.

18. Within the scope of their work, activities and the opportunities provided pupils make very good progress in terms of taking responsibility for their work and actions. They look after school property and, for example in design and technology, handle equipment with care and sensibly observe safe practices. They do their best to behave appropriately towards others.

19. Although rates of attendance are below the average for primary and secondary schools, they are well above the average for similar special schools. Unauthorised absence is low compared to similar schools. All pupils significantly improve their records of attendance after starting at the school. Many pupils have a very poor history of attendance at previous schools but make substantial gains in their attitudes towards school and their actual attendance during their time at Maplewood. Most pupils travel to school by specially arranged transport and, therefore, the time at which they arrive is determined by these arrangements. Most transport is however, punctual and collects and delivers pupils efficiently.

#### **HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?**

20. The quality of teaching is very good overall. Pupils learn very well and make very good progress overall. It is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stage 3. The teaching has improved markedly since the last inspection when nine percent was deemed unsatisfactory, this mainly occurring in Key Stage 3. All the teaching is now satisfactory or better. Teaching at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is stronger because of the very good level of detail in the planning, particularly for higher and lower attaining pupils. Nine tenths (90 per cent) of teaching observed was good or better and nearly four tenths (38 per cent) very good or excellent. In two lessons in science (two per cent) the teaching was excellent.

21. The teaching of English is very good overall. Activities are very well matched to pupils' individual needs helps enabling each to learn at their own pace. Teachers inspire confidence and as a result pupils try hard. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are enhanced by the very many opportunities to respond to the probing questions asked by teachers and by the good opportunities for oral presentations promoted in lessons and assemblies.

22. The teaching of literacy is very good. Class management is an outstanding feature of all literacy teaching. Teachers plan their lessons carefully and often individually. They ensure distinct sections of the time allocated are devoted to word and sentence level work. Texts are well chosen. There is a clear focus for teaching and learning in every lesson. The teachers take care to arrange the classroom carefully to facilitate whole class and small group work. Pupils are left in no doubt about what they are required to learn. Lessons build reliably on pupils' existing knowledge and understanding.



23. In mathematics (including numeracy), the teaching is good. Energetic presentations and the variety of different ways activities are presented by teachers captures the interest of pupils. Humour is used well, especially to give encouragement or to successfully diffuse any negative situations that may be developing – these are always dealt with sensitivity and unobtrusively. A particular strength of the teaching is the way teachers help pupils explore different ways of tackling problems and encourages them to provide explanations for their answers.

24. The quality of teaching is very good in science. Pupils are presented with high levels of challenge, both academically and behaviourally. Teachers' use of a range of teaching techniques and styles, including providing many opportunities for practical work which reinforces the pupil understanding of scientific ideas and keeps them interested. Excellent teaching is characterised by high quality, detailed planning, careful explanations, and constant checking to ensure pupils have understood what they have been taught. Teacher – pupil relationships are very strong and the very good behaviour seen in lessons, the quietness of the 'intensive' and productive working environment are the result of the teacher making it very clear about what is expected.

25. Teaching is good in personal, social and health education for the specific lessons and very good for all the aspects taught during the daily life of the school. The relationships teachers have with the pupils inspire confidence and trust. As a result, pupils successfully model their behaviour on that of the teachers, and are content to be instructed by their guidance and example. There are good opportunities for pupils to make practical contributions to proceedings, particularly in debating and exploring moral and social issues.

26. The quality of teaching is very good in IT. Specific lessons are taught by the school's technician whose very good skills and knowledge and calm and methodical approach to teaching the subject across the school, help pupils learn very well. In addition to this, teachers and support assistants use IT well to promote pupils' learning in other subjects, which also has a beneficial effect of re-inforcing pupils' IT skills.

27. In religious education the quality of teaching is very good overall. Good use of religious artefacts, and multimedia presentations captures pupils' imaginations and interest and helps them to learn very well. Teachers help pupils to effectively explore moral and social issues within a religious context and this contributes well to pupils' personal development.

28. The quality of teaching in physical education is very good across Key Stages 2 and 3. No lessons could be observed in Key Stage 1 but the skills of the teachers enable pupils to make considerable progress in swimming. The very good management of pupils supports not only their skills and behaviour, but also their high regard for the rules and conventions in sport. All staff display very good interpersonal skills and subject knowledge and teaching is successful in including pupils who are disaffected by their own personal performance.

29. In art, the quality of teaching is good at Key Stages 2 and 3. No lessons could be observed at Key Stage 1. In design and technology it is good overall and good at Key Stage 1 and 2; in the very good teaching seen at Key Stage 3 teachers use IT, media and other resources particularly well, integrating learning of skills such as computer aided design with fabric technology. The teaching geography is good overall. It is good in Key Stages 1 and 2 but at Key Stage 3, where the teaching is very good, the teacher's enthusiasm for the subject inspires pupils. The use of debate and role-play really helps them explore the political and social aspects of the subject very well. In history little

teaching could be seen, except for in Year 6 and in Key Stage 3; it is good overall with some very good features. The good quality of teaching seen in music is characterised by good relationships and an encouraging approach, which helps pupils' contribute with confidence.

30. No overall judgement could be made on the quality of teaching in French at Key Stage 3 because only one lesson could be seen. There are, however, weaknesses in teachers' subject knowledge.

31. Teaching has many important strengths. One of the main strengths is the way in which the enthusiastic teaching inspires pupils, many of whose self-confidence and self-esteem is very low on entry to school. Teachers carefully planned support and encouragement gives pupils the confidence to participate in activities. As a result, their successes, and the praise they receive, spur them on to try harder. They leave school confident and proud of their achievements.

32. Pupil management by all staff including support assistants is exceptional. Relationships are very good and this engenders respect and trust in pupils. Potentially negative situations are handled expertly, sensitively and calmly, allowing learning to be maximised and any disruption (usually relating to events or actions outside school) to be minimised. Teachers make it clear what is expected from pupils, academically and behaviourally and pupils do their best to rise to this; they want to do their best and try hard. Pupils are expected to get down to their work quickly and to concentrate well.

33. Teachers and learning support assistants (including the school's technician) work extremely closely together as a staff team. The high quality support staff prepare themselves well for lessons, intuitively respond to the pupils' needs and often record pupils' responses and make assessments. They make a significant contribution to the work of the school and the progress of pupils.

34. The staff use computers very well to enhance pupils' learning, record what they are doing, as well as improve their capability. The role of IT in lessons is very well developed and teachers and support staff exhibit considerable skill and confidence. They are particularly good at encouraging pupils to put great effort into their learning and try their hardest to succeed. This results in pupils learning very well.

35. Teachers know their pupils very well, their personal circumstances and difficulties. The staff's very good knowledge of pupils' individual targets and the pupils themselves means that all are aware of what pupils need to do to improve. Basic skills are taught well and subject specific vocabulary well promoted in lessons, thus enabling pupils to have a greater understanding of ideas relating to the subject, such as the use of 'evaporation' / 'condensation' in science, 'field' in IT, and 'vulgar fractions' in mathematics. There is just one weakness in teacher's subject knowledge – not all teachers at Key Stage 3 are confident in teaching French and one class does not receive any teaching because of this.

36. In all lessons the brisk pace maintains pupils' concentration. Teachers' questioning is probing, often 'quick-fire' to make pupils think quickly and pupils know that they should have thought carefully before they answer. However, wrong answers are dealt with appropriately and pupils are in no way ridiculed or 'put down' – all contributions are valued.

37. The teaching of and provision for pupils with additional special educational needs (such as the small number of pupils the school has with dyslexia, dyspraxia and those on the autistic continuum) is very good, enabling them to make very good progress overall.

Teachers make skilful adaptations of lessons based on a very good knowledge of these pupils' needs. There is a high level of effective individual planning, and the teachers vary the pace of lessons to suit individual needs. Those who speak English as an additional language (one pupil at the time of the inspection) and those who have poor reading skills receive a high standard of additional and specific help. The school takes professional advice on teaching and learning styles when this is necessary. Homework is satisfactorily provided in accordance with the school's policy.

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

### ***Learning opportunities***

38. There have been significant improvements in the curriculum since the previous inspection, when curriculum planning was a weakness and was a key issue for the school to address. The quality and range of learning experiences the pupils receive are now good. These are well planned across the school, ensuring that what pupils are to learn builds systematically on their previous work and that they do not unnecessarily repeat work they have done before. The curriculum is broad and balanced and very relevant to the pupils. It is strongly geared towards significantly improving pupils' personal development and particularly with regard to their self-confidence and self-esteem and motivating them to behave well and learn. In addition, the school day is now longer, allowing more time for teaching, and is to be extended by a further 15 minutes a day in September 2000. Design and technology did not meet statutory curriculum requirements at the time of the previous inspection but has now been improved and meets statutory requirements.

39. For pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 (the primary department) the curriculum is good. It is both broad and balanced and covers all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It places an appropriate and very clear emphasis on pupils' personal development. All statutory requirements are met. Planning to ensure that pupils make progress is reviewed every year and any necessary adaptations made. To guide planning in the medium term, for a term or less, the schemes of work published by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority are used for some subjects. Where these are not currently being used the school plans to use them in the near future. For pupils up to the end of Key Stage 1 the curriculum is planned in a one-year cycle but is reviewed and revised annually, to ensure that pupils do not repeat previous work and that the work they do builds appropriately on what has been covered before. The school's planning for English and mathematics takes appropriate account of the National literacy and numeracy strategies, adapted to the specific needs of its pupils. The implementation and effectiveness of the school strategies are very good.

40. For pupils in the secondary department (up to Year 8 in Key Stage 3) the curriculum is satisfactory overall, with one key area of weakness where the curriculum fails to meet the statutory requirement to teach a modern foreign language to all pupils. In one class the pupils are not taught a modern foreign language so these pupils are disadvantaged in comparison with the other secondary age pupils. For the majority of pupils in Key Stage 3 the curriculum includes all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education and statutory requirements are met. In all other subjects curriculum opportunities are the same for all pupils. In response to the issues reported in the previous inspection the school reorganised the way pupils are taught in Key Stage 3. Pupils now largely follow a secondary school way of timetabling and are taught by subject specialists, having a different teacher for many curriculum subjects. For the majority of subjects this works well and pupils adapt to this model well. In the previous inspection planning for design and technology was noted as failing to meet statutory requirements. This issue has now been

addressed and, despite significant and unresolved difficulties with the accommodation, design and technology now covers all the required areas.

41. The National Literacy Strategy and National Numeracy Strategy are very well implemented throughout the school and have had a significant and positive impact on pupils' learning. The emphasis the school places on developing reading, writing and numeracy skills and the high quality support provided ensures very good progress and has a positive impact on pupils' ability to use these skills to promote their learning in other subjects of the curriculum.

42. Pupils' personal development is promoted very well throughout the school and is implicit in all its work. As a result, pupils are very well prepared for their next stage of education including those who integrate into mainstream school. However, there is, at present, no whole school planned programme for teaching personal, social and health education and the teaching programme is at the discretion of individual teachers. Currently pupils are taught to be aware of drugs and have sex education lessons, in line with statutory requirements. Some pupils are taught citizenship as part of a specially planned programme for personal, social and health education in one class. The school does intend to introduce a more co-ordinated whole school programme for these areas, based on an appropriate scheme of work, from the beginning of the next year to strengthen its provision for this subject.

43. There is good planning for information technology based on the Qualifications and Curriculum model. Information technology skills are taught discretely to all pupils by the information technology technician. The skills developed are then very successfully built on in other subjects of the curriculum. The school's good information technology curriculum has a positive impact on developing pupils' literacy and on their self-confidence and self-esteem – especially in relation to the use of the Internet for research and the very good use of IT to support pupils' learning.

