

INSPECTION REPORT

MARDEN BRIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL

Whitley Bay

LEA area: North Tyneside

Unique reference number: 108635

Headteacher: Mr A J Driver

Reporting inspector: Denis Pittman
16976

Dates of inspection: 19th – 21st May 2003

Inspection number: 249138

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Middle deemed secondary

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 9 – 13

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Lovaine Avenue
Whitley Bay

Postcode: NE25 8RW

Telephone number: 0191 2008725

Fax number: 0191 2008727

Appropriate authority: Governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. V. Dowland

Date of previous inspection: 9th June 1997

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
16976	D. Pittman	Registered inspector		Characteristics, standards : the school's results, teaching and learning, leadership and management
13786	S. Walsh	Lay inspector		Standards : attitudes, values and personal development, curricular and other opportunities, care of pupils, partnership with parents
8756	P. Hanage	Team inspector	Mathematics	
12499	M. Durkin	Team inspector	English as an additional language English	
30105	J. Smith	Team inspector	Science	
22906	B. Hodgson	Team inspector	Information and communication technology Physical education	
15606	C. Hill	Team inspector	Special educational needs Art	
21803	L. Ramsay	Team inspector	Design and technology	
19915	P. Hooton	Team inspector	Educational inclusion Geography	
30911	J. Barton	Team inspector	Modern foreign languages	
6327	J. Thorp	Team inspector	History Religious education	
4697	R. Black	Team inspector	Music Citizenship	

The inspection contractor was:

Independent School Inspection Services (ISIS)
3 Harrowby Road
West Park
Leeds
LS16 5HN

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Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London WC2B 6SE

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Marden Bridge is a larger than average middle school educating pupils between the ages of nine and 13. There are 616 pupils at the school: 290 boys and 326 girls. The school is popular with parents and admission numbers have been stable in recent years although they did fall below expectation in the current Year 5. Most pupils are of white heritage; the number of pupils who do not have English as their first language is above average. The school serves the urban area of Whitley Bay; pupils come from socio-economic backgrounds that are broadly average in national terms.

Overall, pupils' standards of attainment are average when they join the school. The proportions of pupils with special educational needs and those who have statements of special educational needs are below average. The school is part of the 'Excellence in Cities' group. It has received independent recognition of achievements through attainment of Investors in People, Healthy School, Sportsmark and Tidy School awards.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

Marden Bridge is a good school which is committed to providing an all-round education for every pupil. Good teaching ensures that pupils achieve well. Pupils are enthusiastic, interested and actively involved in the wide range of opportunities available. The school is an orderly community with very good provision for social development. The school is well led and has a clear sense of purpose. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- Pupils achieve well in all three core subjects of English, mathematics and science; standards in mathematics and science are above average by the end of Year 8.
- The provision for modern foreign languages, physical education and citizenship is very good.
- Teaching is good so pupils make better progress than expected.
- Personal development of pupils is good. It is enhanced by the very good extra-curricular and social education provision.
- The school is well led ensuring that standards continue to improve.
- Relationships in the school are good and pupils have a very positive attitude to their work.

What could be improved

- The provision in art is unsatisfactory; standards are below average.
- Pupils do not have enough opportunities to use computers other than in information and communication technology (ICT) lessons.
- Heads of year are not monitoring or evaluating pupils' work sufficiently well.
- There are inconsistencies in assessment procedures and in the quality of marking.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress since it was last inspected in 1997. Standards have improved in most subjects and are now above average. The overall curriculum provision has improved but issues remain over the size of classes in design and technology. The quality of teaching has improved so that pupils are achieving well. Staff have high expectations and higher attaining pupils are now being appropriately challenged. Most the major criticisms raised at the time of the last inspection have been addressed and those weaknesses relating to financial planning and senior management monitoring have been changed into strengths.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	2000	2001	2002	2002
English	C	C	C	B
Mathematics	C	C	C	B
Science	C	C	C	B

Key	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

Results in the national tests have been improving at a similar rate to that seen nationally. Standards have been consistently in line with the national average for the last three years. Standards in the 2002 tests are average in English, mathematics and science, but they are above average for all three subjects in comparison with similar schools. Current targets and those for future years are demanding, reflecting the increased emphasis placed upon raising standards.

By the end of Year 6, standards are above average in most subjects; they are average in mathematics, design and technology, history and religious education. Standards are below average in art but are well above average in physical education. Pupils achieve well in nearly all subjects; achievement in French and physical education is particularly good. Pupils achieve satisfactorily in design and technology and history but achievement is unsatisfactory in art. Overall, a similar situation exists at the end of Year 8, except that standards are also above average in mathematics and religious education. Standards in modern foreign languages are well above average. In general, achievement is good by the end of Year 8; pupils achieve particularly well in modern foreign languages and physical education. Pupils with special educational needs make similarly good progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. Pupils are very eager to learn and maintain their concentration and enthusiasm in lessons very well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Good. There is a calm ordered atmosphere in lessons. There is little bullying or aggressive behaviour of any kind.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils show an understanding of how their actions will affect others. Relationships with teachers and other pupils are good. Pupils learn to use their initiative and to take on responsibility through the many opportunities provided.
Attendance	Satisfactory. Attendance is broadly in line with the national average and there is no unauthorised absence.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Years 5 – 6	Years 7– 8
Quality of teaching	Good	Good

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

Teaching is good in all subjects except in design and technology where it is satisfactory. The overall quality of teaching in art is unsatisfactory. Teaching in physical education is very good. Generally, the major strengths in the teaching are the teachers' subject knowledge, their high expectations of pupils and the way that they control pupils' behaviour. The good quality of teaching evident in the school promotes a positive learning environment.

The teaching of the basic skills literacy and numeracy is good. One weakness in the teaching is the lack of planned opportunities for pupils to use computers in their day-to-day lessons.

Teaching meets the needs of all pupils well, including those with special educational needs. Higher attaining pupils are being appropriately challenged. As a result, pupils make greater gains in their knowledge, skills and understanding than would usually be expected.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	Good. There are some significant strengths in the curriculum such as the very good provision for gifted and talented pupils and the range of extra-curricular activities but the school does not make enough use of computers in lessons.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Good. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in lessons. The provision is excellently managed; informative individual education plans help teachers plan their work well for pupils.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. Teachers are very supportive and pupils are given every encouragement to succeed.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and cultural development as well as very good provision for their social development. Respect and personal responsibility are features emphasised by the school
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are good procedures for improving behaviour and for ensuring that pupils are safe. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school has a very effective mentoring programme to support individual pupils.

The school works very well with parents, allowing them to feel part of the school community and enabling them to make a real contribution to school life.

The school works very hard to ensure that all pupils are treated equally. French is taught from an early age and German is also introduced later. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are fully involved and informed as to their child's progress towards agreed targets.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Good. There is a clear focus on improving standards and a good level of commitment on the part of all staff to meet this aim. The headteacher has successfully created a supportive, collaborative ethos in the school. An efficient and hard-working senior management team ably supports him.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Good. Governors have a good understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses and play a leading role in moving the school forward.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Good. The school has good systems for improving the quality of teaching and its priorities for development are good.
The strategic use of resources	Good. The school development plan priorities are appropriately matched to its resources. Financial planning and control are efficient.

The school is well staffed; teachers are supported by a good number of well-qualified support assistants. A recent refurbishment programme has significantly improved the accommodation in the main building; there are plans in place to improve the remainder of the building. The school has access to high quality sporting facilities but the provision in the textile and dining hall areas is inadequate. The school has a good supply of resources for its needs. The headteacher and governors are effective at ensuring they are providing the best value for the money they receive, especially in terms of consulting with parents and pupils.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school and make good progress. • Behaviour is good. • Teaching is good, and staff have high expectations of pupils. • Parents feel comfortable about approaching the school with issues or questions. • The leadership and management of the school are good. 	There were no significant issues that parents identified as causing them concern.

The inspectors agree with the parents' positive views but standards in art are not yet high enough.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. Pupils' standards on joining the school are average. By the time pupils leave the school their standards are above average and they are achieving well. Standards have improved since the last inspection, particularly in French and physical education
2. Results in the national tests for 11 year olds in 2002 were average in English, mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment in all three subjects was above average. Generally results rose at the same rate as the national rate of improvement. There were no significant differences in the results of girls and boys.
3. Standards of work seen in lessons, by the end of Year 6, are well above average in physical education. An emphasis has been placed on raising standards for higher attaining pupils in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science. Standards are now above average in English and science and average in mathematics. Standards are also above average in information and communication technology (ICT), French, geography and music. In all other subjects, standards are average apart from art where they are below average. Where standards are above average, achievement is good in the light of pupils' attainment prior to joining the school.
4. By the end of Year 8, standards are well above average in French and physical education. Standards are above average in all other subjects except English, design and technology and history, where they are average. Standards continue to be below average in art. The pupils currently in Year 8 attained standards that were broadly average when they were in Year 6, so they are achieving well in those subjects where standards are now above average and particularly well where standards are well above average.
5. Pupils' standards in literacy skills are above average. A range of texts, in all subjects, encourages the use of technical and specialist vocabulary, especially in science, French and English. The development of literacy in French is very good because it is planned for and taken seriously as a way to improve standards. Pupils correct their work, use the target language creatively and use their dictionaries to promote literacy. The learning resource centre supports all subjects, for instance, by stocking specialised texts and multi-media materials. The English department has dictionaries available and used in each classroom. Key words are displayed prominently in most classrooms to familiarise pupils with these words. Carefully censored Internet access allows pupils to research topics in detail. Pupils discuss their work enthusiastically and sensibly in most subjects and show respect to their peers and staff by listening attentively. More developed discursive and analytical speaking is not consistent, however, in subjects where literacy teaching is less emphasised. In art, for example, pupils' speaking and listening skills are identified as a target for improvement. Pupil passivity and teachers' over-direction lead to lower standards in speaking and listening in design and technology and geography. Reading fluency is encouraged and seen to particular effect in English and French. Writing at length is a feature in English and geography but is not so evident in ICT. Most subjects undertake the teaching of basic literacy skills conscientiously. With the support of the English and special educational needs departments, pupils gradually make improvements to their spelling, reading and writing skills.

6. Pupils receive a good grounding in basic skills in their mathematics lessons; they are taught well. Their standards in numeracy are above average and contribute significantly to their progress in many other subjects. Pupils in ICT were taught how to use spreadsheets and were able to devise formulae, for example, in Year 5 to use in calculating profit on goods sold. Pupils in design and technology have good skills in measuring and weighing accurately, which improve the quality of finished products. Pupils make good use of their numeracy skills in geography. In a Year 6 class, they were able to give compass directions, work out distances and use grid references. Pupils in science can tabulate results from experiments and represent the results graphically. They can use a variety of techniques, including tree diagrams, measuring and calculating averages.
7. Generally, there is little difference in the progress made by different groups of pupils such as boys and girls, which is a reflection of the emphasis placed upon equal opportunities for all pupils. The standards of pupils with special educational needs (SEN) at age 11, whilst below those nationally, are better than would be expected, based on what they had achieved on entry to the school. One reason for this is the good procedures for assessing and testing pupils and using the results to plan support for learning, especially in English and mathematics. The standards SEN pupils achieve by the end of Year 8 are good and again are better than would be expected. These pupils make good progress from the standards they achieved when they were 11 year olds. In some cases very good progress is made from when SEN pupils enter the school at the age of nine. The school uses tests and assessment data to set challenging targets for these pupils. Consequently, SEN pupils make good progress in relation to the targets set in their individual education plans for both their learning and behaviour. Pupils, including looked after children, who arrive with extremely low levels of literacy and for whom English is an additional language, make good gains towards their targets and for some progress is very good.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Pupils have very good attitudes to school. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly. There is very good involvement in the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school. Many pupils are enthusiastically involved in a wide variety of team sports. They are proud to represent the school. Pupils' achievements and interest outside the school are appreciated and celebrated and this helps to promote good personal development. Pupils are smart and well presented. They have a pride in themselves and their schoolwork
9. Pupils of all levels of attainment have very good attitudes towards their schoolwork and in a significant number of lessons their attitudes towards learning were excellent. Pupils are very responsive. They are keen to answer the teachers' questions. In personal and social education lessons even younger pupils exhibited very mature attitudes; most were articulate and very well informed. Pupils pay good attention towards practical tasks. They follow instructions carefully and work well in groups and pairs. The school's policy of seating boys and girls together has worked well and some very good co-operation between boys and girls was observed. Pupils with special educational needs have good attitudes to school. They are keen to learn and benefit from very good relationships with their peers and adults. They enjoy learning and doing well and this raises their confidence and self-esteem. They respond well to lively teaching and the good, frequently very good, support they receive in lessons. Gifted and talented pupils rise well to challenges and enjoy the more demanding work. Pupils with English as an additional language gain confidence and this helps them to

improve their command of English. Pupils' hard-working and enthusiastic approach towards learning helps them to achieve well and reach high academic standards.

