

# INSPECTION REPORT

Our Lady and St. Joseph VA RC Primary School, Brooms  
Leadgate

LEA area: Durham

Unique Reference Number: 114253

Headteacher: Mrs. S. Fenwick

Reporting inspector: Mrs. M.A.Palmer  
20646

Dates of inspection: 18 - 21 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 705750

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

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## INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	4 - 11 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	St. Ives Road Leadgate Consett County Durham DH8 7SN
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr. T. Clark
Date of previous inspection:	June 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs. M. A. Palmer, Registered Inspector	English Under Fives Art History Music	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Efficiency
Mr. D. Hirons, Lay Inspector	Equal Opportunities	Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mr. A. Scott, Team Inspector	Mathematics Science Information technology Design and technology Geography Physical education Special educational needs	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Curriculum and assessment Leadership and management

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- The overall quality of education provided by the school is good; pupils make good progress at Key Stages 1 and 2.
- Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make overall good progress.
- The headteacher's very strong leadership provides very clear educational direction for the school and enables its aims and values to be very successfully promoted.
- Positive and constructive relationships between pupils and teachers effectively promote pupils' good attitude to work and good behaviour.
- The school is a very caring community in which pupils' well-being is a priority and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is well promoted.
- The school's effective partnership with parents and the community makes an important contribution to pupils' learning.
- The school's financial planning, financial control and administration are very good.
- The school gives good value for money.

### • Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Provision for children under five does not consistently promote good progress in all areas of learning.
- II. Teachers' systems of on-going assessment of pupils' progress are under-developed and insufficiently used to guide the next steps of pupils' learning.

The weaknesses identified in this report are far outweighed by what the school does well. They will, however, form the basis of the governors' action plan. A copy of this plan will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

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

The school has responded well to the last inspection and has demonstrated a firm commitment to school improvement. A programme for reviewing and updating long-, medium- and short-term planning for all subjects was successfully implemented, with initial priority being given to English and science. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 is well structured, with appropriate subject documentation to guide teachers. However, the curriculum for children under five does not adequately address the key areas of learning at an appropriate level for the children when they start school. Staff training and greater focus on information technology and design technology have resulted in improvements throughout the school. Levels of attainment in design and technology are now in line with expectations at both key stages and pupils are extending their information technology skills across a wider range of applications. Focus has been successfully directed to ensuring that more able pupils are appropriately challenged. Results in National Curriculum tests and assessments illustrate that in 1999 attainment of the higher levels at Key Stages 1 and 2, was above average compared to similar schools. Provision has also been improved for the promotion of pupils' awareness and appreciation of their own and others' cultures, chiefly through well-planned assemblies throughout the school year. Systems for monitoring spending have been developed; the cost of developments has been clearly identified in the School Development Plan, so that evaluation of spending can be made. This area of financial planning and control is now very good. The overall quality of education and progress of pupils, supported by the range of improvements, have resulted in the school providing good value for money. This compares favourably with the last inspection, when the school was found to give satisfactory value for money. The school is well placed to sustain improvements and continue to move forwards.

### Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

Performance in	Compared with all schools	Compared with similar schools	Key
English	E	D	<i>well above average</i> A
Mathematics	B	A	<i>above average</i> B
Science	B	A	<i>average</i> C
			<i>below average</i> D
			<i>well below average</i> E

Pupils display a range of attainment on entry, but overall development is below average. However, overall, pupils under five make satisfactory progress and pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2 make good progress. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and make good progress at Key Stages 1 and 2.

The table above shows that in 1999, pupils' average test scores were well below the national average in English and above the national average in mathematics and science. When pupils' performance in 1999 is compared with that of pupils from similar schools, results were below average in English and well above average in mathematics and science. However, a high percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 had educational needs focusing on language and literacy and three pupils had statements of special educational need. Notably, the percentage of pupils attaining a higher level in English was broadly in line with the national average and above similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining a higher level in both mathematics and science was above the national average and well above similar schools. Care should be taken in making year by year comparisons, as the number of pupils taking the tests fluctuates and is often well below twenty and the number of pupils with special educational needs varies within each year group.

At the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999, pupils' overall attainment in reading and writing was well above the national average and very high compared with similar schools. Pupils' attainment in mathematics was broadly in line with the national average and well above similar schools.

Evidence from the inspection indicates that the vast majority of pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are on course to attain the nationally expected standards in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence indicates that pupils are on course to attain above the expected standard in science.

### Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	satisfactory	good	good
Mathematics	satisfactory	satisfactory	good
Science		good	good
Information technology		satisfactory	satisfactory
Religious education			
Other subjects	satisfactory	satisfactory	satisfactory

Teaching was satisfactory or better in 95 per cent of lessons observed. In Key Stage 1, one third of lessons were good. In Key Stage 2, two thirds of lessons were good and a small number were very good. Good teaching was most consistently found in English and science lessons throughout the school and in mathematics lessons at Key Stage 2.