44. The curriculum is well planned and is reviewed every year by the curriculum co-ordinator with the curriculum-planning group. All decisions about the curriculum are then discussed with the whole staff before changes are implemented. This ensures that all staff are involved, understand and are fully committed to any changes and developments. In some subjects the current schemes of work lack sufficient detail, but this is to be rectified when the school adopts the national schemes of work developed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The school has enthusiastically embraced the new curriculum developments for September 2000, looking carefully at them to identify the changes that need to be made to make them accessible to the needs of the pupils at the school. Curriculum changes for the beginning of the new school year have already been identified. As the schemes of work become available for the Key Stage 3 curriculum the school plans to use these in their curriculum planning.

45. There are satisfactory curricular opportunities outside the school day. There is an after school karate club where pupils are taught by a professional karate teacher. The school uses such experiences to teach pupils self-control, restraint and boost their self-esteem. The pupils enjoy the sessions and the opportunity to gain recognised karate awards. During the inspection they demonstrated their skills to parents at their annual meeting with the governing body. The club is growing in numbers and is open to all the pupils at the school on condition that their behaviour in school is sufficiently good to permit them to attend. In this way it acts as a good incentive to control their behaviour in school so that they may attend the club. Parents show their support for the club by taking responsibility for getting their child home afterwards. When they are unable to do this, the

school does its best to arrange suitable transport to return pupils home.

46. There is an annual opportunity for pupils to go on a residential trip for outdoor and adventurous activities. Again this is available to all pupils in the school, but only the most well behaved pupils are permitted to go on the trip. In this way the trip affords an incentive to good behaviour over the longer period and a reward for pupils who do learn to control their behaviour. It is a good opportunity to develop self-confidence, independence and practice physical skills out of doors.

#### ***Community links and links with partner institutions***

47. Links with the community contribute well to pupils' learning and personal development. Visits are made out of school to supplement classroom lessons. Pupils learn about aspects of history, geography and science in visits to a planetarium, botanical gardens, wildlife sanctuaries and other places of interest and cultural heritage. Pupils' spend four days at a residential centre for outdoor activities and take part in coastal walking. Coaching is provided in football and karate. All this is much valued and well supported by pupils and makes a very good contribution to their personal development. The swimming pool, at the local college of further education, is well used. Pupils support local and national charities and they sing at a home for elderly citizens. Visitors to the school include a range of musical groups and entertainers. These make a good contribution to pupils' learning and cultural development. Representatives from health and safety agencies help build pupils' awareness of safe and healthy living.

48. The school has very good relationships with many other schools and works closely and very effectively with them to facilitate reintegration in mainstream education. There are useful arrangements with other institutions which provide placements in school for teacher training and work experience, but which also promote pupils flexibility and personal growth effectively.

#### ***Provision for personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development***

49. The school cultivates pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development very well. Since the last inspection, there has been a satisfactory level of improvement in the promotion of learning about other cultures. The promotion of sound moral values, acceptable social skills and self-discipline continues to be a strength and is very good. The ethos of trust and mutual respect mentioned in the last report is still strongly evident in the work of the school.

50. The school's provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Assemblies successfully promote broadly Christian values and give opportunities to pupils to pray to God and to reflect. There is little planning to promote aspects of spirituality in curricular subjects, but pupils are very proud of their school, are enabled to celebrate their own and others' achievements within it. This engenders feelings of self-worth and self-confidence in the pupils and serves as a spiritual process of affirmation. Pupils show their spiritual 'side' in their close concentration when listening to music and their enthusiastic singing in lessons and in assemblies.

51. There are very good opportunities for pupils' moral development. The school is an intensely moral community, engendering a very strong sense of right and wrong. This is exemplified in the school's own code of practice for pupils and the sanctions and rewards the school has. Besides enabling pupils to reflect on their values and beliefs, periods of reflection in assemblies also allow pupils to think of the consequences of their behaviour. They, thus, begin to take responsibility for their own actions. The school strongly promotes honesty, fairness and a respect for truth and justice.

52. Social development is very well promoted. As early as Key Stage 1 pupils are enabled to take simple classroom responsibilities. Much of the very good provision of personal and social education is successfully focussed upon teaching pupils to live in a community. Teachers and some ex-pupils provide excellent role models. During the week of the inspection an ex-pupil visited the school to encourage the pupils. He had previously transferred to mainstream secondary school, had succeeded internationally as an athlete and was now looking towards planning for higher education. The quality of relationships within the school is very good and gives pupils a yardstick against which to judge acceptable behaviour. PSHE lessons give them good opportunities to discuss courtesy and good manners. During the week of the inspection, pupils' manners were very good. They said "please" and "thank you" and appeared to really mean what they had said. Behaviour in the dining room was impeccable and social behaviour modelled by the headteacher and staff. Pupils take turns patiently. They help the teachers and each other. They are good hearted and generous. Social development is further promoted by good opportunities for pupils to co-operate. During a week of inspection, the annual sports day strongly fostered self-discipline and fair play.

53. There are satisfactory opportunities for pupils to appreciate their own cultural traditions and the richness of other cultures. Pupils study at least one Shakespeare play in Key Stage 3. They are introduced to, and participate in a range of English music. Brass and string ensembles have visited the school. Pupils are helped to read some simplified classic novels and experience a range of English poetry. In their study of other cultures pupils examine a wide range of artists. Lessons in religious education continue to introduce pupils to major world religions. Pupils have used scarabs as a motif in the manufacture of African style jewellery. A reproduction of Gauguin's "Christ crucified" was used in a religious education lesson to illustrate the tenets of the Christian religion. There have been performances of Peruvian panpipes, Japanese drums and a variety of Indian music.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?**

### ***Child protection, welfare and guidance***

54. Procedures for child protection are very well managed and provision for pupils' health, safety and general welfare are good. The monitoring and promotion of pupils' personal development are very good. Significant improvement has taken place, since the previous inspection, with regard to the establishment of formal procedures for health and safety that were originally a weakness.

55. The member of staff who is designated to be responsible for child protection is well qualified and trained to do so and she ensures that teachers and non-teaching staff are fully able to comply with procedures. There is appropriate and effective collaboration with relevant external agencies.

56. Health and safety policy and procedures, which are based on the local education authority model, are in place and risk assessments are carried out. The school has substantially improved its formal arrangements and has raised awareness of health and safety generally. However, several matters of minor concern were brought to the school's attention by inspectors, which the school promptly responded to, but are indicative of the

need for advice as to how to ensure that the routine safety checks that take place are carried out in a more systematic way.

57. Pupils' attendance is closely monitored by the school, which, together with the local social services department and education welfare officers, makes every effort to encourage parents and pupils to have positive attitudes to school. The school's response to absence is very prompt and visits to homes often occur by mid morning and pupils brought into school. Over time, the measures taken have been very effective.

58. The management and monitoring of pupils' behaviour and conduct is excellent and has a profound effect on pupils' improved behaviour. The quality of supervision, guidance and care by all adults in the school is exceptional. Pupils' self-discipline is consistently and continuously promoted by the exceptionally high expectations of all staff. Teachers provide appropriate and caring guidance and patiently counsel individual pupils whenever this is needed. Sanctions such as loss of privileges are very well used and a quiet room allows those pupils who need time to cool off and have some personal space. Pupils are very aware of the 'rules'. Every week, the whole school assembles and celebrates pupils' achievements; pupils welcome this and have a great sense of pride when they receive their awards. This spurs them on to try harder. Aspects of pupils' personal development are very closely monitored. Teachers' records include a detailed weekly 'social' report about each pupil. Monitoring is very well used to determine targets and strategies to move pupils' personal development on. The daily indirect contact with parents via the 'school diary' works very well. The school very successfully creates an atmosphere of calm in which pupils feel safe and supported. The school is well supported by external specialist agencies.

### ***Assessing pupils' attainment and progress***

#### ***Using assessment information to guide planning***

59. The school's provision for the monitoring of pupils' personal and academic performance has improved since the previous inspection and is now good overall. There is a sound up-to-date policy, which sets out clearly the systems to be used.

60. The assessment of what pupils know, understand and can do is good. Teachers now use this information well to modify pupils' learning opportunities and it is especially used well where pupils are having difficulties learning and need activities to be adapted or broken down into smaller steps. The attainment of individual pupils in the subjects of the National Curriculum is assessed using the relevant statements of attainment. As an individual pupil's attainment of each statement is secured this is recorded by the teacher. Over time these assessments give a clear picture of an individual's learning in relation to the subjects of the curriculum and enables teachers to identify any aspects of learning that a pupil may not have achieved. They then plan work to address this. In addition to monitoring pupils' learning in subjects of the National Curriculum, teachers record personal and social development using nationally produced competency statements. All this information is collated in helpful individual pupil files that bring together all relevant information relating to a pupil's academic learning or personal development. These are maintained by the pupil's current teacher and follow the pupil through the school, building a comprehensive picture of the individual's learning and development over time. The school carries out appropriate national end-of-key-stage assessments. For some pupils this is by the teacher assessing their attainment, while higher attaining pupils take the formal tests.

61. Other strategies are also used to note pupils' progress or areas of difficulty and support teacher planning to meet these. Teachers keep records of the work that has been covered and note individual pupils who have made good progress or those who have found difficulties. Individual teachers or subject co-ordinators may identify specific assessment materials, which they use on a trial basis in their class or subject before sharing their views with the rest of the staff. For example, some teachers have used the optional standard assessment tests with pupils in Key Stage 2. Decisions about new strategies to use are made in discussion with the whole staff. Non-teaching assistants also frequently contribute to the monitoring of pupils' learning by noting progress made and discussing this with teachers.

62. The school's systems for monitoring and recording pupils' behaviour are excellent. The information from monitoring is used by teachers to set targets for improving individual pupil's behaviour. These targets are formulated / shared with, and understood by, the pupil. In most classes they are prominently displayed in classrooms and pupils are frequently reminded of them. Using all this information teachers and non-teaching assistants know the pupils very well and this knowledge is used when planning for future learning.

63. Pupils' work is marked in discussion with the pupil. Some teachers, although not all, also helpfully annotate the work with comments that describe how it was done. While analysis of pupils' work in books shows that pupils clearly do make progress, judgements about rates of progress can be more difficult in some subjects as some of the work is undated.

64. Improving the quality of individual education plans was a key issue at the time of the previous inspection and satisfactory improvements have been made since then. However, these plans could go further in helping pupils with their learning. Individual education plans, which include targets for improvement, are produced every term using a straightforward, and very clear format. The majority of the targets relate to the pupil's personal development and behaviour. The school appropriately places a heavy emphasis on improving behaviour and believes these targets to be the most relevant for their pupils. While this is a good strategy when pupils first enter Maplewood and targets help to successfully modify their behaviour, there is currently no system for setting targets for improvement in academic subjects. There is an intention to begin to develop these targets in the near future but this process is at early stage of development.

## **HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?**

65. Parents have very positive views about the school and value its provision and the very positive effects it has on their children's progress and personal development. The school's links with parents contribute well to pupils' education and parents' involvement in the life and work of the school is generally satisfactory. The judgements in the previous inspection report were similar.

66. Parents are particularly complimentary about the frequency of contact with them, especially the personal contact through the use of the telephone, home visits and the home-school diary. They know how their children are getting on and they find it very easy to approach the school about any concerns. They are pleased with the way the school is led and managed and the quality of teaching is such that their pupils give of their best. They consider that the support, guidance, care and supervision provided are very good and pupils make good progress in their academic and personal development.

67. Some parents think the school should provide more homework but inspectors are



satisfied with the policy that the school adopts. A few parents say that the school does not work closely with them but inspectors find that the school goes to considerable lengths to work closely with parents about pupils' individual needs. A small number of parents state that behaviour in the school is not good. Inspectors judge that, given the nature of the establishment and the reasons for pupils being there, a certain amount of difficult behaviour is inevitable but it diminishes quickly and very substantial improvements in behavioural standards are achieved.

68. The general information provided about the life and work of the school is good overall. However, the quality of Information provided about pupils' personal development is better than in their academic reports. The good quality of the school prospectus and the personal and regular contact creates a positive working atmosphere and partnership among parents.