10. Behaviour is good. The school is an orderly community. Behaviour in the classroom is often very good. There is a calm, ordered atmosphere in lessons. There are a handful of Year 8 boys who lack concentration and attempt to challenge the teacher. Even when these pupils are difficult the calm atmosphere is usually retained. The behaviour of these pupils impedes their own progress but is not allowed to disturb the work of the rest of the class. Behaviour around the school is good. There is a nice social atmosphere in the dining hall and behaviour in assemblies is very good. A small number of pupils are concerned about bullying. Physical bullying is rare; the school spends considerable time on trying to resolve relationship problems, especially among groups of girls. The school tries to ensure that no child is unhappy at school. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and relationships between pupils are also usually good. This assists learning and gives pupils the confidence to speak out in class.
11. Exclusions rates rose to a very high level last year but the school has recognised that exclusions were too high and has managed to achieve a significant reduction in exclusions during the current school year.
12. Personal development is good. There are very good opportunities for personal development outside lessons. Pupils learn to use their initiative and to take on responsibility through their involvement with the school council, the ECO committee and 'peacekeepers'. The opportunities for personal development within the classroom can be more limited. Although group and paired work is often used well in subjects such as science and geography, sometimes pupils are not given enough responsibility for their own learning. Opportunities for independent research can be limited; for example, the school's homework policy does not encourage the setting of longer-term research tasks
13. Attendance is just satisfactory. Most pupils attend school very regularly but attendance rates marginally fell below the national average last year. This is because a small number of pupils spend extended holidays in the Indian sub-continent and many more pupils take at least two weeks holiday in term time. There are a small number of older pupils whose attendance at school is erratic.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. Teaching is good in all years and, as a result, pupils learn better than usual. Teaching is satisfactory in design and technology but unsatisfactory in art; teaching is good in all other subjects. The overall quality of teaching in physical education is very good.
15. Some strengths are common to most subjects in the school: the subject expertise of teachers, the way that teachers control behaviour and the high expectations of achievement. In science lessons teachers have good subject knowledge and use a variety of teaching styles. They are able to give clear explanations of concepts, helping pupils to learn. Good use of questioning is a feature of these lessons and this enables pupils to clarify their understanding in relation to key scientific ideas. In design and technology lessons teachers give clear explanations, demonstrate techniques and use resources well. As they introduce new knowledge and skills, they reinforce existing learning through a series of well-planned activities. In history lessons when teachers involve pupils in discussions, their good subject knowledge enables them to pose questions effectively, both to challenge pupils' thinking and to evaluate their

learning. In modern foreign language lessons pupils develop good listening skills because all teachers have a good command of the target language and use it extensively. The music teacher's subject knowledge is very good and his own enthusiasm and style and keyboard command are strong factors in the success of lessons. The good subject knowledge of religious education teachers enables them to present information in interesting ways, which ensures that pupils are always fully involved in lessons.

16. Teachers' high expectations, obvious from the start, are maintained as lessons continue. In a very good Year 6 English lesson on Haiku poetry, pupils worked very hard, motivated by the enthusiasm of their teacher. They responded very positively to his high expectations by producing their own creative poetry. In ICT lessons there are high expectations of pupils to complete tasks set. The right level of challenge is evident in many lessons. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson on equivalent fractions, the interesting range of activities was well suited to meet the different needs of pupils. The expectations of teachers are reflected in the high quality of presentation in books. For example, in geography, pupils take a pride in their work and the standard of presentation in exercise books, by pupils at all levels of attainment, is in many cases high.
17. Teachers manage their pupils very well. In mathematics lessons well-established classroom routines, which ensure that pupils know how they are expected to behave and that they are expected to work hard, are a key factor in their good learning. Unsatisfactory behaviour is rare in lessons, because teachers ensure that pupils concentrate on their work. Teachers are very good at judging when intervention is needed. The teachers are able to control behaviour in this way because relationships are so good in the school and because the school is very successful in getting pupils to understand the importance of rules and the impact that their actions can have on others. Throughout most lessons the teacher's interaction with pupils contributed significantly to learning and progress. Teachers always make sure that all pupils are involved in the work and discussions and that pupils with special needs receive the extra support they require so as to play a full part in the lesson. In music lessons pupils have clear routines and work without fuss, wasting no time when changing activities. This good level of management is also reflected in physical education lessons.
18. Some other aspects of teaching, such as the way that homework is used or the attention paid to the marking of work, are not as consistent as they should be. Most teachers mark work regularly and frequently, but occasionally some do not go into enough detail about how the pupil can improve. For example, history marking does not always follow the school's agreed policy. While teachers are positive about pupils' efforts, they provide insufficient indication about how pupils could develop or extend their work. In some mathematics lessons the plenary session at the end of is too brief, and does not reinforce learning as well as it could. In art lessons individual teaching and the use of question and answer sessions are used well but demonstrations, while informative, can be too long. Similarly in some English lessons pupils learn less than in others because the teacher talks too much and pupils are not involved. Where teaching is less effective, as in some design and technology lessons, the pace and demand of pupils in their learning lack challenge; in consequence small numbers of pupils are uninterested and learning is slow. In some modern foreign language lessons the mastery of vocabulary and structure is also limited when the presentation of new material is done in a routine manner that does not hold the pupils' attention and interest.

19. A common weakness in a number of lessons is the lack of sufficient opportunities for pupils to use computers. All pupils have lessons specifically for ICT, but they are not getting enough occasions to use their skills in other subjects. The school is aware of this problem and is making provision for extra computer resources to give greater accessibility for use in everyday lessons.
20. Lessons usually provide a good atmosphere for learning. In history lessons, clear learning objectives are identified at the start of lessons. These objectives are carefully explained, with indications of how they fit with what pupils have worked on previously and then reinforced continually as the lesson progresses. These approaches contribute positively to pupils' learning. In the best lessons pupils have the confidence to try things out, attempting an ambitious answer or putting forward an opinion, secure in the knowledge that the reactions of both teacher and fellow pupils will be sensitive and supportive. In these lessons teachers also use resources very effectively to make the pupils' learning more meaningful. Activities are interesting, and pupils are encouraged to succeed. These features were very effectively shown in an excellent Year 5 lesson religious education lesson on the various books in the Bible.
21. For the teaching of pupils with special educational needs, teachers plan so that the work in each lesson is a good match to each pupils' requirements They know their pupils very well and this means they do not always record what each pupil knows, understands and can do during the lesson to show the progress made. The withdrawal programme is good because of the high quality liaison between class teachers, the support teacher, support staff and the special educational needs co-ordinator. The pupils' individual education plans contain clear targets that are sufficiently practical for class teachers to implement when support staff are not present. In the best lessons pupils know their targets. However, the practice is not consistent. The support staff are very effective because they know the pupils very well and frequently set targets for learning and behaviour with a good blend of help and challenge. Teaching of pupils on withdrawal programmes is good. Pupils respond well to questions and tasks in class. They learn well and make good progress in these small groups and in one-to-one teaching. Pupils are given work to meet their needs but which also challenges them and therefore helps them to learn and make progress.
22. Through regular meetings with subject co-ordinators, teachers are well aware of the teaching and learning needs of gifted and talented pupils. The subject co-ordinators meet regularly to discuss the provision, including teaching and learning styles, and to identify any training needs for teachers. Through the co-ordinators a distinct teaching and learning programme has been devised. The programme identifies ways in which the learning resource centre can help departments to include ways to accelerate learning in schemes of work and provide enrichment opportunities both in and outside the classroom. Good practice is identified and shared with the teachers by the co-ordinators. All subject departments are providing enhanced opportunities for these pupils and some departments are particularly keen, such as modern foreign languages and science. Teachers are willing to adapt and adjust to take account of pupils' rapid development and play a key role in maintaining the register of pupils who are gifted and talented.
23. The quality of teaching has continued to improve since the school was last inspected. No unsatisfactory lessons were observed this time and higher attaining pupils are being given suitably demanding work. Nearly every parent who responded to the questionnaire felt that expectations are high and 94 per cent felt that teaching is good

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

24. The overall curriculum provision is good and broadly meets the requirements of the National Curriculum. Pupils in all year groups have access to specialist teachers and teaching areas. The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of all pupils and encourages pupils of all abilities to fulfil their potential. Gifted and talented pupils are well provided for, as are those with special educational needs and those who are in the early stages of speaking English.
25. There is a good quality broad and balanced English curriculum and the mathematics curriculum is satisfactory. The good science curriculum is practically based and offers pupils a good range of experiences. The curriculum provision for geography, history and religious education is good with a strong emphasis on developing skills in these areas. There is very good provision for modern foreign languages with access to specialist provision and high quality teaching in Years 5 and 6 encouraging pupils to make a flying start in French. Criticisms were made in the previous report regarding access to German lessons. German is still taught at lunchtimes but any enthusiastic child now has access to these lessons. The music curriculum is generally good but there is too much emphasis on knowledge rather than practical experience. There is a very good physical education curriculum facilitated by the excellent facilities.
26. The ICT programme is well planned and covers all the required areas of the National Curriculum. ICT is used well in music and French and its use is developing in design and technology. However, there are subject areas including science, art, history, geography and religious education where the use of ICT could be improved.
27. There have been significant improvements to the curriculum since the previous inspection. There is now sufficient time for science, and physical education now meets the demands of the National Curriculum. However, time for design and technology and art is restricted. This contributes to limited provision for food technology and textiles. The art curriculum needs to be broadened in order to meet the needs of all pupils, especially in Years 5 and 6.
28. The school provides a good range of learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. The withdrawal programmes are well organised so those pupils have the same curriculum as mainstream pupils but at a level matched to their individual needs. Pupils' experiences are relevant to their learning needs despite these needs being quite different amongst the pupils. The learning resource centre is central in providing enhanced learning opportunities for gifted and talented pupils, for example in geography, using ICT to produce an animated presentation on global diversity and training opportunities for their parents. The sports centre successfully draws on the support from outside the school; for example, in physical education, pupils have the opportunity to train with the North Tyneside basketball squad. Although provision for equal opportunities is generally good with the needs of pupils from all abilities being well met, the arrangements for booster classes has resulted in some pupils in Year 6 missing a number of geography, ICT and design and technology lessons.
29. There is good provision for pupils whose first language is not English because of dedicated, intensive teaching. Consequently, pupils quickly become conversant in English and are able to learn. Pupils are matched in classes according to ability and therefore all pupils are able to make similar, good progress.

30. The provision for extra-curricular activities is very good. There is a very wide range of clubs and activities and teachers are committed to widening pupils' range of experience. Good musical opportunities exist with access to peripatetic teaching of musical instruments and award-winning choirs. The provision for physical education and team sports is very good. The pupils have many opportunities to travel; there are regular skiing trips to Norway and visits to France. One of the football teams is due to tour in Scotland and there are other regular sports fixtures outside the local area. There are regular visits to other coastal schools, which widens the pupils' social experiences. The extensive extra-curricular opportunities make a very good contribution to personal development.
31. Provision for personal and social education is good. The curriculum is very good and there is a good balance of social, moral and health education. The provision for drug education is very good and the pupils are involved in preparing teaching materials to be used throughout the local authority. The programme for sex education is age-appropriate and there is a good first aid course, which provides very useful advice that is appreciated by pupils. Teaching of personal and social education is almost always good and is never less than satisfactory. However, despite circle time and group work being stressed in policy documents, discussions in the lessons tended to be led by the teacher. Good provision is made to ensure that the needs of all pupils are met. For example, at times classes are divided and higher attaining pupils, who have better developed independence, work on developing scenarios involving drugs using innovative computer software. Pupils who need more guidance work on a similar activity developing role-play with greater help and support from the teacher. Very good use is made of very up-to-date materials such as TV interviews, new computer software and high quality books provided through the local library service. This all helps to make the course more interesting and relevant to pupils. There is satisfactory use of outside speakers but the use of external specialists, lively presentations or drama is not a strong feature of the course.
32. The school has good links with its local community. The local community and the school worked well in partnership in order to achieve the building of the sports centre. This has resulted in excellent sports facilities available to the school and the local community. The location of the sports facilities and the use of them by the local community have raised the profile of the school. The school has a very heavy involvement in local sport. The school makes good use of local facilities; for example, there is a geography field trip to Holy Island and there has been a visit to the safety works at Whickham. There are good links with local churches with local ministers from a range of denominations coming into school to take assemblies and the school using a local church for special services. The jazz choir has sung for older local residents and there has been carol singing in a local shopping centre.
33. The school has effective relationships with partner institutions. The school takes pupils in from a wide range of first and primary schools. There is effective liaison between schools and the school is an active member of the local pyramid group. The school has good relationships with receiving high schools. There have been meetings about mathematics, and the school has access to Key Stage 3 national curriculum test results which help the school to monitor standards. One of the local high schools has been supportive in allowing its French assistant to spend some time assisting in Year 8 classes.
34. Provision for spiritual, moral, social and cultural education is good overall and has been sustained since the previous inspection.

35. Provision for spiritual education is good. Personal and social education makes a good contribution towards spiritual development. During a lesson on homelessness Year 5 pupils were able to empathise with the plight of homeless people and expressed mature and sensitive views. Subject areas such as science and geography encourage pupils to acknowledge the wonders of life. Religious education lessons give pupils the opportunity to understand a variety of beliefs and this allows pupils to develop their own views about the meaning of life. Pupils are encouraged to reflect upon their own experiences in many lessons including personal and social education lessons and assemblies.
36. Provision for collective worship is very well planned. There is a wide variety of themes that have a strong spiritual, moral, social and cultural content. Appropriate regard is paid to Christian tradition but prayers and periods of reflection are well designed and embrace all faiths. Regular class assemblies are of good quality and keep both the audience and active participants interested and involved. For example, a Year 8 class assembly about magic explored the mysteries of life and had a strong spiritual and cultural content. Celebration assemblies acknowledge a wide variety of pupil achievements both in and out of school. Pupils talk about their experiences. This enhances pupils' self-esteem and promotes confidence.
37. Provision for moral education is good. Teachers and staff lead by example and provide good role models. A considerable amount of time is spent discussing behaviour with difficult pupils and there is strong moral guidance. The personal and social education programme makes a good contribution to moral development; for example, pupils were able to discuss moral dilemmas and develop an understanding of concepts such as peer pressure and stereotyping. Pupils are involved in regular fund-raising activities and are keen to support those less fortunate than themselves. The ECO committee encourages pupils and staff to care for the environment.
38. Provision for social education is very good. Pupils are able to take part in a very wide range of extra-curricular activities such as team sports which encourage social development. Pupils understand the concept of fair play and learn to work well together. There are many residential visits and pupils get the chance to socialise with each other and with children from different backgrounds. The school council and ECO committee give pupils responsibility outside the classroom and an active role in decision making. The Girls Talk Group and the work of the learning mentor encourage pupils to improve their social skills. The breakfast club provides further opportunities for social mixing. Year 8 pupils react well to the responsibility of acting as 'peacekeepers'; they help to resolve fallings out, support younger pupils and provide lunchtime supervisors with valuable help. The school's policy of seating boys and girls together has encouraged pupils to work well together. Opportunities for paired work in science enhance collaboration and co-operation but opportunities for independence are more limited in other subject areas.
39. Provision for cultural education is good. Cultural education is good in French; for examples there have been visits to France and pupils have been involved in a play that was produced entirely in French. There are close links with the local theatre and pupils have taken part in productions and have watched professional productions. The music department is involved a local multi-cultural group and the award-winning choirs have performed locally and further afield. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate cultural diversity. There has been a visit from an African singer and an Indian drummer. English texts are from a variety of cultures. The art curriculum has only just started to address other cultures and there has been recent work on Aboriginal art.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

40. The school is caring and supportive and provides a very cheerful and friendly learning environment. Many teachers know the pupils well and the headteacher has particularly good knowledge of the pupils and their needs. There are good arrangements for child protection and looked after children. Staff have appropriate training and local procedures are followed. There are good quality induction arrangements for pupils who enter the school in Year 5. The school is very sensitive to the needs of the significant number of pupils who start later in Year 7 and has developed a good induction system that ensures these pupils make friends and settle quickly.
41. Pupils receive high quality personal support. In addition to the class teacher, the learning mentor can also provide good quality personal support. The Girls Talk Group provides very good support for those girls who need a little extra care, encourages them to develop their social skills and helps them to learn to look after themselves. Good personal advice is also available through personal and social education lessons and drop in sessions with the school nurse.
42. The system of regular mentoring by the class teacher together with good recording results in good monitoring of personal development. However, there is the potential to improve the system by introducing more rigorous academic monitoring, including the regular setting of specific targets together with providing clear strategies for improvement.
43. On special educational needs issues the school liaises very well with other agencies, parents, pupils and teachers. Teachers know their pupils very well and support them very effectively. The school complies with the Code of Practice and statements and reviews are up to date and the provision in statements is being fully implemented. The school is successful in meeting targets identified in individual education plans and annual reviews. There are very good arrangements to support very low achievers in making very good progress and to recognise their achievements.
44. The school has good arrangements for promoting good behaviour and for dealing with harassment or bullying. The teaching staff are experienced and mature and many have developed their own good quality strategies for managing pupils' behaviour. The school's behaviour policy is used when necessary. There are many rewards and younger pupils especially value merit badges and certificates. Sanctions involve detentions and sending pupils into other classrooms and in extreme cases difficult pupils accompany the head of year for the rest of the day. These measures work for the majority of pupils but there is a small group of Year 8 boys whose challenging behaviour is not always appropriately dealt with.
45. Cases of bullying and racism are carefully recorded including the action taken by the school. It is clear from school records that extensive work has been done on managing groups of girls who frequently fall out, and discouraging the small number of pupils whom may be tempted to bully others. The school takes a clear stance in disproving of and discouraging bullying and in extreme circumstances pupils who make life difficult for other pupils have been excluded.
46. Procedures for monitoring attendance are satisfactory. The school contacts parents whenever possible during the first morning of absence. Improvements have been made since the previous inspection and telephone calls are now recorded in a file. During the inspection week the school was experiencing difficulties with its computer registration system. However, it was clear that year heads and senior staff do not

make enough use of computer-generated data to analyse records of attendance despite the school's attendance rates being below the national average. Registers were often not taken in individual subjects; this could result in internal truancy not being promptly identified and has health and safety implications. There are termly attendance rewards; however, there are insufficient strategies in place to encourage good attendance.

47. The school provides a safe environment but there are outside areas which require repair in order to reduce risks. Procedures for risk assessments are satisfactory but could be improved by more active monitoring of teaching practices and by greater involvement of governors. Parents appreciate the kind and caring approach of the office staff when dealing with sick and injured pupils. There is a need to improve the recording of accidents and illness and to ensure that first aid equipment and medicines are securely stored.
48. The assessment of pupils' work is satisfactory. There is a clear school policy which links assessment and the monitoring of pupil progress. There is some good practice, for example in geography, of day-to-day assessment and the marking and recording of pupils' progress. In other subjects, for example in history, it is weaker. In some subjects pupils knew at what level they were working; in others they were not clear about this, or about what they had to do to improve. In science, records of pupils' progress were good but there were often not enough comments on marked work to guide them on to the next level. In English there are clear detailed assessment procedures, including National Curriculum levels; however, pupils were often not aware what level they were reaching. The results of tests and assessments are used well to identify pupils who are gifted and talented. The process also identifies pupils who are underachieving. The learning resource centre has seen a big improvement in learning styles for these pupils through the 'Learning to Learn' opportunities it provides both in and outside the classrooms.
49. The use of assessment information is satisfactory. The school has recently developed good systems for tracking pupils' attainment at whole school level and to highlight pupils who are underachieving. This contains a good range of assessment information about pupils' attainment. Examples of this are pupils' standards on entry to the school, end of year standards, and Year 6 National Curriculum test results. Teachers and subject co-ordinators have access to this information, and some are using it well to track the performance of individual pupils and set targets for them. For example, in mathematics it is used to place pupils in different teaching groups. However, in many subjects, teachers are not yet familiar enough with the system to use it confidently. It is not at present being used in a consistent and systematic way across all subjects to track both the performance of individual pupils and of particular groups. The role of the head of year in tracking pupil progress and underachievement is in its early stages.
50. Good progress has been made since the last inspection in developing a whole school system for recording and monitoring pupils' attainment. However, as previously, there is still inconsistent practice across individual subject areas.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents are very pleased with the quality of education offered by the school. They are aware that teaching is good and that it allows their children to make good progress. Parents feel that expectations are high and that their children are encouraged to become mature and responsible. They value the all-round education offered by the

school and feel that social education is very good. Parents believe that pupils are valued for their individuality and that there is respect for diversity. They find the school very easy to contact about problems or questions they want to ask. The inspection agreed with parents' positive views of the school and also judged teaching to be good and confirmed that pupils were making good progress. Children do receive a good quality all-round education with very good quality social education.

52. The school has developed a good quality partnership with parents. The headteacher spends a considerable amount of time communicating with parents about pastoral matters such as behaviour and bullying. The school works well with parents to try to ensure that all children are happy in school. The school's open door policy was observed during the inspections, and if a member of staff is available parents who have problems are quickly seen. Parents appreciate the cheerful and positive approach of the office staff who actively enhance links between home and school. A small number of parents were concerned that the school does not have a good enough partnership with parents but there was no evidence identified during the inspection that would support this view.
53. Parents are supportive of the school and its work. Many parents dedicate significant amounts of time transporting their children to extra-curricular activities including sports events and fixtures. There is an active Friends Association which focuses on providing enjoyable social events where children and parents can spend valuable time together. There are also fund-raising activities. The school has recently run a well-attended drug information evening for parents and an evening about the literacy strategy. Good support from parents helps pupils to achieve well.
54. Information for parents is satisfactory. The prospectus is of a very high standard and has been improved since the previous inspection. There are regular newsletters and parents are well informed about the work of the school. A small number of parents do not feel well informed about their children's progress. Although reports are satisfactory and meet statutory requirements the tick list format is rather bland and teachers' written comments tend to focus on children's attitudes and behaviour rather than their progress in a particular subject area. Targets and strategies for improvement are rarely offered. There are regular parents' evenings; however, it has been tradition for parents to meet class teachers rather than subject teachers. The school sought parents' opinions about these arrangements and although the majority voted to retain this system a significant number of parents in Years 6 and 7 would have preferred to meet subject teachers. Class teachers are provided with quite detailed written information from subject teachers but this information is not copied to parents. Some parents have commented that if there is a problem with a particular subject it is sometimes difficult for a class teacher to answer the parents' questions. It is, however, always possible for parents to book an additional appointment to see a subject teacher.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. The school is well led and managed. The good leadership provided by the headteacher has led to a continuing improvement in standards. He is ably supported by senior management who work effectively as a team in the interests of pupils and staff. Central to the school's success lies its commitment to putting the pupil first. This commitment is reflected in the additional support that is given to pupils of all abilities and the range of opportunities provided to promote pupils' personal development. The quality of what the school does in these areas has a clear impact on pupils' standards of achievement.

56. Many other features of the school are led and managed well. Most subjects are led and managed at least satisfactorily and for most the quality of leadership and management is good. The management of modern foreign languages and physical education is very good but in art it is unsatisfactory. Areas that were previously weak, such as music and ICT, have been improved and standards are now above average. A school improvement group that is open to all staff discusses ideas and actions to further improve teamwork and raise standards. This is an effective strategy for involving staff in the broader issues of the school.
57. The role of the year head is underdeveloped and it is not clear who is responsible for monitoring, evaluating and actively managing year heads. Year heads have no administrative base and this can create difficulties in managing efficiently. Despite sufficient time allowance some year heads are taking insufficient responsibility for developing the identity of their year and for monitoring attendance, academic progress, personal development and behaviour. This results in other senior members of staff having to spend too much time dealing with pastoral matters.
58. Governors play a good role in leading the school. They have a clear view of the school's strengths and weaknesses and can talk in detail about aspects such as accommodation, ICT resources and performance management. Governors play a full part in drawing up plans for the school's continued improvement and in identifying an appropriate focus for priorities such as raising standards. Statutory requirements for the National Curriculum are met. The ways that governors obtain information about the school's performance are effective and ensure that they remained focused on standards. Time is devoted to looking at the work produced by pupils and this approach is supplemented by visiting lessons to observe teaching and to have discussions with subject co-ordinators.
59. The monitoring of teaching is good, with a regular timetable of observations carried out by the headteacher and senior management team. The headteacher has taken a leading role in the development of a teaching and learning policy and has conducted training sessions for the staff on pupils' learning styles. The good action taken to address these issues has led to an improvement in the quality of teaching and, especially, a reduction in the amount of teaching that was unsatisfactory. In broader context of monitoring, some subject co-ordinators are not getting enough opportunities to observe the good practice of other teachers to make sure that standards are consistently maintained.
60. The management of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is excellent and makes a very valuable contribution to pupils' learning and progress. All staff are very experienced in ensuring children's learning needs are met. The special educational needs department benefits from the support of an informed governor. It is very successful in reflecting the school's aims and values in its work, especially helping pupils to enjoy learning, to develop positive attitudes and self-image and to fulfil potential. The department's use of ICT to inform and support teaching and learning is good and its use to record and measure progress is developing very well. The co-ordinator is very good at using innovative graphics to show pupils how successful they are and the progress they are making in both the short and long term. The real strength of the management of special educational needs is the monitoring. Through regular meetings and frequent informal discussions with all staff involved and with pupils, there is excellent monitoring of the provision. All staff are very willing to adapt and adjust to take account of pupils' rapid development. Resources are good and are very well used to inform and support teaching and learning. .