69. The home/school agreement is limited in scope and does not represent, promote or state sufficiently strongly how the school and parents will seek to work together. The written agreement is, therefore, less strong than the good practice undertaken by the school. The annual school reports (separate from the Annual Review of the Statement of Special Educational Need) are inconsistent in the way they report what pupils know, understand and can do. Information often relates to what pupils have experienced and enjoyed. Annual reviews, on the other hand, are very informative and enable parents to clearly understand the progress pupils are making, particularly in their personal development. National Curriculum levels are stated and detailed curriculum information, generally about the core subjects, provided. The daily diary keeps parents up-to-date and through its two-way communication facility effectively promotes a joint effort by teachers and parents to support pupils in a coordinated way.

70. Parents are strongly encouraged to visit or telephone and teachers almost always telephone parents during the school day when it is important for parents to be aware of significant developments. Attendance by parents at the key events in the school's calendar is high. Teachers regularly discuss with parents strategies which will assist their children. Some guidance publications are issued and from time-to-time worksheets, for example on mathematical problems, which parents are encouraged to work through with their children at home. Homework is only set when deemed to be particularly helpful in specific circumstances or when requested by parents. A few parents do not give sufficiently firm support to their children to maintain high levels of attendance. Due partly to the large area that the school serves and the distance to travel, many parents are not involved in the work of the school, but the school does everything it can to maintain contact with such parents.

## **HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?**

### ***Leadership and management by the headteacher, senior management team and governing body***

71. Good improvement has been made in the leadership and management of the school since the last inspection by the increased involvement of the governing body and a more rigorous monitoring of teaching and learning. The health and safety issues identified have been addressed and the relevant policies adopted. Overall, the leadership and management of the school are now very good. The headteacher and staff have succeeded in providing pupils with a secure and nurturing environment to which pupils have responded very well. There is an excellent school ethos subscribed to by all staff. The headteacher, together with all staff, has a total commitment to the school's further improvement and success. The school meets its aims very well and is now focused high expectations of pupil achievement and behaviour.

72. The headteacher provides very good leadership and is highly regarded by pupils, parents, staff and governors. She has a clear vision for the school and its future (despite many uncertainties for a number of years) and is instrumental in the embodiment of its aims and values. She is dedicated to both staff and pupils and maintains a high profile, overseeing pupils' behaviour throughout the day. This has a positive effect on pupil behaviour and difficulties are quickly diffused. The headteacher is supported in the collegiate structure by a deputy headteacher and a curriculum group of three staff. She leads the monitoring and evaluation of teaching within the school very well but elements of the formal monitoring by the curriculum co-ordinators are as yet underdeveloped and fragmented. Senior staff members need to work more as a team in monitoring and evaluating policy implementation. Subject co-ordinators contribute positively to the school development plan by submitting their own individual 'blueprints' but their subject monitoring is informal, and, inconsistent. They have not extended their checks on the quality of learning across the school consistently to a strategic plan.

73. The deputy headteacher provides good support to the headteacher. He does not have a defined teaching commitment – this is specifically in order to address day-to-day teaching and organisational eventualities. His support role to staff has impacted positively in reducing staff absence and in allowing staff to undertake a wide range of training. The deputy headteacher acts as backstop and as a calming influence when adverse pupil behaviour threatens the learning of others. His intervention has a positive impact on the behaviour of individuals. Through provision of alternative learning activities, pupils are quickly returned to their lessons in a more positive frame of mind.

74. Day-to-day management of the school is very good. The school is well organised and runs smoothly with most discussions on relevant issues taking place at the twice-weekly staff meetings. Minutes of these meetings indicate that this is where the school demonstrates collegiality at its best.

75. The governing body is supportive to the school and, through established committees for finance and personnel, takes an active part in its management. There has been improvement in its involvement in monitoring the work of the school but this is still developing. It is increasingly assuming responsibility but still needs to extend its knowledge and overview of the school's curriculum. One governor is responsible for informally monitoring the curriculum, teaching and pupils but there is no adoption of particular subjects by specific governors.

76. Development planning is satisfactory and is commented on through the regular monitoring and review which takes place. The school development plan is detailed and comprehensive but is not easy to read and unwieldy in its organisation. Though it is costed, the measures of success for its spending plans are sometimes imprecise and do not state clear criteria against which future improvement will be measured. These criteria are insufficiently linked to pupil progress. The school development plan does map development for all subjects but for modern foreign languages it is ill defined and lacks clear direction. Over the last two years the school has decided on the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy and the development of information technology as its priorities. This has had a really positive impact on pupils' progress in both areas of the curriculum and has improved pupils' progress significantly.

77. The systems for teacher appraisal are very good. The headteacher appraises all teachers and gives comprehensive feed back for their professional development. There are less formal arrangements for the appraisal of the performance of learning support

assistants. Arrangements for the setting of performance targets for the headteacher and deputy headteacher are in place and are monitored by a named governor.

78. The school's medium –term priorities are influenced by the circumstances of the impending re-organisation and relate primarily to curricular matters and to the development of the transferable skills of staff on that re-organisation. Although the governing body has set school performance targets, they are set at zero for the number of pupils estimated to achieve Level 4 at the end of Key Stage 2. This is an underestimation of the achievements that the school is making in core subjects over the period since the last inspection and it needs to consider more realistic and more specific targets based on pupils' performance in all aspects of their academic and personal development.

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

79. Staffing levels and expertise are very good overall. The number of teachers is sufficient to meet the needs of the pupils. Staff are well qualified, continually updating their skills and there is a wealth of experience and expertise to meet the demands of the curriculum. Many staff have specialist skills and knowledge in the subjects they teach and this contributes well to pupils' learning, such as in science. However, there is no member of staff qualified or with sufficient expertise to teach French and though teachers do their best, some pupils in Key Stage 3 do not receive their entitlement to a modern foreign language because of this lack of expertise.

80. Each of the nine classes has a learning support assistant (LSA) attached to it. This arrangement is a strength of the school especially when pupils move around to specialist teachers in Key Stage 3. The experience and knowledge of the LSAs is invaluable in supporting teaching because the adults work closely as a team and their highly collaborative approach means lessons are well managed and pupils are able to make very good progress. Support staff provide continuity to the whole school curriculum by working with pupils during lunchtime and escorting them to and from school on the minibuses. They are fully involved in staff training and carry out significant responsibilities such as the teaching and technical management of information technology in the school. Teachers plan their lessons carefully to include the LSAs and lessons are discussed before and after delivery. Some LSAs are used well to assess pupils and to take notes of their responses during lessons. The strong team spirit noted in the last report continues to be a feature of the school.

81. Very good arrangements for the induction of new staff are in place (as well as the procedures for mentoring newly qualified teachers). There are useful guidance notes for staff and a very detailed staff handbook for non-teaching staff. All staff have the opportunity to develop their own skills through further training and the school is a centre for local education authority training for learning support assistants. Staff development is a strength of the school and the range of expertise makes the school a potentially significant centre for staff training in the education of pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

82. Accommodation is good overall. However, the information technology (computer) room is too small and insufficiently ventilated for pupils to work in. The school is aware of this and plans are well underway to make alterations, as part of the school's remodelling due to re-organisation, so that information technology can be taught in much more appropriate surroundings. The school has taken note of accommodation recommendations from the last inspection; there are now specialist facilities for science, and exterior windows continue to be gradually replaced. Library resources are good; reference and fiction books are accessible in classrooms. The school is very clean and well cared for, and is further enhanced by the very well-displayed samples of pupils' work in the classrooms and around

the corridors. The hall is not equipped for Key Stage 3 pupils to do gymnastics and the design and technology facilities are very restricted. Changing and showering facilities are of a high standard, particularly the facilities for the small number of girls who attend the school. The school makes good use of the swimming pool at the neighbouring further education college; the very good quality of teaching and very good facilities enhance pupils' learning and many exceed national expectations in swimming by the end of Key Stage 2.

83. In English, design and technology, personal, social and health education and French there are sufficient resources; other subjects are well resourced, with very good resources in art, information technology, geography, history, mathematics, science, religious education, music and physical education. Resources are of good quality and accessible. The school makes good use of computer technology and teachers are developing the range of specific software to support the curriculum. Visiting musicians including a saxophone quartet, are arranged termly with the local authority music service, this arrangement expands the curriculum and extends pupils' knowledge of people beyond the school.

### ***Financial planning***

84. Financial planning is good. The headteacher has firm control over planning the budget and linking proposed spending with focussed plans detailed in the school development plan. Appropriate delegation is in place. Subject co-ordinators have budgets for which they bid annually. However, while plans are appropriately costed as yet there is no formal mechanism for assessing the impact of the spending on attainment.

85. A designated governor for finance meets regularly with the headteacher to review the budget and the governing body receives regular feedback on financial matters. There is no finance committee but governors have agreed to deal with financial matters as a whole body and, for instance, the school development plan costings are determined and monitored by the whole governing body. This is quite appropriate. The uncertainties about the future role of the school (which have occurred over many years) have somewhat limited long-term financial planning although some long-term plans have been proposed and planned for. In the circumstances appropriate action has been taken. Governors' priorities being mainly concerned with immediate improvements in accommodation and with ensuring appropriate staffing following reorganisation. The school has built up an appropriate surplus, which has been earmarked for use following the planned reorganisation and modifications to the school buildings.

86. Specific grants made to the school are used appropriately to extend the curriculum and to raise attainment particularly in literacy and IT. The school is beginning to apply the principles of best value and this is satisfactory. The headteacher uses contact with other special schools (as well as using local education authority produced data) as a mechanism for comparison with similar organisations and all purchasing proposals are examined for cost effectiveness.

87. There is good day-to-day management of the finances of the school and of school administration in general. All procedures are in place and supported by documentation. A local education authority audit has been recently undertaken and the few weaknesses identified have been addressed. The school uses IT for management well. In addition to the use made by administrative staff for financial management, IT is used well to enhance the day-to-day working of the school. For instance during the week of the inspection the school's web site had reports and pictures of sports day. Teachers each have a laptop computer, which they can take home to prepare their planning.

## WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

88. In order to improve the educational standards and rectify the weaknesses the headteacher, core management team and governing body should:

- (1) Improve pupils' progress in French by
  - Ensuring that all pupils who should be taught the subject;
  - Increasing teachers' knowledge and confidence in teaching the subject.

*(paragraphs 154 - 158)*

In addition to the key issue above, the following less important issues should be considered for inclusion in the school's action plan. These are indicated in the following paragraphs:

- Improve the organisation of the school development plan so that information is easy to read and data is easy to retrieve and that criteria for measuring the success of the plan are clear and precise;
  - Ensure that scope of individual education plan targets is more wide ranging for those pupils who have learning difficulties and these targets link clearly to annual targets set in the pupils' annual review of the statement of special educational needs. Also, that this contributes to whole school target setting;
  - Ensure that pupils' annual reports clearly state what pupils' know, understand and can do;
  - Provide opportunities for co-ordinators to monitor the quality of teaching in their subjects where more than one teacher teaches the subject;
  - Consistently date pupils' work.
- (paragraphs 63, 64, 69, 72, 76)*

## PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

### Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	101
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	49

### Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	36	52	10	0	0	0

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

### Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	No of pupils
Number of pupils on the school's roll	90
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals	60

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	90*
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	0

\* pupils may enter and leave the school at any time during the school year

### Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	7.2	School data	3.1

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 1**

Pupils' results are not recorded as less than 10 pupils took the test

### **Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Total
	2000	15

<b>National Curriculum Test/Task Results</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
	Absent	1	1	1
	Level 1	3	2	2
	Level 2	6	3	4
	Level 3	4	7	4
	Level 4	1	2	4

  

<b>Teachers' Assessments</b>		<b>English</b>	<b>Mathematics</b>	<b>Science</b>
	Absent	1	1	1
	Level 1	2	0	2
	Level 2	4	7	2
	Level 3	6	3	5
	Level 4	2	4	4

### ***Ethnic background of pupils***

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	89
Any other minority ethnic group	0

### ***Exclusions in the last school year***

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	1	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

### ***Teachers and classes***

#### **Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y8**

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	13.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	6.8
Average class size	10

#### **Education support staff: YR – Y8**

Total number of education support staff	10
Total aggregate hours worked per week	325

*FTE means full-time equivalent.*

### ***Financial information***

Financial year	1999/2000
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	£
Total income	670 769
Total expenditure	671 485
Expenditure per pupil	7 461
Balance brought forward from previous year	21 264
Balance carried forward to next year	20 548



## **Results of the survey of parents and carers**

### **Questionnaire return rate**

Number of questionnaires sent out	90
Number of questionnaires returned	48

### **Percentage of responses in each category**

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	60	33	6	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	48	44	4	2	2
Behaviour in the school is good.	44	38	8	4	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	17	33	23	19	8
The teaching is good.	69	23	4	2	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	69	25	2	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	83	13	0	2	2
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	69	29	0	2	0
The school works closely with parents.	63	23	10	4	0
The school is well led and managed.	69	23	0	2	6
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	58	27	8	2	4
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	55	32	2	2	9

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

**ENGLISH**

89. Since the last inspection, there has been a good level of improvement in the teaching and learning of English at all key stages. The higher attaining pupils continue to achieve standards close to the national expectation by the end of Key Stage 2, particularly in speaking and listening. As a result of very good teaching, pupils' response to the lessons continues to be very good. Creative and imaginative writing are now satisfactory, areas where pupils had limited opportunities when the school was last inspected. There is now sufficient emphasis on the teaching of poetry. Progress in reading in Key Stage 3 is now good where it was inadequate previously. There are good opportunities for pupils to discuss authors, illustrators, examine content and book structure and look for deeper meanings in text, largely as a result of the school's implementation of the National Literacy Strategy. The proportion of very good teaching seen has improved. The book stock at Key Stage 2 has been reviewed with particular attention to reflecting boys' interests and is attractive and stimulating for all pupils. Lessons now provide good structured opportunities for pupils to access books and IT in order to undertake a worthwhile level of information gathering.