61. Financial management and the planning of the use of resources are appropriately related to the school's priorities. The school is anticipating a small deficit on the overall budget this year because of a reduction in the number of pupils in Year 5. An appropriate proportion of the budget is allocated to learning resources for subjects. The quality of financial control and provision of budgetary information to senior management is good. In financial administration, there are correct divisions of responsibility and good procedures for ordering, receiving and paying for goods and services purchased by the school. The last financial audit indicated areas for improving financial efficiency. These have been corrected. Competitive tendering is used for the ordering of goods or services, and the school works hard to achieve the best value in its financial decisions. The administrative staff are efficient and greatly assist the smooth running of the school.
62. The school provides a good education for its pupils. Standards are continuing to improve and teaching is mostly good. The school provides good value for money.
63. All teaching staff are qualified, two of whom are newly qualified. Staffing provision is good and generally meets the requirements of the curriculum. The staff development co-ordinator has a clear view of the training needs of the staff in relation to the school development plan. Training is developmental, giving staff the opportunity to build up their training records within the national standards for teachers. The school holds the Investors in People accreditation, indicating that all staff (teaching and support staff) are appropriately appraised and trained. Training for threshold standard for teachers has taken place but job descriptions have yet to be matched to staff reaching the higher threshold points. The number of support assistants, low for the number of pupils requiring support, work very hard to ensure the wide range of pupils' needs are met with the right blend of help and challenge.
64. The accommodation is adequate to meet the needs of the school. It is a mixture of old and new. The school is housed in an unusual 1900's building, some of which has been attractively renovated and parts are due to be refurbished this summer. Good efforts have been made to improve the appearance of the building with bright and attractive displays of pupils' work. The school is very fortunate in having use of a very modern sports centre and all-weather pitch; the ICT suite is also well equipped. The music department is spacious but equipment is cleared away each night to make a space for community use. The condition of accommodation and level of resourcing in the textile area do not provide for or reflect the modern technological approach of the subject. The dining hall is inadequate to meet the demands of a large school and places constraints upon the organisation of the school day through dual sessions to accommodate the pupils.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

65. In order to raise standards and improve the quality of education still further, the headteacher and governors should:

- Improve standards in art by ensuring that monitoring and assessment procedures are more rigorously applied. In addition, the curriculum needs to be broadened to accommodate more three-dimensional work. [Paragraphs: 97,98,100]
- Improve standards in ICT by providing more opportunities for computers to be used in lessons. [Paragraphs 19, 82, 87,97,131]
- Develop the role of heads of year by providing training in management skills relating to monitoring and evaluation. [Paragraph 57]
- Improve the consistency in the use of assessment data to monitor and track pupil progress. Ensure that marking policies are applied more rigorously. [Paragraphs 18,72,81,94,11,112,124,134,153,155]

Other considerations

- (1) Improve the management skills of subject co-ordinators in the use of data and evaluation. [Paragraphs 59,111]
- (2) Improve the accommodation provision for textiles and the dining hall facilities. [Paragraph 64]
- (3) Develop better strategies to improve attendance. [Paragraph 13]

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	97
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	65

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
Number	2	14	47	34	0	0	0
Percentage	2	14	48	35	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	Y5– Y8
Number of pupils on the school's roll	616
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	108

Special educational needs	Y5– Y8
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	12
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	86

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	34

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	44
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	23

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	7.4
National comparative data	6.1

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0.0
National comparative data	0.3

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 2 (Year 6)

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2002	69	76	145

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	54	56	66
	Girls	58	57	69
	Total	112	113	135
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	77 (75)	78 (80)	93 (90)
	National	75 (75)	73 (71)	86 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	49	58	62
	Girls	61	63	64
	Total	110	121	126
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	76 (81)	83 (84)	87 (83)
	National	73 (72)	74 (74)	82 (82)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

Categories used in the Annual School Census
White – British
White – Irish
White – any other White background
Mixed – White and Black Caribbean
Mixed – White and Black African
Mixed – White and Asian
Mixed – any other mixed background
Asian or Asian British - Indian
Asian or Asian British - Pakistani
Asian or Asian British – Bangladeshi
Asian or Asian British – any other Asian background
Black or Black British – Caribbean
Black or Black British – African
Black or Black British – any other Black background
Chinese
Any other ethnic group
No ethnic group recorded

Exclusions in the last school year

No of pupils on roll	Number of fixed period exclusions	Number of permanent exclusions
558	76	2
0	0	0
4	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
1	0	0
5	0	0
3	0	0
18	0	0
8	1	0
1	0	0
2	0	0
0	0	0
7	0	0
7	0	0
0	0	0
0	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: Y5– Y8

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	33.82
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.2

Education support staff: Y5– Y8

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	112

Deployment of teachers: Y5– Y8

Percentage of time teachers spend in contact with classes	82
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Average teaching group size: Y5-Y8

Key Stage 2	22.5
Key Stage 3	26.1

Financial information

Financial year	2002/3
	£
Total income	1588048
Total expenditure	1586767
Expenditure per pupil	2584
Balance brought forward from previous year	101710
Balance carried forward to next year	12000

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Recruitment of teachers

Number of teachers who left the school during the last two years	3
Number of teachers appointed to the school during the last two years	2
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Total number of vacant teaching posts (FTE)	0
Number of vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of a term or more (FTE)	2
Number of unfilled vacancies or vacancies filled by teachers on temporary contract of less than one term (FTE)	0

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	616
Number of questionnaires returned	178

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	40	50	7	1	1
My child is making good progress in school.	48	49	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	33	56	5	1	6
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	32	60	7	1	1
The teaching is good.	47	47	2	1	4
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46	43	8	2	2
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59	37	2	1	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	67	31	1	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	38	49	8	2	3
The school is well led and managed.	50	40	4	1	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	47	46	5	1	2
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	45	42	4	1	8

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

ENGLISH

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

Strengths

- Strong leadership of the subject is beginning to improve standards for all pupils.
- Teaching is good; there is some excellent teaching leading to good learning.
- Relationships between pupils and teachers are good and result in productive learning.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils are not given enough opportunity to make their contributions and so enhance their own learning.
- Some pupils are unaware of their targets for learning.

66. Results in the 2002 National Curriculum tests for pupils at the age of 11 are broadly in line with the national average and above the national average for schools taking pupils from similar backgrounds. The results reflect an improving trend. There is no significant difference between the results of boys and girls; boys' results have improved steadily.
67. Standards of work by the end of Year 6 are above average. This represents good achievement and improving standards, because, when the pupils joined the school, their standards were average. These standards are an improvement on test results because of the positive effects of literacy teaching and new schemes of work directed at individual pupils' success. Writing, in particular, has improved, and presentation of work is neat, controlled and reflects pupils' pride in their work. Most pupils have a good knowledge and understanding of literacy skills by the time they have been in the school for two years. Their oral skills are good in classroom discussion and they are keen and confident speakers. Pupils lack confidence when speaking in formal situations because the skill has yet to be developed in teaching. Writing standards are above average; pupils have grasped key skills in spelling, punctuation and grammar and their work is well presented. Writing is also creative and poetic; for example, in one Year 6 class pupils worked enthusiastically to describe fog to interest the reader, for example "The mist swirling and clogging the air" and "Fog is the echo of the present". A minority of pupils cannot write longer pieces. The standards of all pupils are benefiting from a wide choice in the variety of writing assignments and increasing use of ICT to aid the presentation of work. More systematic use of new technology is planned to improve pupils' writing standards. Reading is varied and deliberately chosen to interest the pupils. A variety of reading activities engages pupils' interest and concentration and so they learn well. Reading aloud, both individually and in groups, improves reading and encourages interest. Further involvement of the pupils in their reading would increase confidence and fluency.
68. Attainment in English by the end of Year 8 is average. Achievement is good because these pupils' standards at the end of Year 6 were below average. Pupils write with understanding and appreciation of Shakespearean texts and pre-20th century poetry. Year 8 pupils made spells after studying *Macbeth*, including "In the boiling cauldron shake, striking venom of a snake". They read a wide variety of texts and successfully place texts in a historical context. A key feature in the pupils' work is their ability to empathise with character and situation and analyse moral issues. They can evaluate

character and theme although only higher attaining pupils produce detailed writing assignments. Overall, presentation of work is careful and consistent. Pupils can analyse media texts and research references because of the teaching and close liaison with the learning resource centre. They use standard and non-standard English appropriately and are respectful listeners. A minority of pupils rely too heavily on the teacher and their work is brief, lacking in detailed understanding and insight.

69. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress. They receive good support from their class teachers who work with the special educational needs co-ordinator to plan strategies for success. Pupils whose first language is not English also make good progress because of close support and structured teaching. Planned work for gifted and talented pupils, including directed teaching, has ensured good progress.
70. The quality of teaching and learning is good, and there are examples of very good and outstanding teaching and learning. In a small minority of otherwise satisfactory lessons, pupils learn less than in others because the teacher talks too much and pupils are not as involved. In these lessons, pupils make satisfactory rather than good progress. In the majority of lessons, there is a brisk pace; pupils are clearly motivated and a large amount of work is completed. Pupils enjoy exchanging ideas with each other and their teacher in an atmosphere of achievement and respect. Pupils respond well to their teachers' care for their achievement and this helps develop the good relationships evident in the department. In a Year 7 speaking and listening lesson, the pupils thoroughly appreciated analysing *The Iron Woman* and role-playing their ideas to the rest of the class so deepening their understanding of the book. This is because the teacher sensitively drew out their ideas and encouraged their thinking. In a very good Year 6 lesson on Haiku poetry, pupils worked furiously to keep up with the enthusiasm of their teacher. They responded to his high expectations by producing their own creative and stylish poetry. The pupils' joy in the lesson encouraged and developed their love of the subject.
71. The leadership and management of the subject are good. The new subject co-ordinator has provided stability and a clear educational vision that inspires both teachers and pupils. Teachers share the preparation of schemes of work and subject responsibilities. This has created a team spirit and a shared commitment to success. As a result, they are regularly discussing what is best for the pupils. The curriculum has benefited from a rich variety of work and good opportunities to develop pupils' social and moral education. Procedures for assessment are clear and used to set individual pupils' targets. This is not consistent in practice and marking is sometimes bland and lacking in specific targets to guide pupils' improvement. Pupils are not all aware of their National Curriculum levels and consequently are not clear about how they can improve their standards. This is recognised by the department and is a priority for improvement. The head of department has developed a cohesive team after a period of instability and there is good capacity for further improvement in standards.
72. Progress since the last inspection has been good. Literacy teaching has been used effectively to improve basic skills and to provide more variety in teaching. Teaching and learning have improved and the leadership of the subject is better. The action plan targets pupils' achievement at level 5 in the tests at the end of Year 6. Standards are rising, and, with the shared commitment to sharing good practice and attention to identified areas for improvement, the department has the capacity to succeed even further.

MATHEMATICS

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

Strengths

- Teaching and learning are good, and pupils achieve well.
- There has been good progress on issues raised in the last inspection.
- Pupils' attitudes to mathematics are very good; they enjoy learning.
- The department is well managed and led.

Areas for improvement

- There is not enough planned use of ICT; access to computers makes this difficult to achieve.
- Performance data is not used systematically enough to track the progress of different groups of pupils.

73. Standards on entry to the school in Year 5 are average. As a result of good teaching and their own hard work, pupils make good progress and standards are improving, especially in Years 7 and 8. By the end of Year 8, pupils are reaching above average standards. Achievement over time is good for all pupils. Progress since the last inspection has been good.
74. Results in the Year 6 National Curriculum tests in 2002 were in line with national averages, and were above average when compared to results from similar schools. The test results were lower than those of the previous year. School assessment data shows that standards are likely to be average this year.
75. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 6 are average. During Years 5 and 6 pupils not only improve their skills in all aspects of mathematics, and particularly in number, but also develop good working routines and positive attitudes to learning. The continuing emphasis on getting pupils to talk about their work and explain their methods means they develop a good understanding of mathematical ideas, and provides the foundation for the increase in standards in Years 7 and 8. This good achievement throughout Years 5, 6, 7 and 8 is shown in the above average standards reached by the end of Year 8. Higher attaining pupils in all years reach at least above average standards and an increasing proportion are well above by the end of Years 7 and 8. Lower attainers reach well below average standards at the end of Year 6. They make good progress and many reach below, rather than well below, standards by the end of Year 8. Nearly all pupils' attitudes and behaviour are very good and this contributes to their good achievement.
76. Throughout the school, standards are consistent across all aspects of mathematics. As pupils make good progress through the school, their knowledge and ability to use specific techniques increase. This links to a deepening understanding of topics and how to approach different types of problems. Pupils are able to record their methods of solution in writing, and to describe them orally.
77. The 2002 national tests at the end of Year 6 showed that there was no significant difference in standards reached by boys and girls. This is also true in work seen during the inspection. Pupils with special educational needs, those who may speak English as a second language and gifted and talented pupils make similar progress to others in their classes. This is due to good teaching and to the way pupils are grouped for lessons. This helps teachers to provide suitable tasks and activities for all pupils, whatever their needs. Teachers and learning support assistants also work effectively with individuals, especially when class sizes are small.

78. By the end of Year 6, higher attaining pupils can use ratio and proportion to answer questions involving changes in cost and profit. Average attaining pupils can calculate fractions of amounts. They can find the area and perimeter of compound shapes, although some pupils have difficulty in using the correct units. Lower attaining pupils can multiply two-digit numbers by two-digit numbers; most can recall their multiplication tables with a reasonable degree of accuracy.
79. By the end of Year 8, higher attaining pupils can solve linear equations involving brackets and fractions. They can use formulae to find the area of parallelograms and trapeziums. Average attaining pupils can solve simple linear equations, some having problems with use of negative numbers. Lower attaining pupils can find the mean and range of a set of data. They can add decimals and can multiply decimal numbers by 10, 100 and 10000. A few pupils needed prompting as to the correct position of the decimal point.
80. The quality of teaching and learning is good overall. Thorough preparation, based on effective planning and secure knowledge of mathematics, provides a clear framework for each lesson. The lesson structure is used well to provide variety and interest. In particular the wide range of starting activities teachers use gets pupils to think mathematically and puts them in a receptive mood for learning. Well-established classroom routines, which ensure that pupils know how they are expected to behave and that they are expected to work hard, are a key factor in their good learning. Teachers encourage pupils to participate actively in lessons and pupils respond by contributing to discussions. They are not afraid to answer questions, even if unsure as to whether they have got them right. This positive attitude helps them to tackle problems that initially appear difficult, and extends their understanding more rapidly. Homework is used satisfactorily to help pupils make progress by reinforcing topics covered in class. Regular assessment of written work helps teachers to see how well pupils are doing and to see which topics need further work. However, there is some inconsistency in the quality of marking from different teachers.
81. When teaching is satisfactory but not good, the pace of learning slows in the middle of the lessons. Sometimes this is because the teacher is giving too much attention to some pupils and others become restless. The plenary session at the end of some lessons is sometimes too brief, and does not reinforce learning as well as it could.
82. There is some good use of ICT in mathematics, for example presenting data by different types of graphs. However, difficulty in gaining access to computers means that this is not planned as systemically as it should be.
83. The subject co-ordinator has built an effective team of mathematics teachers, dealing well with considerable staff changes since the last inspection. Teaching is monitored regularly, an improvement since the last inspection. The training opportunities provided by national mathematics initiatives have been used well to improve the variety and effectiveness of teaching methods. Assessment is used to record and track the progress of individual pupils. However, it is not used rigorously and regularly to identify the achievement of different groups of pupils.
84. Since the last inspection, standards and the environment for teaching and learning mathematics have improved. The displays, in the classrooms and the corridors, show that mathematics is exciting.

SCIENCE

Overall, the quality of provision in science is **good**.

Strengths

- Teaching is good, so pupils to learn well.
- Resources are good, enabling pupils to experience a range of experimental work during most lessons.
- A variety of teaching and learning styles based around practical work maintains the interest of pupils.
- Recording of topic test results allows individual tracking of pupils.

Areas for improvement

- Lesson plans are not clearly linked to assessment.
- Individual pupil tracking and target setting is insufficiently rigorous.
- The subject development plan does not link priorities with staff training and a budget plan.
- ICT and independent learning require further development.

85. Pupils' results in national tests at the end of Year 6 in 2002 were higher than those for similar schools and were higher than English and mathematics in the school. Science results have shown an improvement from 1999 and 2001 results. In recent years there has been no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls.
86. The standards of work seen in lessons at the end of Year 6 and 8 are above average. Standards of presentation of written and oral work are good in all years. Pupils make good progress over time, because they are taught science through practical experiments, which captures their interest, including up to the end of Year 8. Pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' exercise books show good progress in knowledge and understanding in a wide range of topics and pupils in all years can draw line graphs and bar charts.
87. Pupils in Year 6 are able to explain the two different life cycles of insects and pupils in Year 5 know the symbols for, and can set up, simple electrical circuits to test conductivity, using a range of materials they are able to identify. Higher attainers in Year 8 can describe cold as a lack of heat and compare this, unprompted, with previous learning of black as "lack of light". In Year 7 pupils can talk about solubility and saturated solutions in relation to temperature. Able Year 7 pupils can devise a mathematical formula to calculate a prediction for the dissolving time for different sized cubes of jelly, linking numeracy skills with scientific investigation. They also know and understand how the properties of materials relate to the particle theory of matter. Pupils aged 11 and above can calculate basic scientific formulae such as those involving density. Pupils in all years understand the basic concept of planning and design of investigations, including fair tests, and are able to record systematic observations. They are encouraged to make predictions, at times drawing on previous scientific knowledge. Pupils make satisfactory progress in acquiring some of the independent thinking and application skills needed to carry out scientific investigations. Exercise books show that too few pupils follow up their investigations, analysing cause and effect from their graphs and tables. Pupils do not get enough practice in devising independent investigations, or in recording and analysing results using ICT; this situation limits greater progress.
88. Lower attaining pupils, including some with special needs, can carry out simple experiments involving measuring and recording results as a table, following instructions carefully, and are given prompts to assist their writing. These pupils and those for whom English is a second language, make good progress. The emphasis

on literacy embodied in lessons allows all pupils to express their ideas clearly and assists with language skills. Achievement by minority ethnic pupils is similar to that of others because they work well with other pupils, are articulate and show similar levels of interest. Pupils with special needs are highlighted on a register and also achieve well because they work co-operatively in groups with more able students.

89. Enhancement opportunities are available for pupils identified as gifted and talented, who have undertaken extra project work designed to challenge them in the learning resources centre. In a minority of lessons these pupils are given extra supplementary work.
90. The attitude and behaviour of pupils are good in all years. Pupils are punctual to lessons and quickly settle to work. They listen attentively when asked, are keen to answer questions, take part in class discussions and work together co-operatively. Pupils handle apparatus and chemicals with care and respect, paying careful attention to safety precautions, such as the wearing of goggles. Pupils take responsibility for tasks during experimental work. Most pupils in all years take a pride in their written work, producing neat handwriting, carefully drawn diagrams and accurately drawn graphs. They enjoy science and find it interesting.
91. Learning is good because teaching is good overall and teachers have high expectations of what pupils know and can do. Lessons have a brisk pace and provide a practical challenge for pupils, who are motivated. Teachers display good subject knowledge and a variety of teaching styles. They are able to give clear explanations of concepts, helping pupils to learn. Good use of questioning is a feature of most lessons and enables pupils to clarify their knowledge and understanding in relation to key scientific ideas. Teachers often help learning where pupils use flash cards to answer questions, giving all students the opportunity to demonstrate learning, enhancing participation and self-confidence. Learning in co-operative groups of pupils assists those with special needs. Where a classroom assistant is present, she is aware of the lesson content; however, the planning for the varying abilities needs to be more explicit. Lesson planning is detailed but does not always relate to the progress of the pupils in that class.
92. Pupils are managed well through friendly working relationships and firm discipline. Pupils are given praise and encouragement through comments in their exercise books and oral praise in lessons. Lesson objectives are clearly stated at the beginning of each lesson so that pupils know exactly what they are to learn. In some lessons the clarity of the objectives indicates experimental results, pre-empting discovery. There is little scope for independent investigation because lessons are mainly teacher directed. The development of thinking skills is fostered in some lessons. The lesson reviews help to consolidate learning.
93. Common end of topic assessment tests are used effectively to establish the standards of pupils. The marking of books is mostly up to date but there are few comments indicating how pupils can reach the next level. Homework is appropriate and marked regularly in most years and is used to reinforce or consolidate work in lessons. Exercise books show that homework is more consistently set in the lower years. Good quality displays of work in the department are informative and support teaching and learning.
94. Management of the department is good. There is a positive ethos amongst the team of specialist staff, who are enthusiastic and committed to raising achievement in test results. All teachers follow a programme of lessons closely linked to the science

National Curriculum. The co-ordinator of science monitors teaching, and there is thorough record keeping of final topic assessments, allowing tracking of individual achievement and target setting. However, there is no consistent policy supporting the day-to-day recording of progress, preparing students and addressing needs, ready for end of topic assessments. This is not built into lesson planning. The co-ordinator of science is also head of Year 8, dividing demands upon time and line management.

95. The two spacious laboratories are well used, mainly by Years 7 and 8. Years 5 and 6 use a converted classroom, which is in need of refurbishment. The designated laboratories and the adequate curriculum time contribute towards the enhancement of standards in science. The department's single laptop computer is well used for administration. There are two dedicated computers, capable of word processing and spreadsheets but there is no data-logging equipment for investigations. Insufficient use is made of computers for recording data.
96. Improvement since the last inspection is satisfactory. The department has taken on the Science Key Stage strategy with enthusiasm. Since the last inspection, priorities to improve teachers' knowledge and understanding of science, by additional training, have taken place, even though this is not evident from the science development plan. The written plan is not sufficiently related to the budget available. It does not link together current initiatives, underpinned by training, so serving the learning needs of the children. Resources and facilities are good and have kept pace with curriculum demand.

ART AND DESIGN

Overall, the quality of provision in art and design is **unsatisfactory**.

Strengths

- Pupils have good attitudes to learning.
- The provision in lessons for pupils with special educational needs and the gifted and talented is good.
- The subject knowledge of the co-ordinator for art and design is good.

Areas for improvement

- Standards are below average by the end of Year 8.
- Assessment data of pupils is not adequately used to inform teaching and learning needs.
- Management is unsatisfactory; monitoring and development of teaching are not sufficiently rigorous.
- The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory; there is insufficient planned use of ICT to support teaching and learning.
- The provision for three-dimensional work for all pupils in all years is limited; it needs to broaden pupils' knowledge of art and design on work of different scales.

97. Standards by the end of Year 8 are below average for pupils' age and ability. This is a drop in standards from the last inspection when they were average. Observational drawing is underdeveloped, as are pupils' skills with paint and other media. Pupils are able to reference the work of other artists but cannot use it to inform their own work. There are too few planned opportunities for three-dimensional work and to use ICT. Pupils do not have sufficient knowledge, understanding and skills of art and design to explore ideas, methods and approaches so that they can evaluate and modify their work and improve their results. They are very dependent on the teachers for information and have not developed sufficiently as independent learners. They enjoy their work and the good relationships they have with teachers and other pupils.

98. Standards at the end of Year 6 are below average. However, for a significant number of pupils the attainment on entry is well below average. In lessons pupils are responsive to ideas but the use of sketchbooks to explore ideas, collecting both visual and other information for their own work, is underdeveloped, as are drawing skills. Overall progress is unsatisfactory for these year groups. Pupils with special educational needs and those for whom English is an additional language make appropriate progress because the teaching methods are matched to their learning needs. Gifted and talented pupils make good progress because of the enhanced provision provided through the work of the learning resource centre planned with the co-ordinator for art and design.
99. The overall quality of teaching is unsatisfactory. It is best in Years 7 and 8 where teaching is satisfactory. Planning is detailed and resources are good quality and used well to support and inform learning. Individual teaching and the use of question and answer sessions are used purposefully but demonstrations, while informative, can be too long. Teachers know the pupils well as individuals but not always how well they are doing as artists. Teaching is unsatisfactory for younger pupils when lessons are taught by non-specialist art teachers. Teachers are not fully aware of what pupils in each year group should be able to do on their own in art and design. These pupils especially are frequently dependent on the teachers when making choices and deciding when to move to the next stage of their work. This affects the slow pace of learning and the teachers' low expectations. Teaching time with these pupils is frequently reduced by other demands of the school curriculum and this further affects the time that could be spent developing the skills and knowledge of art and design. Lessons, in a non-specialist art room, limits access to displays that could be used to further inform their learning. Teaching of older pupils is more secure but pupils do not have high enough levels of knowledge and skills from earlier years to inform the decisions they need to make about their work. Pupils' knowledge of artists, through their studies and visits to local galleries, is satisfactory but it needs to be broader, looking at a wider range of art and design. There is only a small amount of three-dimensional work across all years and the kiln is not wired for use.
100. The co-ordinator for art and design has produced an art scheme that is supported by portfolios of pupils' artwork. These are very helpful to non-specialist teachers especially when assessing pupils' work. However, the overall quality of leadership and management is unsatisfactory. Effective assessment has not been introduced to accurately assess the pupils' standards on entry to the school and there has been insufficient monitoring of the teaching and learning, especially in Years 5 and 6, to make sure the teaching is better matched to the learning needs of all pupils. Limited opportunities for the co-ordinator to evaluate how the curriculum is delivered, especially for younger pupils, and other monitoring procedures were issues at the last inspection and have not been fully addressed. The overall improvement since the last inspection is unsatisfactory.