90. Pupils make very good progress, overall, in English. Progress is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 in speaking and listening, reading and writing. At Key Stage 3 they make good progress in all of these aspects.

91. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen carefully to the teacher and to each other. They speak quietly and confidently to others. They delight in stories and poems and listen to them with rapt attention. In a literacy lesson, pupils read and wrote rhyming words and understood what it was that made them rhyme. They successfully tapped out the rhythm of a poem and listened carefully as it was played back to them, thus improving their performance. Pupils copy and overwrite words and letters. Higher attaining pupils, with help, read very simple texts with some measure of understanding.

92. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are capable of productive discussion in pairs and small groups. They listen carefully and with a great deal of pleasure when stories are read to them. Most can read and enjoy very simple fiction. They understand the difference between fiction and non-fiction books and how to use an index and contents page to help them gather information. Pupils use a 'blurb' (a synopsis of the book's content) to help them to choose a book for leisure reading. Writing is narrow in range, but includes, besides simple narrative, diaries, accounts, letters and poems. Work contains major errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar, which improve on redrafting. Pupils use computers confidently to obtain information and enhance their learning. They use information technology to present their work in striking and original ways.

93. By the end of Year 8 (Key Stage 3), pupils engage in a high standard of formal and informal debate which is extended into lessons in history and geography, in particular. They continue to work together effectively in pairs and small groups. Pupils make good oral contributions to lessons and confidently read their work aloud in class. All have tackled a Shakespeare play with a measure of success. Pupils can now use a simple dictionary and read simple texts for interest and pleasure. They write imaginative mystery stories, using vivid vocabulary and write to inform, explain and entertain. They have produced workmanlike articles for the front page of a newspaper. Written work includes some interesting and lively poems, which are beautifully presented using IT. However, despite

careful attention to spelling, punctuation and grammar, first drafts of pupils' work continue to contain many errors.

94. The quality of teaching is very good overall. It is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good in Key Stage 3. Pupils make very good gains in learning in Key Stages 1 and 2 and good gains in learning in Key Stage 3, because of this strong teaching. Teachers plan their lesson very carefully and effectively, often on an individual basis. This is particularly notable in lessons based on the National Literacy Strategy. In these lessons pupils are very carefully grouped. Tasks are appropriate, interesting and specifically designed for the particular capabilities of the pupils. They range from putting together simple *Lego* pieces (for the youngest pupils) to aid hand and eye coordination, for example, to the successful promotion of small group discussion. Pupils are specifically taught how to co-operate and this is very successful. In one lesson in Key Stage 2 a pupil spontaneously helped another to spell a difficult word.

95. The teaching of specific reading and writing skills is very good. Support assistants are particularly well briefed and make very valuable contributions to English lessons as they work skilfully alongside the teachers with the lesson objectives very much in mind. Materials are well chosen to support pupil learning and interest. The 'big books' used mainly in Key Stages 1 and 2 are stimulating and attractive to the pupils so that classes maintain concentration when they are being used. This was particularly noticeable during a Key Stage 1 lesson when pupils read "One Curly Caterpillar". In Key Stage 2 pupils maintained a good level of interest in "King Kong" and in Key Stage 3 they showed great concentration when "Krinkle Krax" was read to them. The Key Stage 3 book stock of both fiction and non-fiction material is highly appropriate and motivates pupils to improve their skills in order to read them fluently. Dictionaries are simple, accessible and frequently used. IT makes a strong contribution to pupils' reading progress as pupils access CD-ROMs with great interest and pupils improve their writing skills by redrafting using a word processor. The well-presented finished pieces of writing stimulate them into further improving their skills and also supports their spelling and presentation.

96. Teachers inspire confidence and support pupil self esteem and confidence in their own abilities well. Relationships within the classroom are excellent. Class management is of a very high order and appears effortless. Pupils are self-controlled and able to learn at a good pace. Expectations of behaviour and academic progress are high and pupils willingly rise to the challenges set. Pupils' very good progress is, in great measure, due to the carefully planned and well-organised lessons, based on the National Literacy Strategy framework. This informs the teaching at all key stages, and is particularly effective at Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils' speaking and listening skills are enhanced by the high standards of interactive questioning and discourse within the classroom and the telling and reading of stories. This is consolidated by the good opportunities given to pupils for the development of pair and small group work in English and in other subjects. Pupils make good oral contributions to assemblies. There is also an annual opportunity for public performance.

97. An additional specialist teacher gives good specific and regular instruction to pupils who have particular difficulty with their reading. All pupils are heard reading frequently by teachers and support assistants, so that the sometimes laboriously won skills continue to improve. Those who speak English as an additional language are given a good level of specialist help. All reading records are comprehensive and very well kept.

98. The promotion of pupils' writing is systematically and skilfully undertaken. Spelling, punctuation and handwriting are specifically taught. Redrafting, often using the computer, is particularly effective part of their learning process. Pupils' use of IT allows work to be presented in varied and interesting ways, which motivates pupils to persevere in their learning tasks. The subject leader has a high level of specialist knowledge and commitment and leads and co-ordinates the subject very well.

99. The very good standard of literacy in the school supports pupils' learning generally across all subjects. Pupils' capacity to listen in lessons, both to the teacher and others, enhances their learning in all curriculum subjects. Pupils have a positive attitude to their lessons, and attend to all that is said. Teachers rarely have to repeat questions in the classroom. Pupils are confident speakers. Their vocabulary is limited, but some use correct, if simple, technical vocabulary as early as Key Stage 1. Teachers usually have to press pupils to extend their answers, but this persistence allows pupils to extend their competence in speaking. In a Key Stage 3 science lesson, pupils engaged in a lively debate on the rainforest. Others were able to explain the phases of the moon. Good opportunities for discussion and debate are positive features of all learning in PSHE. Pupils developing confidence is demonstrated in their willingness to read aloud in class.

100. There are some avid readers who read widely for interest and pleasure. Many pupils, however, read little beyond the simple age-appropriate texts presented to them in lessons. Out of school, some pupils read tabloid newspapers. Others read comics and specialist magazines which reflect their leisure interests. In lessons, all pupils are able to read the very simple texts designed to support their learning. In a science lesson at Key Stage 2, for example, all pupils were fully involved in developing research skills in investigating plants and the solar system, using CD ROM and conventional text.

101. Writing is well and systematically promoted throughout the curriculum. In a science lesson on circuits, for example, pupils were specifically help to spell "wire. Pupils demonstrate an awareness of audience when designing posters and writing brochures in subjects such as in design and technology and geography. They label objects confidently. They fill in worksheets, though sometimes need a good deal of help. Pupils use word frames to help them to formulate what they need to say. Pupils do not write extensively, but accuracy improves when it is redrafted. Presentation is usually good.

## **MATHEMATICS**

102. The school has made good improvement in its provision for mathematics since the last inspection. There is now good curriculum leadership and the recent focus on numeracy training has strengthened the impact of the introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy across all key stages. All classes now have dedicated mathematics lessons on a daily basis. This initiative is having a positive impact on teaching and learning. Pupils display interest and pleasure in mathematics - they clearly want to learn. Within lessons they show an eagerness to display their oral and mental skills. There are high expectations and evidence from the current year's National test and teacher assessment at Key Stage 2 and teacher assessment beyond this confirm that progress is now being maintained into Key Stage 3.

103. The attainment levels of pupils at all key stages are generally below the national average. However, pupils make good progress throughout the school and achieve well. Progress is good at each key stage. The teaching of basic number skills is very good. There is good incremental progress and some pupils show a gain of two National Curriculum levels over the course of Key Stage 2.

104. All pupils make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of mathematics and cope with the mathematical demands of different subjects. The introduction of the National Numeracy Framework is giving a sharper focus to planning and assessment. Some pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 are able to apply their mathematical skills to everyday situations. One pupil was able to work out his newspaper bill for the week. Another was able to convert sterling into the currency for a forthcoming holiday using a conversion graph. By the end of Key Stage 3 pupils can plot distance against time in measuring their personal performance in athletics and enhance their findings with a variety of computer-generated graphs.

105. At Key Stage 1 pupils can name 'first' to 'fifth' in a sequence of objects. They progress in their understanding of number and recognise that whichever way two numbers are added together the answer does not change. Pupils can name plastic two-dimensional shapes and understand the ideas expressed in spatial language such as 'top-bottom' and 'empty-full.' Lower attaining pupils are able to insert missing numbers in a number line to twenty and sort coins. Higher attaining pupils combine coins to make a total of 5p and combine three numbers to present different ways of presenting additions, understanding that whichever way these are displayed the answer is always the same.

106. All pupils at Key Stage 2 consolidate their oral and mental mathematical skills. Lower attaining pupils answer written questions about the position of animals on a chart. They are able to double numbers to 50 and construct bar graphs of everyday interests. Two pupils plotted the makes of cars and the popularity of certain television programmes. They understand the simple language of geometry such as right angle, perpendicular and parallel. Higher attaining pupils draw equilateral triangles and circles accurately using a compass. They continue to apply and extend their skills when they spontaneously realise there are short cuts, by drawing on ideas learned from their mental work. For example, in work on number tables, one pupil notices emerging patterns on both the vertical and horizontal axes of a one hundred square. Higher attaining pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 understand and measure obtuse and acute angles and are able to estimate them, and the lengths of pieces of string, with a very good degree of accuracy. In work on solid shapes, lower attaining pupils recognise cubes and cylinders, while higher attaining pupils mark where "half-full" in on less common liquid containers such as a conical flask. They then make successful comparisons with levels in more commonly shaped containers.

107. At Key Stage 3 pupils are able to convert vulgar fractions into decimals. They can use fractions in everyday situations, for example, working out a third of their spending money. Lower attaining pupils exchange coins for others adding up to the same value and cut shapes in halves. They extend their knowledge and understanding of axes of symmetry and nominate tennis rackets and castles as examples. At the end of Year 8 one higher attaining pupil accurately proposed an axis of symmetry when viewing a ship from the bow. Another child used a series of computer-generated graphical presentations to indicate the increasing usage of the Internet. Lower attaining pupils understand place value to two places and can extract information from a tally chart. They are able to calculate the frequency with which numbers occur when rolling a dice.

108. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good overall and has some very good features. Teachers enjoy the subject and energetically present it to pupils in different ways to capture their interest. One novel feature was the use of DIY brochures in considering degrees of exactness when measuring for a fence or planning for bedroom shelving. In this lesson pupils were comfortable in their use of millimetres. Expectations for achievement and behaviour are very high and pupils are regularly encouraged to discuss and explain what they are doing. Work is always carefully matched to ability, interest and age and, in

combination with a range of teaching strategies, this results in behaviour which is often very good and ensures learning is maximised. Good humour and great encouragement are features of the teaching in many lessons. These are used to good effect when some pupils find the work or the situation potentially difficult. Teachers manage pupils very well, giving praise for effort and achievement. They use appropriate strategies to restore the restless behaviour of some pupils and any misdemeanours (which are usually minor) are dealt with sensitively and unobtrusively.

109. Lesson planning is good across all key stages with many extensions and contingency exercises set into the planning. Teachers plan links by relating new and previous work and explore the links between the different aspects of mathematics. Planning for independent learning is a feature of some lessons. Teachers adopt a calm manner and judicious questioning supports pupils, instils confidence and encourages them to explore their answers for alternatives. In their planning teachers make very good use of learning support assistants and their contribution has a significant impact on learning. They are so well briefed and personally skilled that their involvement is often seamless with that of the teacher. They focus on reducing the anxiety of lower attaining pupils and contribute to their inclusion within lessons. Lessons regularly include plenary sessions, offering additional opportunities for pupils to report their successes and for others to celebrate them. Though some mathematics lessons are quite long, a brisk pace and the variation and rotation of activities helps to keep pupils motivated and engaged in their work. Work is regularly marked in a way that encourages learning and homework is set to consolidate skills learned.

110. The National Numeracy Strategy has been introduced with considerable success. The impact is noticeable and all pupils are benefiting from the structured approach of the initiative. Pupils have clearly improved their oral and mental skills. This has had a positive impact on their self-esteem and self-confidence.

111. Pupils' progress in mathematics is assessed and recorded routinely through well chosen questioning and there are clear procedures for recording pupils' achievements. This, and the use of well-structured personal record sheets, strengthens the monitoring of mathematics across the key stages. However, while this information informs the setting of learning targets in some individual educational plans, it is not general practice within the school.

112. Leadership in mathematics is good. The subject co-ordinator has a clear direction for the subject and has provided training on the National Numeracy Strategy for all staff. Practical advice and support has also been offered to colleagues in the classroom during its introduction. The mathematics policy is good and schemes of work are comprehensive. The subject co-ordinator has raised staff awareness by liaising with the local Numeracy Consultant and co-opting support in the planning and implementation of the strategy. There is a suitable spending and development plan in place that covers the medium-term. Good use is being made of a recently introduced published textbook series and overall quality of resources is sufficient to support the programmes of study. Practical equipment and structured number apparatus is evident wherever mathematics is being taught. Information technology supports mathematics, particularly in applying mathematics in space, shape and measurement. Other mathematical applications were seen during the inspection in food technology and physical education. There is a shared commitment within the school to improving pupils' achievements in mathematics.

## **SCIENCE**

113. Pupils' progress and their standards of achievement have improved since the last inspection and these are now very good; previously they were judged to be satisfactory and occasionally good. Throughout the school there is a very good emphasis on well-planned investigative work and this enhances pupils' knowledge and understanding very well. The good improvement since the last inspection, and the standards achieved, are largely due to the very good skills of the co-ordinator who mostly teaches the subject.

114. Pupils make very good progress throughout Key Stage 1 and achieve very well. They cover a range of topics across the programmes of study, including work on light and sound where simple, but effective, experiments add to pupils' enjoyment and extend their learning. In their work on electricity they understand that batteries have to be connected with crocodile clips and wires to a bulb and are able to use this knowledge to build a simple circuit which lights up a bulb. Evidence from pupils' work shows that they have studied 'living and non-living things' and have covered topics on 'forces' and 'properties of materials'. They can identify hard, strong and 'bendy' materials. They know how to identify plants and animals, and to recognise vegetables. They can predict that plants will not grow if they are deprived of water, light or soil. Pupils each have their own garden plot and talk enthusiastically about the turnips, cabbages and tomatoes they have planted. They enjoy 'digging and growing things' and are aware of the need to water and compost their plants, reporting that so far there are 'only leaves'. Pupils enjoy their cultivated garden and the wild garden with a pond, though they have seen the fish but the frog remains underneath the water. They learn basic recording skills that are developed as they progress through the school, enabling them to make very good progress in basic scientific principles of observation and collecting information.

115. In Key Stage 2, pupils cover a wide range of topics appropriate to the programmes of study. They make very good progress and by the end of the key stage have experienced a substantial amount of work on healthy eating, light sources, animal habitats and electricity. They study the forces of gravity and make accurate predictions about objects that will float or sink; they confirm their predictions with experimental work. They improve their recording skills as they make diagrams to show their findings when they attempt to separate sand, salt and flour from water by filtration. They classify electrical appliances according to the part of the home with which they are associated and extend their knowledge of the natural world in the ocean and the desert. Pupils make very good use of a light sensor to confirm their predictions about the comparative strengths of light from the sun, a torch, candle and lamp. Their skill in using information technology is further increased as they present their data graphically. They use violins and drums to demonstrate that sound vibrations can travel through materials. Pupils make very good progress in their learning, when after experimenting with varying amounts of liquid in test tubes, different strengths of elastic bands and chime bars, they discuss their findings sensibly and enthusiastically, carefully recording their findings. They make very good progress in understanding that friction hinders movement. For example, in investigating friction by pulling a brick against different surfaces, measuring the speed and distance of balls rolling down different surfaces, pupils develop their predictive and observational skills. They record their observations and discuss the implications of their investigations in for example deciding on a suitable surface for a corridor where old people might walk. The basic recording skills which pupils learn at this key stage are applied throughout the school and enable pupils to maintain a good level of progress in the scientific principles of hypothesis, prediction and inference.

116. During Key Stage 3, pupils make good progress. They cover a range of topics applicable to the programmes of study. They have studied the solar system, the properties of light, the reproduction system of plants and the anatomy of the human ear and eye. At the beginning of the key stage pupils cover a module of work that reinforces their understanding of the importance of science and of safe working practices during the practical lessons. Using balls and the light from the overhead projector, pupils are able to explain that the moon does not give off light but is reflective and can see the relationship between the sun, moon and earth. Pupils in Year 8 can represent photosynthesis as a word equation, they investigate the germination of seeds and record the growth of seeds kept in test conditions. As a result of this they draw conclusions about the need for light, soil and water for growth of plants. Pupils make good progress in using scientific words, making observations, drawing conclusions and using information technology to present their findings in a variety of ways.

117. The quality of teaching and learning is very good overall. Teaching is very good in Key Stages 1 and 2, and good in Key Stage 3. Some excellent teaching was observed in Key Stage 2. When teaching is excellent, the lessons offer a very high level of challenge, with perceptive questioning provoking pupils to think carefully about topics, such as friction and evaporation. In these lessons not a moment is wasted. Throughout the school, the specialist teacher and the class teachers employ a very good practical approach and demonstrate a very good knowledge and understanding of the subject. This enables pupils to ask questions with confidence and satisfy their curiosity. The teaching of basic skills is good; pupils in Key Stage 3 build up personal glossaries of scientific vocabulary and in Key Stage 2, teachers reinforce mathematical skills of measuring as well as reading and writing. In all key stages teachers plan effectively and take account, in their detailed planning, of pupils' individual educational and behavioural needs. Work is adapted to take account of individual pupils' strengths and weaknesses; the work of the learning support assistants is focused on pupils' individual needs. Teaching is characterised by good teacher knowledge of the subject, very clear and probing questioning which makes pupils think very carefully about their scientific evidence and to suggest ideas and solutions. In science, teachers are enthusiastic and lively and this causes pupils to be totally focused on their work and motivated to make very good progress.

118. Throughout the school pupils are well behaved, join in with their investigations with enthusiasm, completing their written work with care. Support staff make an invaluable contribution to the lessons, they are well briefed and have a very good understanding of pupils' needs. The relationships between the adults and the pupils are a very strong feature of the lessons and contribute well to the very good progress made by pupils in this subject. Teachers use a wide variety of relevant resources, which make the lessons interesting and allow pupils to carry out a range of investigations, concentrating intensely. The specialist teacher, who demonstrated excellent teaching, consistently maintains a calm, firm but friendly demeanour in the classroom. This means that pupils are not distracted from their work but enjoy the subject and are keen to show their growing knowledge and understanding of the subject. The well-planned practical activities are well resourced, and challenge pupils to do their best work and make very good progress. The opportunities given to pupils to work co-operatively make a very good contribution to pupils' personal development. Their confidence and self-esteem increases as they see the success of their investigations and their findings presented well as a result of the very good use of information technology in the subject.



119. The school's planned work for science is good. Teaching of science is carried out by the specialist teacher in Key Stage 3 and by class teachers together with the specialist in Key Stages 1 and 2. Careful planning and liaison means that the units of work, which link well to the programmes of study, are taught to all pupils and so establish breadth and balance across the curriculum. There is a clear up-to-date policy and comprehensive scheme of work. The existing scheme has developed as a result of much staff discussion and is reviewed and amended regularly.

120. Assessment in the subject is good throughout the school. Pupils are assessed at the end of each unit of work and this information is used to inform the end of key stage record profile. Teachers use these assessments to adapt future work, and to make sure that any gaps in pupils' learning are identified and remedied. This helps pupils to continue making very good progress in the subject.

121. The management of the subject is very good. The co-ordinator has responsibility for whole school science, consults colleagues about the scheme of work and consistently monitors pupils' progress. A strong feature of the school is the close liaison and communication between all adults, which means the co-ordinator is able to give sound guidance for non specialist colleagues who are teaching the subject and that all staff discuss pupils' individual needs. The co-ordinator has very good relationships with the learning support assistants who accompany pupils and makes very good use of their expertise in managing pupils. Future plans for the subject include incorporating some aspects of science into the literacy and numeracy lessons

122. Resources in the subject are good, and are well used. The emphasis on investigative work is well supported by the availability of good quality resources. The teacher and the pupils make very good use of the computer, and CD ROM resources are being built up. Accommodation has been significantly improved since the last inspection and there is now a very good, designated, science room. The facilities, including the two mobile laboratories and computer, provide very well for the research needs of pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, and for the present group of Year 7 and 8 pupils.

## **ART**

123. Improvement since the last inspection is good. The quality of teaching at Key Stage 3 has improved and pupils' learn well at this key stage. In the last inspection teaching and progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 was good and this has been maintained.

124. It was not possible during the inspection to observe the teaching of art at Key Stage 1. However from an examination of displays and artwork it is clear that pupils achieve well and make good progress. Pupils achieve well at Key Stage 2. They use brushes and glue effectively and develop a good understanding of shape and form in making a collage using large tissue paper shapes. They discuss the composition of the piece, the relative merits of where pieces are placed and, when satisfied, stick them down. Older pupils in the key stage develop an understanding of perspective. They know how to use size and colour to create distance. They know the names and styles of famous artists such as Turner. In another lesson pupils use jewellery from a range of cultures as a stimulus, copying the design firstly onto paper, drawing and shading with pencil before making their own necklace. They review their work as it progresses. At Key Stage 3 (up to Year 8) pupils achieve well and occasionally this is very good. They use tools and other equipment independently. They use the computer to create designs, which are later transferred to T-shirts. They use a combination of their own work, text and clip art to produce individual designs. Another group make picture frames using tiles to create a mosaic. Pupils make

good progress across the key stages. Younger pupils in Key Stage 1 make accurate still life drawings of plants. In Key Stage 2 these skills are developed to include the use of tone and shade in the drawing of familiar objects such as a stainless steel vacuum flask using pencil and charcoal. In Key Stage 3 pupils show good observational skills in their finished self-portraits.