CITIZENSHIP

Overall, the quality of provision in citizenship is **very good**.

Strengths

- The leadership of the co-ordinator in developing the curriculum is good.
- The school council has been effectively developed.
- The school has a very good ethos for promoting good relationships.

Area for improvement

- To ensure greater integration and monitoring of other subjects' contribution to the citizenship programme.

101. Citizenship is a new subject in the curriculum, being introduced as a statutory subject in Years 7 and 8 in autumn 2002. The school has taken the option of introducing it also in Years 5 and 6 even though the subject is non-statutory at this stage.
102. The formal teaching of citizenship is principally undertaken as discrete modules within the personal, social and health education programme. Every subject is also expected to contribute though and there is very good guidance available for subject co-ordinators, with much resource material being held centrally. The curriculum opportunities for citizenship were, appropriately, subject to an initial curriculum audit. Subsequent curricular planning, to ensure coherence across the school, was undertaken before the introduction of the subject and has resulted in a very positive beginning across all years. In these early stages of the cross-curricular delivery of citizenship, geography, history and religious education have established the strongest links.
103. The scrutiny of pupils' written work across all years in the school shows that the teaching of issues such as human rights, conflict, the need for rules, and living in a community is thorough and meaningfully planned for the respective year groups. Pupils show a thoughtful response and work is well presented. Further work is planned to ensure that the whole curriculum is responsive to the needs of citizenship.
104. Less formally, the impact of citizenship upon the ethos of the school has been the most powerful advocate for this new area of the curriculum. The recent establishment of a school council has been very successful. The process of electing two representatives from each class has in itself been a constructive experience for pupils, in helping to understand democratic procedures. The candidates have to present a manifesto, which is both relevant and feasible, and the voting takes place by secret ballot. Through the procedure of elections there is equal access to the council; it is not exclusive. Although the procedures of the school council are undertaken by the councillors, it is a forum to discuss and voice pupil concerns. All pupils can raise issues that they want taking to the council and in this respect the council is proving to be very effective; it is proud of what has been achieved within the short time since its inception. Recent action by the council, in response to such issues, has resulted in the installation of seating benches alongside the recreational hard area, the installation of water bottle facilities at various points in the school and the decoration, with a mural, of the school canteen. The council has also been active in making the decisions about charities to support, from the many suggestions made by the pupils. Within the last couple of years considerable contributions have been made to charities such as the Christmas Shoe box appeal, Children in Need and the Yellow Brick Road.
105. The school has encouraged pupils to become involved in many issues concerning conservation and recycling by forming an ECO committee and is effectively working towards bronze ECO status by improving the school site. Through this initiative, pupils have had very good experience of learning to negotiate with outside agencies, such as supermarkets, about supplying compost for a new garden area, or on matters concerning joint litter problems.
106. In looking for opportunities for pupils to develop skills of participation and to take responsible action the school has developed a 'peacekeepers' initiative. The children

who volunteered had to show commitment to an extensive period of training before commencing their duties. The vast majority, of the younger children, have accepted the 'peacekeepers' and see them as a part of the daily life of the school. They respond well if given advice or are corrected by them. The 'peacekeepers' themselves have learnt when to refer on more difficult matters, such as when children fail to respond towards them in an acceptable manner.

107. Leadership is thorough and imaginative and has laid a firm foundation for the implementation of this new area of the curriculum. It is a measure of the very good quality of the leadership that the co-ordinator for citizenship has been seconded, for one day a week, to North Tyneside local education authority to help train other teachers deliver the subject in the early non-statutory years and materials are being tested within the school.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

Overall, the quality of provision in design and technology is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teachers have good subject knowledge and lessons are well planned, enabling pupils to acquire sound basic skills and knowledge.
- A good range of materials and projects is offered to pupils.
- A high level of commitment by staff has led to greatly improved workshop and ICT provision.
- Good classroom management leads to pupils' good behaviour and positive attitudes.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils are not given sufficient opportunities to explore their own ideas and be independent in their learning,
- Assessment is not yet used sufficiently to set individual targets for improvement.
- Class sizes are very large across all years, which impedes the pace and rigour of learning, even when lessons are well organised and managed.

108. Standards of work seen are in line with those expected at the end of Year 6 and this is reflected in teacher assessments. This means that pupils' achievement in relation to their standard when they enter the school is satisfactory. Pupils enjoy design and technology, show interest and enthusiasm, and take pride in their work. Over time through working in a range of projects they make satisfactory gains in their knowledge and understanding of the materials, and they are able to use hand tools and equipment with competence. In Years 5 and 6 the use of structured tasks supports this progress and the development of pupils' understanding of the design process. In Year 6 pupils learn how to use computer-aided design to draw two-dimensional objects in colour
109. In Years 7 and 8 pupils are currently working in line with expected standards and this represents satisfactory achievement over time. Pupils' understanding of design is beginning to improve. In Year 7 pupils gain understanding of the basic skills of graphics and the use of lettering styles, and in Year 8 pupils analyse cam movements and use this knowledge in their sketching of design ideas and annotating key details for a mechanical toy. Higher attaining pupils complete tasks well, but low attainers do not always pay enough attention to detail and finish. In most areas pupils have a satisfactory understanding of the materials and they use a range of hand tools and equipment competently, but their research skills are below average. Pupils are developing skills in end of project evaluation but they do not assess their work against

specific criteria and do not understand what a design specification is. Pupils with special educational needs achieve well because teachers give high levels of support and channel their strengths into successful outcomes.

110. The quality of teaching and learning overall is satisfactory, with some good features. Teachers manage pupils well, often in cramped conditions, and their high expectation of behaviour creates a positive attitude in pupils. Pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Teachers have good subject knowledge, give clear explanations, demonstrate techniques and use resources well. As they introduce new knowledge and skills, teachers reinforce existing learning through a series of well-planned activities. In many lessons teachers give considerable direction as they guide pupils through structured tasks. This ensures development of basic knowledge and skills but it inhibits pupils' development as independent learners. Teachers do not make enough use of tasks where pupils can decide what to make for themselves, or look at existing products and investigative work to help them develop their 'design and make' products. Where teaching is less effective the pace and demand of pupils in their learning lack challenge; in consequence small numbers of pupils in some lessons are uninterested and learning is slow. The curriculum offered provides sound opportunities for pupils to progress well. The use of ICT to build on pupils' understanding of the design process is improving and units of work in which computer-assisted design and computer-assisted manufacture (CAD/CAM) are fundamental to the design activity are being developed. Literacy strategies are built on as pupils are positively encouraged to use appropriate technological vocabulary. There is, however, need for further recognition of the particular contribution design and technology can make to pupils' spiritual and cultural development.
111. Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed but the methods used are not consistent across the department and lack clear criteria. Marking is not as helpful to pupils as it might be, often lacking in constructive comments and targets for improvement. Teachers do not make enough use of assessment during and at the end of lessons to check pupils' learning and understanding and to help to plan future lessons.
112. The leadership and management of the department are satisfactory; overall improvements since the last inspection have been satisfactory. The subject co-ordinator has been in post for two years and during this time there have been significant changes with the refurbishment of the design and technology workshop and improved provision for ICT. Planning is good and documentation gives clear guidance to staff. New assessment systems for monitoring teaching and learning and for tracking the progress of pupils in design and technology have been introduced, but are in their early stages and are not as yet being used to set targets for improvement for the subject and pupils. The technician support for the subject is good, but it is limited in what can be done by the time allocation. The condition of the accommodation and level of resourcing in the textile area are unsatisfactory, and do not provide for or reflect the modern technological approach of the subject.

GEOGRAPHY

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

Strengths

- The good subject expertise promotes effective learning.
- Pupils' geography skills and knowledge are well established.
- Assessment procedures in Years 7 and 8 are raising standards.

Areas for improvement

- Pupils need more situations to apply knowledge rather than simply record it.
- There are insufficient opportunities for extended talk about topics in lessons.

113. Standards of work seen at the end of Year 6 are average. This represents good achievement, given the low level of pupils' geography skills on entry to the school. By the end of Year 6 pupils are at ease interpreting and labelling maps, calculating distances and using compasses and four-figure grid references. Numeracy skills further develop through interpreting population, rainfall and other data from graphs or tables. During preparation for a field study on Holy Island, higher attaining pupils were using six-figure grid references, working independently with Ordnance Survey maps. Established note-making habits, teachers' quick-fire lesson starters and devices for recording information ensure a strong, accurate knowledge base. Understanding is enriched because teachers consistently provide opportunities for making comparisons, for example between Whitley Bay and St Lucia. The small allocation of time limits opportunities for the use of ICT, and for a wider range of imaginative writing and talk, where pupils could apply the language and theories of geography. Lower attaining pupils need more step-by-step preparation for writing.
114. Standards at the end of Year 8 are above average, reflecting the greater amount of time given to the subject; pupils' achievement is good. Pupils' extended writing is much more detailed, showing confident understanding of geographical terms and ideas like 'Gross National Product' and life expectancy. They structure their writing and include an introduction and conclusions. In newspaper front pages, brochures and letters, pupils interpret what they know for different audiences and consider different viewpoints, particularly making the most of local field visits. Higher attaining pupils impressively pull together conflicting evidence and avoid over-generalising. For example, one pupil writing about life in Brazil expressed concern that "two families can live so close and yet be so different". They do not have enough opportunities for talking at length to explore the fundamental rights and wrongs of inhumane economic developments. Pupils organise well those group tasks which challenge them to explore one aspect of a study and present it to the rest of the class. At this stage, they extrapolate information from a wider range of sources including ICT. Extending this idea, the highest attaining pupils are currently involved in an innovative challenge using the latest ICT software. Pupils with special educational needs and those whose first language is not English make good progress especially when working in groups or pairs.
115. The gap between boys and girls' attainment is narrower than seen nationally. Teachers have devised a range of competitive or short-episode lesson starters designed to capture the interest of boys. Thorough marking, target setting based on prior attainment data and regular assessments, using National Curriculum Levels, help identify underachievers.
116. A new assessment system is in place for pupils at the end of Year 6 to provide a more accurate benchmark for measuring progress and a geography database will collate all assessment statistics so that analysis can more effectively influence decisions about teaching.
117. Good leadership and good improvement since the previous inspection ensure consistency in teaching. Pupils' learning benefits from a team of confident and experienced geographers. The focus on change is beginning to pay off and teaching is overall good, and better in Years 7 and 8 where group and pair activities challenge

pupils' thinking and develop independence. All teachers share lesson objectives with pupils, give them deadlines for each task, and start and end with various ways of testing learning. These common strategies keep pupils moving and they know what they have achieved, so learning is good. Teachers are clear that learning about citizenship, understanding the feelings of disaster victims or those in economically exploited regions, or respecting the culture of Inuit people, for example, has an important place in geography and they plan writing tasks to enable pupils to stand in others' shoes. More oral activities are needed to encourage speculation and reasoning, obliging pupils to apply data and geographical information in order to deepen understanding. Sharing of ideas amongst teachers about active learning needs to happen more often to increase pupils' responsibility for learning.

HISTORY

Overall, the quality of provision in history is **satisfactory**.

Strengths

- Teaching is frequently good and some lessons are of high quality.
- Teachers' subject knowledge enables them to interest and engage their pupils effectively.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient emphasis on developing specific skills in history, particularly pupils' research skills.
- Procedures for monitoring, evaluating and developing teaching are not yet established.
- Teachers' marking provides insufficient indication about how pupils can improve their work.
- Too little use is made of ICT to support teaching and learning in history.

118. By the end of Year 6 overall standards in history are broadly in line with those expected nationally of pupils at the age of 11. When they leave the school at the end of Year 8, most pupils are on course to attain nationally expected standards by the time they reach the end of Year 9. Taking into account their previous attainment, pupils of all levels of capability, including those with special educational needs, with English as an additional language or who are gifted or talented, achieve well throughout Years 7 and 8.
119. In Years 5 and 6, pupils develop a good knowledge and understanding of the topics they study. Most develop their understanding of chronology satisfactorily, able to place events within their topics of study accurately, because they have studied appropriate timelines. In their work on the Ancient Egyptians, for example, a timeline detailing events, conquests and rulers underpinned their understanding of the period, while further work on sequencing events reinforced their understanding. Pupils are able to gain information from a range of sources, such as their observations of pictures or photographs, and this does support their deepening knowledge. However, they generally have too few opportunities to develop historical skills such as enquiry and interpretation through guided independent work, because they have access to only a limited range of other sources. At times there is a lack of challenge in some of the activities, which limits the progress pupils make. In their most recent work on exploration Year 6 pupils are beginning to understand the links between the reasons for or causes of events and the impact of these on people's lives. Overall, the planned programme of work in history ensures that pupils' achievement is satisfactory by the end of Year 6.

120. Pupils build effectively on this sound start in Years 7 and 8. They have more opportunities to work with a wider range of sources and consequently develop their historical skills more effectively, so by the time they leave the school their achievement in history is good. Again at this stage the use of timelines reinforces pupils' understanding of chronology. There is better use of some historical sources, such as the portraits of the French royal family in their work on the French Revolution for example, to help pupils develop the ability to reason, speculate and make deductions from what they observe. Higher attaining pupils learn to draw conclusions about the value of information derived from a particular source by considering its reliability or bias. Throughout this stage there is an emphasis on the identification and acquisition of key words related to the various topics studied, such as 'social', 'economic' or 'political'. Opportunities to write from the point of view of people in the past reinforces pupils' learning effectively and imaginatively, as it did in their writing a letter demonstrating their understanding of the life of a puritan, for example. In their most recent work on industrialisation, pupils are developing an understanding of cause and effect, demonstrating that they can evaluate available evidence derived from a range of sources to make good, reasoned arguments about the reasons for and consequences of particular actions. Teachers' assessment of pupils' attainment is more effective at this stage and this ensures that pupils are aware of their own levels of attainment and of targets for improvement. However, at times, there remains at this stage a lack of challenge in some of the activities provided, especially for higher attaining pupils.
121. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress because teachers address their needs effectively in lessons. Where additional classroom support is available, pupils receive valuable extra help in developing their literacy skills. Pupils with English as an additional language also make satisfactory progress.
122. The overall quality of teaching is good throughout the school; some lessons are of high quality. Although not all history specialists, the committed team ensures planning is well co-ordinated so all pupils have access to a coherent and progressive programme of work in history. Clear learning objectives are identified at the start of lessons. Where teaching is best, these objectives are carefully explained, with indications of how they fit with what pupils have worked on previously and then reinforced continually as the lesson progresses. This contributes positively to good learning. For example, in one very good lesson with Year 8, continuing work on industrial development in the north east, the teacher very effectively explained the objectives for the lesson. She kept the objectives firmly in her pupils' minds as they worked, returning to them periodically and at the end of the lesson as they reviewed what they had learned. Teachers generally manage their lessons with good pace, involving pupils in a variety of learning activities, including discussion, group and individual work. Successful teaching of older pupils in particular provides opportunities for problem solving, drawing on available sources and their existing knowledge and understanding, which involves them in addressing some key historical questions and making deductions from the evidence available. This variety in approach ensures learning is often good, because it builds on and holds pupils' interest. This promotes their learning effectively. Where teachers involve pupils in discussions, their good subject knowledge enables them to pose questions effectively, both to challenge pupils' thinking and to evaluate their learning.
123. Teaching is less successful at times, for example when pupils are provided with insufficiently challenging learning activities. When this occurs pupils lose interest or become easily distracted. Generally, with younger pupils in particular, there is an over-emphasis on knowledge related to the various topics they study and insufficient

thought and planning given to developing their historical skills. Teachers' marking is inconsistent and does not always follow the school's agreed marking policy. While they are positive about pupils' efforts, teachers provide too little indication in their marking about how pupils could improve, develop or extend their work. Although there are some imaginative activities planned, or recently completed, teachers generally provide too few opportunities for pupils to work with the computers in history.

124. Where teaching is effective, teachers engage pupils' interest and enthusiasm for the subject. Pupils of all capabilities engage in discussions readily and most are confident to contribute their own ideas. Most are able to concentrate appropriately in lessons and consequently progress is generally satisfactory and good in the best lessons in Years 7 and 8.
125. Leadership and management of the subject are satisfactory and improving, but there remain significant further developments required to achieve good quality provision. The school has overcome the recent difficulties caused by lengthy staff absences, with a senior member of staff providing effective temporary leadership. This has ensured that teamwork has remained strong. Improvement since the previous inspection has been satisfactory. There is a valuable history handbook, including aspects identified for further development. Programmes of study have been usefully revised and a sequence of assessments devised and introduced, already effective in Year 8. Overall, however, this is not yet sufficiently well established. As yet there is insufficient analysis of data and insufficiently detailed record keeping either to inform teachers' further planning or to enable them to track pupils' progress effectively. Although the induction arrangements for teachers new to the school are good, particularly beneficial given the number of temporary teachers working in the department, the monitoring, evaluation and development of teaching are unsatisfactory.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

Overall, the quality of provision of information and communication technology is **good**.

Strengths

- The quality of teaching is good.
- Pupils attain standards that are above those expected for their age.
- Relationships between teachers and pupils are good.
- The subject is well led and managed.

Areas for improvement

- There is insufficient use of National Curriculum levels in teaching to help pupils set targets.
- The lack of additional ICT accommodation limits opportunities for the use of ICT in other subjects.

126. The standards of work seen are above average and in some instances they are well above average. Pupils in Year 5 use basic word-processing skills in making good use of a range of different fonts and colours. They have a very good understanding of the use of spreadsheets, and their work is well above that expected for their age. They can use different formulae to total rows and columns, and make use of the 'autosum' function. In Year 6 pupils use desktop publishing software to produce *The Marden Times*, where they are able to use different fonts and insert images and *clip art*. They are learning how to develop a slide show, and understand what is meant by a master slide. Pupils in Year 7 produce slide shows, making good use of the software to create interesting slides with flying text and sound effects. In the control unit of work, pupils understand the conventional signs for flow charts and create short sequences to control a simulated lighthouse. In Year 8 pupils have created slide shows on specific topics of personal interest. They use more complex formulae in spreadsheets and are beginning to understand the modelling capabilities of spreadsheets. They use word-processing techniques to produce more formal business-type letters. In developing websites pupils understand how to create hyperlinks, and are aware of the importance of creating a website for a specific audience.
127. Teaching is good. Teachers make very effective use of their very good subject knowledge to give clear explanations, which helps pupils learn. There are good relationships between teachers and pupils, and the positive attitudes displayed by pupils contribute to their learning. Lessons are well planned, with a range of tasks set which are appropriate to pupils' capabilities. Good use is made of data projectors to show pupils how to use software. There are high expectations of pupils to complete tasks set, but sometimes preliminary planning on paper would lead to pupils making better progress in developing their websites. Pupils' work is well assessed at the end of each unit, with written comments and National Curriculum levels, which helps pupils understand how well they are doing in relation to national levels. However, little use is made of National Curriculum levels in teaching, to help pupils set personal targets. Teachers know their pupils well, and are able to set work, or provide additional help for pupils with special educational needs.
128. In all lessons pupils make progress; often it is good, as they learn new skills and reinforce existing ones. Building on a foundation of word-processing skills in Year 5, pupils make progressive use of these to make use of desktop publishing software, create slide shows and develop websites. Pupils achieve well in the subject as they reach above average levels at the end of Year 6 and in Year 8.

129. The subject is well led and managed. There is a clear vision for the development of the subject. Schemes of work are well constructed and progressive to enable pupils to build on learned skills and prepare them for the next stage of their education at a high school. Good use is made of technology to store pupil records, which is used to analyse how well they are working in the subject.
130. There has been good progress since the last inspection, with discrete ICT lessons established for all year groups. New computers have been installed, a new computer room has been created and the subject is now supported by a technician. These developments have led to a dramatic rise in standards, which were below national expectations at the last inspection, and are now above.
131. There has been some improvement in the use of ICT in other subjects, as the majority of teachers have completed the NOF training for ICT. The learning resource centre, with ten computers and an interactive white board, is used well by some subjects, particularly modern foreign languages. A few computers have been installed in the art and technology departments, and other subjects have planned use of ICT in their schemes of work. However, even though pupils are developing a wide range of computer skills, they are not able to apply them sufficiently in other subjects because of the restricted access to computers elsewhere in the school. There is also insufficient monitoring of how subjects make use of ICT, although the planned Intranet, and new computer room will be a welcome additional resource to further increase access to computer technology.

MODERN FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Overall, the quality of provision in modern foreign languages is **very good**.

Strengths

- Standards are well above average by the end of Year 8.
- Leadership and management are very good.
- The very good extra-curricular provision benefits gifted and talented pupils in particular.
- Teaching makes a very effective contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

Area for improvement

- There is a need to share and consolidate good practice more effectively.

132. Standards in French at the end of Year 6 are above average. Most pupils are able to write and speak at length, with good accuracy, giving details about themselves and others. Overall pupils' achievement by the end of Year 6 is very good. All pupils develop good speaking skills. They learn the rules of pronunciation well and, as a result, learn to speak with good accents. Because they have many opportunities to speak they develop very good oral confidence. Many pupils are able to speak at length about their personal experiences. In one class in Year 5, for example, all pupils, including those with special educational needs, were able to take part in long question and answer sessions giving details about themselves, their families and their friends. Most pupils develop good writing skills. They learn to write accurately. Many pupils are starting to use a variety of structure and vocabulary and to apply grammar rules so that they begin to write independently. Many low attaining students achieve a level of accuracy that is above expectation.
133. By the end of Year 8 standards in French are well above average. High attaining and many average pupils can use the perfect and simple future tenses with confidence.

They use tenses accurately in extended writing and speech. The standard achieved by many gifted and talented pupils, in oral work, is particularly high. They take part in plays and extended role-play using complex language and structures. Low attaining pupils demonstrate a good understanding of tenses and often use them accurately. Standards in German are in line with national expectations. Pupils' achievement in Years 7 and 8 is very good. They build on the firm basis achieved in earlier years and further develop their oral and writing skills. They are encouraged to memorise vocabulary and structures and are able to reproduce language in speech and writing without written support so all pupils are acquiring the skills of coping with unexpected situations. High attainers and many average pupils are learning to apply grammar rules in new situations so that they are developing the confidence and the ability to write and speak independently. Many pupils extend their knowledge of vocabulary and structure because they are encouraged to write creatively. Pupils in Year 7, for example, were able to go beyond routine vocabulary and structure while learning about personal description because they were encouraged to invent, and write about, creatures of their own invention. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in most lessons because teachers know them well and are able to support them effectively. Pupils with English as an additional language are also well supported in most lessons and make good progress overall. Many of these pupils are talented linguists and make very good progress with the encouragement of their teachers. Pupils who study German as a second foreign language make good progress.

134. All pupils behave well in lessons and the majority have a positive attitude to their work. They join in oral work with enthusiasm and work conscientiously on individual tasks.
135. Learning and teaching are very good overall. Pupils improve their knowledge of vocabulary and structure because lessons are well planned. Introductory activities always revise previous learning while the main activity in the lesson frequently builds on previous learning in a structured way. In most lessons pupils are clear about what they have achieved in lessons because lesson objectives are clear and shared with pupils and there is a thorough review of learning at the end. Pupils develop very good listening skills because all teachers have a very good command of French and German and, in most lessons, use the target language extensively. Pupils concentrate well and are mostly keen to learn because, in most lessons, teachers are successful in creating a good working atmosphere. As a result pupils are happy to make contributions knowing that their efforts will be valued. Low attaining pupils learn well in these lessons because teachers know them well and are able to support them effectively. Pupils' concentration is particularly good in those lessons where there is a good variety of activity and where teachers have high expectations and conduct the lesson at a brisk pace. Pupils' mastery of vocabulary and structure is limited occasionally in some lessons when the presentation of new material is done in a routine manner that does not engage pupils' attention and interest.
136. Teachers assess pupils' progress regularly and thoroughly and keep careful records of progress. Pupils are involved in the assessment process. Most pupils know the National Curriculum level at which they are working and are frequently required to review their own progress and draw up strategies for improvement. However, their understanding of National Curriculum levels is limited and few pupils knew what they had to do to move from one level to the next. All teachers undertake the marking of pupils' work conscientiously. They use supportive comments and often explain to pupils how to improve the quality of their work. Teachers regularly use assessment information to plan their work. There is very good practice in assessment but it is not consistently applied by all teachers. The department makes good use of ICT,

particularly to support gifted and talented pupils. It makes a very good contribution to extra-curricular activities and to the development of pupils' literacy skills.

137. Leadership and management of the department are very good. There is a very clear sense of direction. Action planning is clearly focused on raising standards. The subject co-ordinator works hard to involve part-time staff in the work of the department through joint planning sessions and has been successful in creating a cohesive team. The monitoring and valuation of the work of the department, including teaching, are very thorough. Teaching and learning are under constant review with the aim of improving standards. However, new ideas are not yet incorporated into schemes of work so that good practice is not consolidated. There is very good liaison with local high schools. The time allocation for French is well above average and is a major factor in achieving high standards. The offer of German is a rare bonus in a middle school. The department has maintained the high standards achieved at the last inspection and has, therefore, made good progress.

MUSIC

Overall, the quality of provision in music is **good**.

Strengths

- Through their excellent behaviour the pupils show a commitment to learning.
- Pupils have very good opportunities to develop ICT applications in music.
- There are many opportunities for performance and standards are very good.