125. Pupils benefit from good, effective teaching at both the key stages seen. They create some high quality two and three-dimensional work. The school environment is enhanced by high quality displays of this work, showing the care and value staff place on pupils' work and their desire to give them encouragement. In classrooms there are displays of work in the style of Jackson Pollock, charcoal drawings of vacuum flasks, work on perspective and excellent displays of sculpture. The good quality teaching helps pupils produce this high quality work. Planning for lessons is clear and what is to be learned is shared with pupils at the beginning of the lesson. The activities in the lessons are varied and the pupils find them interesting. They are keen to get on with their work. Resources are used well. Teachers regularly show pictures painted by a range of artists for pupils to model their style and technique; through this, for instance, they develop a good understanding of how to show perspective through the use of light and shade. Pupils are managed well and with good humour, which helps them stay interested in the activity and complete their work. Pupils are polite and listen very carefully. They behave well. All of them enjoy the activities and are keen to see their finished results. The pupils use materials and equipment well and carefully. They help clear up and put things away.

126. The subject is well managed by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. There are a wide variety of resources available and a collection of pupil's work developed by the co-ordinator provides a good on-going portfolio of ideas for staff to use. Good use is made of available space both for teaching and display, emphasising the value the school places on pupils' work. While the accommodation at Key Stage 3 is satisfactory and well used, the lack of specialist facilities imposes some limits on the range of work that can be undertaken. There is currently no formal system in place for the monitoring and evaluation by the co-ordinator of the teaching of the subject, although the provision is informally monitored.

## **DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY**

127. Good improvement has been made since the last inspection. This is due to the improvement in the quality of teaching and learning at Key Stage 3. The school has made substantial efforts to improve the provision at Key Stage 3 through the introduction of specialist teaching and development of the curriculum. The continuing uncertainty in the length of time Key Stage 3 pupils will remain in the school (due to proposed local education authority re-organisation) has made further development in the facilities impractical for the school. The current accommodation, though unsatisfactory for pupils at Key Stage 3, is being used effectively, but limits pupils experience of the range of designing and making skills at this key stage.

128. Across the key stages pupils make good progress overall. Skills in food preparation develop well. Younger pupils can chop fruit using a knife. Older pupils grate and shred ingredients using kitchen equipment. At Key Stage 2 pupils design and make working models powered by pneumatics and simple circuitry. They use a variety of joining techniques such as tape and *blu-tack*. Older pupils in Key Stage 3 use the computer for developing T-shirt designs which they fix using a hot iron. Other pupils use glue guns safely to mount pencil holders onto a base.

129. At Key Stage 1 pupils prepare fruit salad. They know the names of a variety of fruit

and learn more. They know which parts of the fruit can be eaten and which must be discarded. They use knives to cut the fruit into pieces after washing it. Displayed work shows models of playground equipment designed and made by Key Stage 1 pupils and another display of work by Key Stage 1 pupils of moving models attracts the interest of other pupils as they pass in the corridor. At Key Stage 2 pupils gain a good understanding of pneumatics. They use a variety of materials to make a working model. One pupil made a jack-in-the-box, another a rising platform, both using air pressure for the moving parts. They understand that air pressure creates the movement and discuss with one another how to improve their designs. Other pupils at Key Stage 2 make electrically operated model vehicles, constructing circuits with switches, motors and light bulbs. They discuss how the circuitry can be fixed to the body of the model. They know how to make a working axle and can use their knowledge of circuitry to power a vehicle.

130. At Key Stage 3 pupils could achieve more if the technology facilities were more extensive and more appropriate for pupils at this key stage. Nevertheless, they make good progress in their work because of very good teaching and the way the school compensates for the inadequacies of the facilities. They construct pencil holders in the shape of letters. They learn how to finish the item by sanding it until smooth and then mount the letter onto a base using a glue gun. Pupils are aware of the safety requirements and use goggles to protect their eyes. Other pupils study the use of textiles and make a padded card with great skills and accuracy in their construction. Older pupils make a mix for biscuits whilst another group design wrappers. Pupils follow the instructions on their worksheets. They know how to grate, cut and shred ingredients using items of kitchen equipment. They know the importance of hygiene.

131. Teaching and learning is good overall. Across Key Stages 1 and 2 it is good and at Key Stage 3, very good. Particularly strong at Key Stage 3 is the way in which the specialist teacher integrates a variety of resources, media, and, particularly, ways of using information technology, which make the subject interesting and challenges pupils effectively. Teachers have good subject knowledge and give clear instructions to pupils. Teachers demonstrate what is to be done and this helps pupils to understand what they are required to do and to learn. Teachers' expectations are high and pupils respond by trying hard to do their best. The teacher and support assistant ask probing questions to help pupils understand what they are doing and devise solutions. Lessons are carefully planned and well organised so the pupils are able to get on with their work quickly. Teachers know their subject well. They give clear instructions and good demonstrations. This helps the pupils understand what they are to do. Well-organised support by learning support assistants ensures that all pupils can complete the tasks set for them. At the end of lessons teachers and pupils evaluate their work, exploring critically how they could improve on the finished product. Pupils are encouraged to think about what they have done and how they could do it better. They tell one another what they have enjoyed and what they have not.

132. The subject is well led. Development of the area is under constant review. Resources are satisfactory across the key stages. The co-ordinator makes great effort to ensure that a range of resources is available despite limitations on storage. IT is used very well. For example, pupils making models use a digital camera to record stages of their design and production to record the stages of their work. Older pupils use the computer to produce the design for their T-shirt. Monitoring of teaching and learning across the subject is informal and although close working relationships enable discussions on development there is no formal system in place for monitoring and evaluation of the provision.

## **GEOGRAPHY**

133. At the time of the previous inspection progress in geography was found to be satisfactory, although it was noted that a lack of secure subject knowledge required considerable preparation on behalf of the teachers and there were weaknesses in the curriculum planning. Since the inspection there has been satisfactory improvement in geography, particularly with respect to whole school planning.

134. Pupils' achievements in geography are good overall. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' achievement is satisfactory and by the end of Key Stage 2 it is good when pupils make good progress and build on their earlier learning. Pupils in Key Stage 1 visit local areas on field trips and remember some of the places they have seen. They remember words they have learned such as "weir" and that they saw this on the river. The higher attaining pupils begin to understand about the points on a compass. Pupils in Key Stage 2 distinguish the features of the landscape that are man-made and those that are natural. They look at photographs taken in the local area and identify features such as colliery wheels and explain their usage. They begin to compare the local landscape with a landscape in Japan and to understand about why volcanoes and earthquakes develop. They understand that some volcanoes are extinct and know what this means. Some pupils look at a map of Britain and identify points, which are north, south, east and west and can locate Sunderland. They use geographical vocabulary correctly. Pupils have good support for their learning from the non-teaching assistants who help them with reading and recording their ideas.

135. Pupils' achievement by the end of the secondary phase (Years 7 and 8) is good because of the consistently very good teaching they receive. They build on their earlier learning, developing their ability not just to recognise natural and man-made features of the landscape (as they did in Key Stage 2) but to understand the positive or negative effects the man-made features may have on the natural world. For example, they learn about the destruction of the rainforests and understand some of the conflicting interests that contribute to the destruction. They debate the destruction, arguing from the viewpoint of local inhabitants, logging companies and governments. The highest attaining pupils understand and use geographical terms such as "greenhouse effect", knowing it refers to the melting of the polar ice caps. Older pupils learn about different lifestyles in Bangladesh. They contrast the lives of wealthy people with the lives of those living in less well-developed areas.

136. Teaching is good overall, with no unsatisfactory teaching; the best teaching is seen in Key Stage 3, where it is very good. Teachers have good knowledge of the subject and plan lessons well, identifying what pupils are to learn and the strategies they will use. The clear planning ensures that both teacher and pupils know what is to be learned and how this will happen. They manage pupils' behaviour well and convey their own enthusiasm for the subject so that pupils enjoy their lessons and what they are learning. They use questions very effectively to make pupils think, but occasionally less experienced teachers do not allow slower thinking pupils sufficient time to find an answer. Teachers make lessons interesting, for example by using debate as a way to help pupils organise their thoughts and ideas. Pupils behave well in lessons ensuring that all pupils in the class have good opportunities to learn. They listen carefully and concentrate on their work. They answer questions and discuss their work sensibly in pairs. Their very good behaviour and the good teaching they receive ensures they maximise their opportunities to learn. Occasional inappropriate behaviour is swiftly and very effectively managed by teachers or non-teaching assistants who ensure it does not escalate and affect the learning of other pupils.

137. There is good co-ordination of the subject. The co-ordinator has worked closely with

other teachers to develop work in geography and to ensure there is a suitable scheme of work for the subject. Teachers assess pupils' attainment in geography using the attainment statements of the National Curriculum. In addition they record the work that has been covered and note any pupils who have achieved high standards or those who have experienced difficulties. Inexperienced teachers are well supported by the co-ordinator and another specialist geography teacher and their planning, teaching and assessment is monitored. There are good resources for teaching the subject, including books, videos and CD-ROMs as well as maps and atlases.

## HISTORY

138. At the time of the previous inspection progress in history was judged to be satisfactory. Since the previous inspection there has been satisfactory improvement and, while pupils' achievement is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2, for secondary age pupils' their achievement is now good. In addition, the previous report noted that planning at a whole school level was underdeveloped. There has been satisfactory improvement in the planning to include both a whole school plan and medium-term planning.

139. Pupils achieve well in history over the time they are in the school. The teaching of history to pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 is generally timetabled for the first half of each term and so little teaching of history to these pupils was seen during the inspection. However, from an analysis of their work, their achievement is satisfactory. Pupils up to the end of Key Stage 1 learn about famous people such as Louis Braille or Florence Nightingale and show a basic understanding of how nursing developed from Florence Nightingale when they note that nurses "care for you and give you medicine". They learn about the origin of *Remembrance Day* and *November 5<sup>th</sup>* and why these events are celebrated. They record their work in simple pictures or sentences. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils learn about the Britain in the 1930s and the Second World War. Their work shows they know some of the key events and dates of that time. For instance, a higher attaining pupil knows that Neville Chamberlain as Prime Minister announced to the nation that Britain was at war with Germany. Their books show that some pupils make good progress - the teacher's comments note that the work is completed independently and is now neater, with improved spelling. Pupils in Key Stage 3 (Years 7 and 8) achieve well; they build on earlier learning to remember key dates and people of World War II and begin to develop an understanding of the war as it developed against Japan in the Pacific. Pupils learning about Oliver Cromwell have some understanding that there are different views of the same historical events demonstrated in different sources. Pupils make good progress from Key Stage 1 when they know about people and events in the past to Year 8 when they begin to understand that there may be different interpretations of historical events.

140. The teaching of the pupils in Year 6 and Key Stage 3 is good overall and especially at Key Stage 3 has some very good features, particularly where role-play and debate are used. Pupils are well managed and there are high expectations that they will behave well and learn. Pupils respond well to these expectations and their good behaviour and concentration has a positive impact on their learning. Teachers' knowledge of history is secure so that any questions pupils may have or explanations needed are accurate and informative, supporting pupils' learning and understanding. Clear explanations and good questioning engage pupils' interest. The challenging questions help the pupils to think and develop their understanding of historical issues. For example, pupils in Year 7 were helped to understand the meaning of government as a republic in a lesson on Oliver Cromwell. Lessons are well planned and what the pupils are to learn is clearly identified. Because of this they are well prepared for what they will learn and planning builds well on their previous learning. Teachers assess pupils' learning effectively and record this using the attainment

statements in the National Curriculum. They record the work that has been covered and note any pupils who have made significant progress or have had problems with what they have learned. This ensures that teachers have a very clear idea about what pupils know and understand so that they can build on this when planning for future learning. The work pupils are set offers them a challenge and any who complete it are set further work to do, so that no learning time is lost. For instance, a pupil who finished his work used a CD ROM encyclopaedia to find out more information about Oliver Cromwell. Pupils enjoy the lessons, listen attentively and behave very well which has a positive effect on their learning.