Areas for improvement

- There is too much reliance upon worksheets which do not engage pupils directly in music and which are not challenging.
- There are insufficient planned opportunities for whole-class performance within the curriculum.

138. Standards at the end Year 6 are above average and pupils achieve well. Pupils consistently show good knowledge about music and are quick and accurate in answering questions from the teacher. In Year 5 pupils are able to play melodies on a keyboard and show that they are familiar with, and can use, standard musical notation. They have a good sense of musical pulse and, in an enjoyable Scottish dance activity, showed very good co-ordination and sense of phrasing. Pupils in Year 6 are able to work very well together in small groups making their own group composition. In a project about the sea they showed sensitivity in selecting appropriate instruments and sounds to correspond to the pictures being used to initiate ideas.
139. Again, pupils in Year 7 have good knowledge of facts within their areas of study. In starter activities they were very quick to respond to questions about acoustic and electric instruments and were very much at home with the technical aspects of their keyboards. They play sensibly, use required fingering and have a well-developed sense of phrasing. Many pupils are still in the early stages of putting two hands together in performance and, so far, few can actually make a steady two-handed performance. Pupils in Year 8 are very competent in their use of ICT and can competently use their skills for the printing out of keyboard music and for research work around their chosen topic for their presentations.
140. In Year 8 pupils are able to work well on independent assignments. They organise themselves well and show considerable enthusiasm in the work that they are doing,

which involves much use of ICT. In other years the pupils are equally enthusiastic and again show strong motivation to work individually at their keyboard coursework. Pupils in Year 5, working in groups of three, without a teacher present, showed a quite unusual degree of maturity in being able to co-operate in composing their 'sea picture'. They, particularly, were most enthusiastic about their music making and were happy to share it with others. Pupils with special educational needs learn as well as the other pupils. Often, in keyboard activities or in group compositions, these pupils do not require any special help and achieve well. In other cases pupils respond well to the specially adapted materials with which they are provided. In all the lessons observed, the behaviour and attitudes of all the pupils were excellent, showing a commitment to learning.

141. The pupils' good progress and enthusiasm are a response to the good teaching. The teacher's subject knowledge is very good and his own enthusiasm, style and keyboard command are strong factors in the success of the lessons. Lessons are characterised by good planning and they get off to a very brisk start. The teacher uses good question and answer sessions to guide pupils' recall of recent work and to probe and extend the pupils' thinking. The response of the pupils is notable for the rapidity with which the many hands go up! The teacher's expectations are high and the good standard of the pupils' knowledge and understanding shows that these expectations are well justified. Usually the lessons divide into two activities at the same time. Sometimes, whilst one half of the class is engaged upon the keyboards, for the other half there is excessive reliance upon worksheets and writing activities that do not engage the pupils in work that is musically challenging. This kind of organisation also fragments the impact of the teaching. The keyboard course itself is short of 'real' music and pupils need to have more access to music that they know and that they can share with others.
142. Leadership and management of the department are good. There are good systems for assessing pupils' progress and use is made of both video and aural taping to record their achievement. Although the identification of musically gifted and talented pupils is very efficient, insufficient use is made of the assessment in planning pupils' future progress. Accommodation is very good with the spacious and attractive environment, and very good resources, providing a strong incentive for purposeful learning. The leadership has a clear vision of the quality that can be achieved, not only in the classroom, but particularly in performance. The response of the pupils shows that there is good understanding, on their part also, of the real quality that can be achieved. The performance of the choirs is outstanding, particularly in their ability to sing with great confidence in up to three or four parts. The success of the Jazz choir in reaching the final of the National Festival of Music for Youth, yet again, is a testimony to the commitment of both teacher and pupils – as well as to the enthusiastic support of parents. Instrumental music is well supported by visiting teachers who tolerate somewhat unhelpful accommodation yet who manage to produce some excellent young players who support a most musical wind band.
143. Improvements since the previous report have been good. Standards at the end of Year 8 are now above average and pupils have very good access to ICT. Pupils show good knowledge about music and they are all involved in a structured keyboard course that gives them a good foundation in understanding and using notation and technical skills.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Leadership and management of the subject are very good.
- The quality of teaching is very good.
- The relationships between teachers and pupils are very good.
- There is an excellent, extensive range of extra-curricular activities.

Area for improvement

- There are insufficient assessment procedures for all activity areas.

144. Standards of work seen in all year groups are well above average and pupils achieve very well. In Year 5, in athletics, pupils understand the essential elements of good throwing technique, such as the grip on the ball, the speed of the arm action and the flight of the ball. In Year 6 there were very good standards in throwing as well as a developing confidence in triple jumping. Pupils in Year 7 know how to grip the javelin correctly and are fully aware of the importance of safety in this event. In shot putting they hold the shot correctly and can use a simple sideways throwing technique. In Year 8 pupils are beginning to understand how good technique in athletics events such as triple jump and hurdling leads to improved performances. There are very high standards of performance in a wide range of school teams. There are particular strengths in boys' football and rugby, and during the inspection week the Year 8 girls team continued to achieve well by heading the North Tyneside girls football league. Over 50 per cent of the pupils have represented their school in teams over the last year, showing strength in depth.
145. In all lessons, pupils of all ability levels, including those with special educational needs, make good progress, as they learn new skills and improve and refine existing ones. In Year 5 there was very good learning in sprint start and technique, and in all lessons pupils develop good evaluation skills of their own and others' performances, which helps them improve their standards. One pupil who did not speak English well made particularly good progress in athletics through the teacher's understanding of his difficulties, and the help he received from other pupils in his class.
146. Teaching is very good. Teachers have very good subject knowledge, which helps them to give clear explanations and demonstrations to pupils, helping them learn new skills and increase their knowledge and understanding. In all lessons teachers make very good use of question and answer sessions, which gives pupils the opportunity to evaluate their own and others' performances, helping them learn. Pupils are given considerable control of their own learning at the start of lessons by taking charge of their own warm-up, which is well supported by teachers. In a Year 7 lesson there are high expectations of pupils to work at their own level, and score and time their performances in athletic events. They do this well showing very good co-operation with one another. Lessons are very well planned and prepared with a range of tasks providing sufficient challenge to pupils. Classes are always very well managed and pupils behave well. The very good relationships between teachers and pupils and between pupils themselves are major factors in successful lessons. Pupils are enthusiastic about the subject and have very positive attitudes. There are very good participation rates, and pupils are active and responsive in all lessons, which contributes to their very good progress.

147. The subject is very well led and managed. There is a commitment by the teachers to provide pupils of all attainment levels with very good experiences in physical education. The provision in extra-curricular activities is excellent. School teams and clubs provide many opportunities for gifted and talented pupils to make full use of their higher level skills. The introduction of inter-house competitions provides considerable opportunities for all pupils to compete in a range of different sports.
148. Since the last inspection there has been very good improvement. Standards have improved, as has the quality of teaching and learning, which are very good. The curriculum now fully meets National Curriculum requirements. The excellent sports hall and all-weather playing area give pupils the opportunity of using first class sports facilities. This is matched by the quality of the education they receive, and physical education continues to be an outstanding strength of the school.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

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

Strengths

- Pupils make good progress throughout the school and by the time they leave at the end of Year 8, standards are above average.
- Teaching is good; at times it is excellent and contributes to the good progress pupils make.
- Pupils respond very well indeed in lessons; their very good attitudes to the subject contribute positively to the good progress they make.

Areas for improvement

- Assessment information is not used sufficiently well to track pupils' progress.
- There are insufficient opportunities to use ICT to support teaching and learning.

149. The school satisfies the legal requirement to provide religious education for all its pupils. Overall standards are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus at the age of 11, but they are above average at the age of 13. This represents good achievement for pupils of all levels of attainment given their broadly average standards on entry to the school. Pupils with special educational needs and those with English as an additional language also make good progress. In Years 5 and 6 this is similar to that found at the time of the previous inspection, while it is better than that reported about Years 7 and 8. However, there are insufficient detailed records of pupils' attainment over the past three years to support a judgement about trends in performance.
150. By Year 6, pupils show a good knowledge of the topics they have studied in religious education. Their knowledge about other religions is good. Many can recall aspects of their study of Islam, such as Hajj, and they understand the importance of such a pilgrimage. They can explain the significance of the bible in their study of Christianity. While they can recall stories they have heard from other religions, such as the Hindu 'The six blind men and the elephant', their learning from other religions is generally less well developed.
151. By Year 8, pupils have built substantially on their knowledge and understanding of the different religions they have studied. They work on a range of themes, such as prejudice, racism and stereotyping, in which they draw on their understanding of aspects of other religions. Pupils are able to discuss some difficult questions related to these themes, showing empathy and consideration in their reflection on adoption

for example. They are introduced to appropriate sources for their studies, using biblical and other historical sources in their 'Jesus Project'. At this stage pupils have completed some good work on Britain as a multi-faith society.

152. The quality of teaching is good overall, but frequently it is very good or excellent. Teachers are highly committed, very hard working and skilful. They have good subject knowledge and this enables them to present information in lessons in a most interesting and engaging way, which ensures that pupils are always fully involved in lessons. Teachers clearly communicate their high expectations to which their pupils respond very well. They have excellent relationships with pupils and this contributes very positively to the consistently very good classroom management. Teachers are able to use a good range of strategies to enable them to manage learning very effectively; these sustain pupils' interest and enthusiasm very successfully and are highly motivating. At its best, teaching in religious education displays many strengths. In an excellent lesson with Year 5 pupils, for example, pupils were very effectively drawn into the lesson as soon as they arrived at the classroom door, with Gregorian chant playing linked to their previous lesson. Pupils were challenged to explain this link as they settled in their places. The teacher very clearly and carefully explained the learning objectives for the lesson, leaving them displayed throughout the lesson. There was a clear indication of how the lesson was building on what pupils had done earlier. The pace of the lesson was very good and the management of pupils excellent. Challenging questions kept pupils thinking about what they were doing and the constant use of appropriate vocabulary contributed to their very good learning. Throughout the lesson the teacher's delightful manner and relationship with her pupils, and her skill, knowledge and enthusiasm, all ensured that their response to the lesson was excellent and that they were fully engaged and involved throughout. Such skilful and highly effective teaching has a positive impact on pupils' learning and the progress they make and could usefully serve as a model for the school as it seeks to develop further the quality of teaching in all subjects.
153. There is a clear commitment to learning among all the staff teaching religious education. Teachers consistently provide appropriately challenging tasks for pupils; their lessons are thoughtful, interesting and demanding and enable pupils to make good progress. Such effective teaching is characterised by planning which is thorough and imaginative. Teachers use a variety of teaching techniques and approaches to enhance pupils' understanding; questioning skills are used most effectively to extend thinking, and opportunities are taken for pupils to review and reconsider their work and draw conclusions from it. Teachers demonstrate good subject knowledge themselves, they communicate their enthusiasm directly to their pupils and their monitoring of pupils' learning during lessons contributes to the effectiveness of their teaching. The marking of pupils' work is inconsistent although there are examples of very good practice in the department. At its best, teachers carefully explain their written comments on pupils' work and invite them to add their comments in response or to follow up or extend it. At other times, pupils are given too little indication of how they could improve what they have done.
154. Most pupils enjoy their lessons in religious education and have a positive attitude towards their learning, which contributes significantly to the good progress they make. They settle down quickly as soon as they enter the classrooms for lessons, listen carefully and attentively to their teachers' explanations and try hard to complete the tasks they are set. The atmosphere in lessons is usually calm and purposeful, and most pupils remain fully focused on what they are doing. Pupils of all ages co-operate well when required to work in pairs or small groups and apply themselves equally well to individual exercises. They face new learning experiences positively and

enthusiastically. In some lessons pupils show real enjoyment in what they learn. In one good lesson on Sikhism, for example, pupils were absorbed in a mind-mapping activity related to their work on the Gurdwara. The teacher used this very skilfully to reinforce their understanding of some key vocabulary.

155. A member of the senior management team currently acts as co-ordinator for religious education. Although this is a temporary arrangement, it has nevertheless been very successful in enabling the department to continue to develop. There has been good improvement since the previous inspection; there is a firm commitment to further improvement, the capacity for which is very good. There is strong teamwork. Planning is very good and ensures that there is a consistent approach across classes of all ages. The display of key questions related to each topic studied during the term and supporting vocabulary reinforces pupils' learning very effectively. There has been substantial valuable work to develop assessment procedures, which are now in place; the identification of assessment tasks for each age group is good. There now needs to be more systematic record keeping to ensure that the resulting assessment information can be used to track pupils' progress, along with the existing periodic scrutiny of their coursework. The monitoring of teaching is underdeveloped, with opportunities missed to use the high quality of some teaching in the department as a model for the further development of other teachers' skills. There is a clear statement of how religious education contributes to whole-school aims in the valuable subject handbook. The subject makes a strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral social and cultural development.