141. There is a satisfactory policy and scheme of work. The scheme of work details the study units from the National Curriculum to be covered and the classes in which they should be taught. Sufficient details of the aspects of these units that may be taught are also included in the scheme. This is an improvement since the previous inspection. However, the school recognises that there is less detailed school guidance than in the new national schemes of work produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and plans to use this, adapted to the needs of the school, next year. The subject co-ordinator has monitored some of the teaching and has ensured that the subject meets requirements. There are good resources to support history teaching, including books, artefacts and clothes for role-play activities. There are a good range of visits to places outside the school environment to support the work done in school. For example, a Year 6 class visited Sunderland to look at old housing and relate what they see now to what they had learned about the conditions workers lived in during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. History lessons give good support to pupils' speaking and listening when they take part in debates, discussions, role-play and answer questions. They also have good opportunities to develop their reading and writing when they read aloud to the class from a text or write about what they have learned.

## **INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**

142. There has been significant improvement in the provision for information technology in the school since the previous inspection. At that time only one third of classes were timetabled to be taught information technology as a separate subject and pupils' progress was barely satisfactory. Currently all classes have information technology timetabled and pupils make very good progress overall. The very good quality specific teaching of skills in information technology is having a significant impact on pupils' progress in the subject. There is now a very good teaching programme in place to ensure that pupils are taught basic information technology skills in the separate subject lessons. This learning is then further developed and put to effective use in other subjects of the curriculum.

143. Pupils' achievements in information technology are very good overall. By the end of Key Stage 1 their achievement is satisfactory and as pupils move through Key Stages 2 and 3, building on this early learning, their progress and achievement are very good. The effectively planned step-by-step learning opportunities that exist for them to develop their skills ensure that the progress they make builds securely on their previous learning. They then transfer this learning to other subjects of the curriculum so that, for example, their knowledge of how to design using a desktop publishing programme is used to plan a design for the front of a T-shirt in design technology lessons. Where pupils in Key Stage 1 were seen using a computer they confidently played a simple game, controlling the mouse, clicking, dragging and dropping pictures to the part of the screen they want to move them to. They then correctly quit the programme.

144. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils' achievements are very good and they are confident users of computers. In discrete information technology lessons, they demonstrate

a good knowledge of the keyboard and the use of icons, tool bars and scroll bars. They open programmes and windows and save and find their work. They develop their understanding of databases and search for information showing an understanding of field headings and how information can be grouped. They begin to understand the need to be precise in the information they use when searching a database. For example, they know that the spellings and spaces of their search must be precise for the computer to find the information. They understand and use the spell check facility to ensure that they spell words correctly in word processing. They learn and remember how to use the find and replace facility to change text on the screen.

145. Secondary age pupils (up to Year 8) effectively build on their earlier learning, becoming much more independent and using different programmes confidently. Their achievements are very good and some pupils are attaining at the nationally expected levels in aspects of information technology. They use the more sophisticated possibilities of some software with minimal support. For example, while younger pupils find and replace text with some help Key Stage 3 pupils independently load, insert and adapt, in some quite complex ways, pictures or clipart from other disk drives. They use a desktop publishing programme to design a poster changing the size, colour and style of the font they use. They select an appropriate border or background, they flood an area of the design with colour and change the design to be more appealing. They use CD-ROM to find suitable clipart pictures or a floppy disk to find photographs to insert into their desktop publishing work, when producing a folded brochure about the school.

146. Pupils' achievement in other subjects of the curriculum, where they further develop their understanding and skills in information technology, is very good. For example, in Key Stage 1 they use a CD ROM to explore aspects of personal development and relationships. Pupils use e-mail in a lesson on citizenship in Year 7 to send their views on a football charter to a BBC television Panorama programme. In science, in Year 4 they use a light sensor to log the brightness of light from different sources and compare them in a graph. In history in Year 8 they search for information about Oliver Cromwell on a CD ROM encyclopaedia.

147. Examples of pupils' work in information technology are very well displayed throughout the school and demonstrate their achievements in the subject, and high regard staff have of their work. They design posters, wallpaper patterns and pictures in the style of famous artists in art lessons in Year 4. In Key Stage 3 in food technology they competently design packaging for biscuits. They produce bar graphs and pie charts in mathematics lessons. They search for information about Islam on the Internet for religious education lessons in Year 6. In design and technology lessons in Year 7 they use a scanner to load a design they have drawn into a publishing programme and then add clipart pictures to their own design. Pupils throughout the school on educational visits use a digital camera to record their activities. Their work demonstrates a good understanding of the many possibilities of information technology and of design and colour. Information technology effectively supports pupils' literacy skills when they draft and re-draft their work or use the spell check option to check that their spelling is correct.

148. No teaching could be seen at Key Stage 1 and, therefore, no judgement made at this key stage. Overall, however, at Key Stages 2 and 3 the quality of teaching is very good. The school identified a need to specifically develop pupils' skills in information technology and addressed this by using the information technology technician to teach skills to small groups of pupils. The technician works with small groups of pupils from all classes in the school. Although no direct teaching of information technology to pupils in Key Stage 1 was seen, from looking at work they have done, the incidental use they make of

the computer and from the teacher's assessment of their learning it is at least satisfactory and teacher's planning is also satisfactory. For pupils in Key Stage 2 the quality of teaching is very good and the teaching of specific skills, highly effective. The lessons are well planned by class teachers and the technician to develop the skills needed to support other subjects in the curriculum. For secondary aged pupils (up to Year 8) teaching is very good overall. The technician's very secure knowledge of the subject, very high expectations of learning and quiet, reassuring manner ensures that pupils are always learning and never frustrated by difficulties. Class and subject teachers and non-teaching assistants also have secure understanding of information technology and plan its use to support their subjects appropriately.

149. Information technology is an integral part of the teaching in most subjects in the school. Pupils' very high level of interest and considerable enjoyment of the subject is obvious in lessons and in their high quality work displayed throughout the school. They behave very well in lessons concentrating hard and working in silence or quietly together. When two pupils share a computer for their work they take turns sensibly, discuss their work together and offer each other ideas. Both the very good teaching and the pupils' high levels of concentration have a positive effect on their learning and their very good achievement. Their obvious pride in their achievements contributes significantly to their self-confidence and self-esteem.

150. Teachers make appropriate assessments of pupils' achievements in information technology. Any areas of difficulty are identified so they can be quickly addressed. Assessments are made using the descriptors in the National Curriculum and kept with other records in individual pupil's files. Close liaison between the technician and teachers ensures that everyone who will teach the pupils shares information about pupils' learning.

151. The information technology co-ordinator has produced a good scheme of work, based on the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority model scheme of work and suitably adapted to the needs of the school. The scheme of work has been revised for next year to include some areas not fully covered previously. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of the strengths of the subject and the areas to develop and has plans to address the weaknesses. For example, although aspects of control technology are taught, these are not as well developed compared to some other areas. However, there are plans to develop this further next year.

152. An appropriate emphasis has been placed on developing staff knowledge of information technology and the co-ordinator and technician have provided frequent training sessions to ensure teachers are secure in their own understanding of the subject. The school has bought all teachers a laptop computer to ensure they have constant access to a computer for practice or to support their work in school. Teachers use these to plan lessons or produce worksheets for pupils to use. The pupils also use them in some lessons, providing them with an opportunity to become familiar with laptops as well as PCs.

153. There are an adequate number of computers in the school. All classrooms have a computer and there are a sufficient number for small groups to use in the information technology room. There is a good range of software and CD-ROMs to support learning in other subjects of the curriculum. The school has received some funding from the National Grid for Learning and classrooms in the main building are connected to the Internet. The demountable classrooms outside have not been connected to the Internet as the school has been uncertain about its future until recently. These are the classrooms used by secondary age pupils so their access to the Internet is more difficult although they do use it when in the main building. The very small room (the computer room) in one of the mobile



classrooms outside the main building that is used for small group teaching is unsatisfactory. It is very cramped, there is no ventilation (unless the door is left open to keep pupils cool) and the furniture and equipment are arranged so that pupils have to sit in uncomfortable positions. The school has plans for a networked information technology suite when the school is reorganised and the building re-modelled; which should address some of these problems.

## **MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES**

### **French**

154. It was possible to observe only one lesson as most lessons were timetabled outside the inspection period. Evidence for judgements about pupils' progress and their achievement is taken from an examination of their work, discussions with teachers and with a small number of pupils. It is not possible to make an overall judgement about the quality of teaching although in the one lesson seen it was satisfactory. This is a similar position to the last inspection. A suitable scheme of work is now in place (in outline form although supplemented by published materials and scheme). However, the subject has been a low priority in the school's planning due to the uncertainties of its future and the place of Key Stage 3 provision and progress since the last inspection is, therefore, unsatisfactory. No subject specialist teacher teaches the subject to all classes; the form tutor for most classes teaches French to their own form. However, one class in Year 8 does not study French; it is stated by the school that the form tutor's subject knowledge and confidence in the subject is not strong enough.

155. Pupils' progress in French is unsatisfactory. Pupils' could achieve much more, in line with their abilities, if teachers' subject knowledge was stronger and if all pupils had the same opportunity to study the subject. All classes, with the exception of one, have timetabled lessons for French in Key Stage 3 (up to Year 8) and there is a continued and appropriate strong emphasis on oral work with a reasonable amount of written work. Pupils make progress in the understanding and use of simple vocabulary such as for numbers and colours; by the end of their time in Key Stage 3 (Year 8) they can name many of these and some higher attaining pupils can identify the rooms of a house - they match pictures of these to the spoken word although their recall of the actual words is limited. Part of the work covered in French relates to the culture and geography of the country which pupils say they enjoy, especially the food related aspects.

156. The quality of the teaching in the one lesson seen was satisfactory. There was a considerable variety of activities, changed at frequent intervals to maintain pupils' interest and pupils' rose well to challenges presented in these. There was plenty of re-inforcement to help pupils grasp the ideas and vocabulary presented and satisfactory use was made of a tape recording of spoken French (although much more use could be made of this and of multimedia opportunities). However, not enough was expected of pupils in respect of their spoken efforts and the use of the target language is limited at times.

157. There is no subject co-ordinator for the subject although the 'spokesperson' has supported the subject for many years and has undertaken training as well as liaising with local authority advisers on how French can be delivered at Maplewood.

158. The school is well aware of its deficiencies in its French provision. For the remaining period that the school has Key Stage 3 pupils, the headteacher is planning to teach the subject to all pupils in Years 7 and 8.

## MUSIC

159. Progress since the last report is good. Although only a small number of lessons could be seen during the inspection, pupils' achievements in music are good overall and music continues to be a significant feature in the school. Pupils make good progress in performing and composing music as well as listening to and appraising music.

160. In Key Stage 1 and 2, pupils have a joint music lesson each week. During this session they listen to recorded music, for example 'Morning' by Greig and recall the composer and the title from a previous lesson. Pupils recognise rhythms played on the keyboard and enthusiastically join in with their teachers in clapping rhythmically to 'you're sitting nicely' and 'well done Chris'. During the lesson pupils sing tunefully, and accompany their singing by playing untuned percussion instruments. The adults and pupils work hard as a team and experience great fun and satisfaction, when they create a small 'production' that includes singing, composition and narration. Pupils from Years 6, 7 and 8 have music lessons with the co-ordinator who is a subject specialist. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils listen intently to recorded music such as movements from Saint-Saens' 'Carnival of Animals' and imagine the creatures represented by the music. Inspired by the music they start composing their own piece on keyboards, showing their knowledge of pitch and tone. Pupils are most enthusiastic, their self-esteem and confidence increasing as they perform their own compositions. In Key Stage 3, pupils improve their keyboard skills, using the correct fingering for their five-finger exercises. They play a melody demonstrated by their teacher and are pleased with their success as one pupil exclaims 'I think I've got it!' They listen well and show by spontaneous applause their appreciation of each other's efforts in performing. Year 8 pupils understand the value of musical notation such as minims, crotchets and quavers. They increase their confidence in reading notation using percussion instruments to perform rhythms. They build on this knowledge and successfully compose and perform their own rhythms. Assemblies offer very good opportunities for pupils to sing together with enthusiasm and enjoyment. There is a good balance between composing, performing and appreciating music.

161. Teaching of music by the specialist teacher is good. The teacher has very good relationships with the pupils and manages their behaviour very well; this results in pupils enjoying their lessons and learning well. The learning support assistants know the pupils very well and the teacher liaises closely with them to make sure pupils' individual academic and behavioural needs are met. The teacher has very good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned with clear objectives. The teacher has a calm approach that pervades the lessons, and pupils respond very well by concentrating and trying to do their best. The work is explained to the pupils clearly, their interest is maintained and they are fully involved at all times. For example they devise rhythms for each other to play and listen appreciatively to each other's efforts. The range of musical experiences is enhanced by termly visits from musicians including a brass ensemble and a saxophone quartet.

162. There is a good policy in place, with clear aims. The scheme of work is built around programmes of study and is being adapted to take note of the new National Curriculum orders for September 2000. The school has good resources and they are very well used, there are sufficient keyboards for pupils to have one each in lessons. The teacher makes ongoing assessments of pupils' learning and a termly record is kept of pupils' progress in music. A strength of the subject is that it makes a very good contribution to increasing pupils' confidence and self-esteem, this is evident from video recordings of past productions and from pupils' attitudes in class. One pupil remained after school to rehearse a solo for a future open evening, showing great determination to perform well. The subject continues to make a valuable contribution to the curriculum and ethos of the school.

## PERSONAL, SOCIAL AND HEALTH EDUCATION

163. The subject did not form part of the last inspection.

164. Pupils' progress in personal, social and health education is very good overall and is considerably enhanced by the vast number of opportunities pupils have on a day-to-day basis. Instruction and advice of these aspects of pupils' development permeate the life of the school and every subject that is taught. In addition, there is good quality provision through formal lessons in sex education, which are delivered as part of the science curriculum, and lessons on drug abuse and citizenship. The school achieved a *Healthy Schools* award in 1999, which until then provided a strong and effective framework for health promotion. It is planned to attempt to achieve the *National Healthy School Standard* next year. Meanwhile, there is little, co-ordinated, formal provision of some aspects of health education, which is also taught as an integral part of the physical education and science curriculum. The school is undertaking a complete audit of the PSHE element in its whole school curricular provision. It has a fully justified awareness that the subject as it is formally taught is currently incomplete, despite pupils' good gains in learning. Planning for a more systematic delivery of the formal part of the course is now at an advanced stage for implementation in September. Co-ordination of the subject during this period of significant development is satisfactory.

165. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are enabled to follow familiar classroom routines confidently, sometimes with support from others. Some are able to anticipate the next stage of the activity, and foresee possible outcomes of their actions. They are often able to undertake some simple group activity, often requiring help for this. They frequently co-operate with others on a simple task. Pupils are capable of a comparatively high degree of concentration when an activity catches their interest and imagination.

166. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils show regard for others' seating preferences when entering the classroom. They willingly fulfil their responsibilities, in giving out milk and biscuits, for example. With prompting, they say which pupils are good at certain subjects, thus enhancing their self-esteem. They work co-operatively to good effect, and are helpful to each other. By the end of the key stage, pupils have at least some strategies for handling conflict, know how to respond to anger and how to make an apology. They volunteer opinions on subjects such as courtesy. Their level of social awareness and manners improve throughout the key stage. Pupils generally know how to signal politeness by a respectful tone of voice and are able to do so. Awareness of drug abuse improves during the key stage.

167. By the end of Year 8 (Key Stage 3) pupils have studied citizenship and know the name and function of the Home Secretary. They have discussed football hooliganism at some length, and gone some way to preparing a well considered fans' charter. By the end of the year, all have discussed loving relationships and how to be a good parent. They receive sensitive and appropriate instruction on matters to do with sex.

168. Teaching and learning in the formal lessons is good but is very good over all the opportunities there are for all aspects of the delivery of the subject. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils, and this inspires confidence and trust. As a result, pupils successfully model their behaviour on that of the teachers, and are content to be instructed by their precepts and example. There is good specific instruction. In one Key Stage 2 lesson on drugs, for example, pupils were told of the harm some drugs can do, and how drug dealers, though engaged in an evil trade, are often widely different people and do not conform to stereotypes.

169. Pupils' interest in the lessons are maintained by a good and interesting variety of learning activities provided by teachers, such as well planned pair work, group work and brainstorming. The lessons give good opportunities for pupils to make good practical contributions to proceedings, particularly in debating the subject of the lesson. They thus take an active part in their learning. Behaviour is very good and classes are well managed which enables pupils to make a good deal of progress.

## **PHYSICAL EDUCATION**

170. Physical education is a significant strength of the school. The school has maintained the high standards that were identified at the last inspection. In the area of swimming, it has improved further and, within its limited indoor accommodation for physical education, it has attempted to increase the range of activities available.

171. Pupils at both Key Stage 2 and 3 achieve very well in all areas of the physical education curriculum. No lessons could be observed at Key Stage 1 during the inspection but an analysis of documentation for the key stage indicates that pupils achieve well and make good progress. They have engaged in developing their throwing skills and their accuracy in hitting targets. They follow activities that develop their spatial and personal awareness and learn the rudimentary skills of team games and working in pairs. At the end of the key stage they have developed good co-ordination in balancing and jumping. They can combine actions to include turning and rolling.

172. Progress of pupils at Key Stage 2 is very good. They start to recognise the long-term effects of engaging in rigorous exercise and its impact in promoting good health. Pupils continue to develop spatial awareness. Some pupils can confidently run backwards to markers without losing their balance. In athletics, they understand the need to warm-up. Pupils are able to follow a sequence of activities and record their progress. They improve their hurdling technique across a series of lessons measured against time and also their performance in jumping. They learn to sequence their work and plan movements in pairs. With the aid of several teachers and assistants in swimming, all pupils understand the principles of water safety. They are separated into ability groups and follow set programmes. Lower attaining pupils work confidently in the water and, wearing armbands, perfect their arm strokes. At the end of Key Stage 2 higher attaining pupils reach at least national expectations in swimming and some exceed these. They gain the appropriate Amateur Swimming Association grades for water skills. One boy has progressed from a water phobia to award level in the school's swimming gala within one year.

173. Progress at Key Stage 3 is very good. Higher attaining pupils improve their swimming stroke technique and attempt water entry using the pike and tuck styles. Pupils of all abilities extend their knowledge of sports safety to throwing events in athletics. They know and understand the techniques appropriate to various events. High attaining pupils improve their shot putting techniques and their performance. They measure their performance and improve their scores against a scale of national expectations. In

swimming, fifty per cent of pupils achieve the national expectations of the Amateur Swimming Association Bronze Award. High attaining pupils at the end of Year 8 are able to plunge dive, tread water and swim a specified distance within strict time criteria and gain the silver award. Lower attaining pupils perfect a crawl type stroke. Scrutiny of work and assessment records confirms good progress in general gymnastics during the year. In Year 8 they have refined their range of gymnastic actions to include extensions of the body and good body shape in exercises.

174. No teaching was observed at Key Stage 1 but teaching across Key Stages 2 and 3 is very good with teachers working closely with support staff. Clear planning and the targeting of high expectations in achievement and behaviour typify this. Organisation and pupil management is very good. Teachers expect a great deal from pupils and especially with regard to high standards of behaviour. As a result pupils' behaviour is very good. Pupils engage in activities with a healthy competitive edge, but staff encourage fun and enjoyment and pupils have high regard for rules and convention. Planning is very effective and addresses health and safety issues in all lessons. Staff display very good interpersonal skills and subject knowledge and teachers succeed in including pupils who are disaffected by their own personal performance. Time and learning support staff are well used and the pace and rigour of lessons promotes self-fulfilment for pupils. Individual activities provide opportunities for developing self-awareness and personal reflection on achievement as in athletics and swimming. Staff know their pupils' potential and achievements and show sensitivity to those who are less physically robust and praise their efforts. At Key Stage 2 pupils applaud the efforts others in swimming when they are edging towards certification. When involved in off site activities, pupils are a credit to the school. At the swimming pool Key Stage 3 pupils show a high regard for self, others and the public. They routinely greeting other site users and show courtesy by opening doors.

175. Planning includes very good opportunities for developing skills in other subjects. The application of mathematical skills learned in linear and time measurement is a characteristic of the subject. Information technology is exploited in pupils' producing their own records. The school sports day is an superb exemplar of behaviour and attitude. Higher attainers at Key Stage 3 record digital images with a camera and with the help of the technician created a school web site of the results on which pupils could access their performance on the network. Competitors show pleasure at the efforts of higher achievers and a sensitivity and tolerance to those who struggle to complete an event. It is conducted without conflict, disappointment or the derision of others. Co-ordination of the subject is very good throughout the school.

176. There is an adequate policy for the subject and schemes of work are well developed. Ongoing assessment is very good and certification is a highlight of the subject providing pupils with another motivational factor. On-going assessment and recording are a part of all lessons and ensures pupils advance at their own rate.

177. The very good leadership in physical education is a significant strength. The staff team is highly committed to pupils achieving in the subject. The school makes best use of its adequate facilities but limitations in accommodation restrict some aspects of the Key Stage 3 curriculum. The school has a good-sized playing field that supports outdoor activities but supplements this with off-site provision. Orienteering takes place in the locality and an annual residential to the Wearside Centre offers selected groups of pupils opportunities for abseiling, climbing, coast walking and canoeing. The school has also improved provision

since the last inspection by including basketball, rugby and, most recently, karate as an out of school activity.

178. Physical education provides very good opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for their own behaviour management. It makes a significant contribution to the moral, social and personal development of pupils and many pupils achieve a level for their age.

## **RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

179. The improvement since the last inspection is good. In the last inspection teaching was satisfactory. Teaching is now very good at Key Stages 1 and 2 and in the lessons observed at Key Stage 3 it is good. Pupils achieve well because of the good quality of the school's syllabus and schemes of work, which are based on the local authority's agreed syllabus for religious education. However, their achievements could be even better if they had more time to study the subject. The improvement in teachers' subject knowledge and the enthusiasm of the co-ordinators support has contributed significantly to the overall provision.

180. At Key Stage 1 and in the early part of Key Stage 2 pupils learn about Buddhism. They know the story of Buddha and can explain that meditation is about thinking. Older pupils at Key Stage 2 learn about other faiths. One group learn about the important symbols such as prayer mats and beads. They know that it is important to wash before handling the Qur'an. Other pupils explore the beliefs of the Sikh religion. At Key Stage 3 pupils have studied a number of stories from the bible and understand the importance of festivals and symbols in a number of faiths.

181. Teaching and learning overall is very good. Planning of lessons is good and imaginative use is made of resources. For instance, pupils marvelled at the Sikh artefacts representing the 'Five Ks' (such as the Kirpan - the religious dagger) in a Year 6 lesson and asked interesting and thoughtful questions in response to viewing and handling them. In a lesson where joss sticks were burning, pupils were able to understand the calming effect of meditation. Expectations of pupils are high and pupils respond well. Presentations are lively and pupils are enthusiastic about what they are going to do. Lessons move at a good pace keep pupils interested. Where teaching is very good, teachers adopt a multi-sensory approach. Pupils use their hands, their eyes and their ears as in making a model of Buddha with instructions from both the teacher and through watching video clips. IT is used to support learning very well. Pupils research comparative religions using the Internet. Opportunities are taken by teachers to develop social and moral awareness through lessons. Where meditation is a focus pupils are asked to reflect on the impact of clear thought before action.

182. The subject is well led and managed. The scheme of work is well used and teachers' confidence and subject knowledge are supported and developed by the enthusiastic co-ordinator. The school has a range of resources and further development is planned. Loan facilities of artefacts are used to supplement the school's resources. Good use is made of video material and of IT. The subject is monitored informally by the co-ordinator through teacher discussions and meetings. However there is no formal system of monitoring of the curriculum. Assessment is undertaken well, recorded and shared with other staff. The time allocation recommended in the agreed syllabus is greater than the current allocation across the school.