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

• **Other aspects of the school**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Good; pupils behave well in and around school; they listen well and apply themselves to their work with interest.
Attendance	Satisfactory overall; the last year shows improvement over previous years.
Ethos*	The school has a positive ethos; relationships are good; there is a commitment to raising standards and to promoting pupils' self-esteem within a caring community.
Leadership and management	Very strong leadership and very clear vision from the headteacher; the supportive governing body is increasingly active in the management of the school.
Curriculum	Satisfactory overall; appropriately strong emphasis on literacy and numeracy; balanced and reasonably broad at Key Stages 1 and 2; insufficiently focused on areas of learning for children under five.
Pupils with special educational needs	Good provision enables pupils to make good progress towards the targets on their Individual Education Plans.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Pupils' spiritual and social development is particularly well promoted; provision for pupils' moral and cultural development is good.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall: staff have sufficient experience and expertise; teachers and pupils benefit from the range of resources and make good use of visits and visitors to extend pupils' learning; accommodation is valued and cared for; accommodation is restricted for children under five; some aspects of library use are under-developed.
Value for money	Good.

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

• **The parents' views of the school**

<b>What most parents like about the school</b>	<b>What some parents are not happy about</b>
III. Their children like school. IV. Members of staff are approachable when there are questions or problems relating to their children. V. The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children. VI. They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school. VII. They are kept well informed about their children's progress. VIII. The school is caring and welcoming.	IX. The work their children are expected to do at

The inspection supports the positive views of parents. Evidence gained during the inspection indicates that pupils benefit from regularly taking home books to share and read with their parents. However, reading diaries are not consistently used to provide parents with guidance as to how they can assist with their children's learning at home. Many pupils at Key Stage 2 enjoy undertaking project homework. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is diligent in ensuring that grades or comments are carefully awarded by the headteacher in response to the work of the individual pupil.

• **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to raise attainment and improve progress across the curriculum, build on existing good practice and further improve the quality of education in the school, the headteacher, governors and staff should:

Improve provision for children under five by ensuring that:

- X. Planning is securely based on the areas of learning for children under five;
- XI. Children have access to a balanced range of activities incorporating the objectives of the Desirable Learning Outcomes;
- XII. Information gained from regular assessment of pupils' progress is used to guide lesson planning and to match tasks to the individual needs of children;
- XIII. Unqualified support staff are clear about their specific objectives in supporting children's learning.

(See paragraphs: 29, 37, 52, 92, 93)

Improve the quality of teacher's assessment and its impact on planning overall by:

- XIV. Devising manageable procedures to assess pupils' progress in skills, knowledge and understanding in all subjects for the short-term and over time;
- XV. Utilise this information in lesson planning.

(See paragraphs: 30, 43, 109, 128)

In addition to the key issues above, the following less important weaknesses should be considered for inclusion in the action plan:

<b>Area for development</b>	<b>Paragraph/s</b>
Opportunities for extended writing .	32, 105
Over-reliance on worksheets.	32, 99, 115, 121
Use of the libraries.	77, 82, 104
Arrangement of accommodation for children under five.	77, 93
Access to a secure outdoor area for children under five.	78, 82, 93
Marking.	30, 109, 115
Subject co-ordinators' time to monitor, co-ordinate and work with colleagues.	69, 82
Annual pupils' progress reports.	43, 61
The use of reading diaries.	62
Clear targeting for all of support staffs' time.	33, 82, 108
Curriculum time less than the recommended minimum.	35

## INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

1. Our Lady and St. Joseph VA RC School, Brooms, is a small primary school. There are 112 pupils on the school roll, with approximately equal numbers of boys and girls. One pupil is from an ethnic minority background.
  2. The school is situated on a pleasant, well laid out site, with a playground and ample playing fields, incorporating a wild garden area. It comprises four classrooms and a large hall, which is equipped for physical education. Available, unused classroom space is utilised as libraries and there is a resource room. The school is organised into four classes, all of which are of mixed age pupils. The classes are: Reception/Year 1, Year 2/3, Year 3/4 and Year 5/6. Children enter the reception class in the September before their fifth birthday. Before entering school, most children have previously attended the nearby nursery. At the time of the inspection, pupils were completing the first half term of the school year. There were five children under five in the Reception/Year 1 class.
  3. The school is situated in Leadgate, a large village to the east of Consett. The school principally serves Catholic children from the locality. Pupils also travel to school from further afield. The catchment area consists of a mixture of predominantly council housing, with some older, privately owned houses. Pupils display a range of skills on entry to school, but, overall, attainment is below the expected levels for the age group. There is unemployment in the area and some families experience a degree of socio-economic stress. Twenty three per cent of pupils are entitled to free school meals. This is broadly average. Almost thirty per cent of pupils are identified as having special educational needs and the number of pupils with statements of special educational needs is high.
1. The school aims to provide a Christian setting in which each child can feel valued as an individual, develop as a whole person and be involved in the community. Within this context, the current aims and priorities of the school are:
    - to raise standards of attainment, particularly in literacy and numeracy;
    - to extend, develop and refine individual target setting procedures;and additional targets are:
    - staff training to improve familiarity with new information technology software and hardware;
    - implementation of new long term curriculum plans and preparation for further revision with Curriculum 2000.

· **Key indicators**

**Attainment at Key Stage 1<sup>1</sup>**

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	6	13	19

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	5	6
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	95 (79)	95 (84)	100 (95)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	5	6	6
	Girls	13	13	13
	Total	18	19	19
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	95 (84)	100 (95)	100 (100)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

<sup>1</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to 1998

## Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2  
for latest reporting year:

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1999	12	11	23

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	6	8	10
	Girls	8	10	10
	Total	14	18	20
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	61 (69)	78 (56)	87 (69)
	National	70 (65)	69 (59)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	6	7	8
	Girls	8	8	9
	Total	14	15	17
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	61 (88)	65 (75)	74 (75)
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

<sup>2</sup> Percentages in parentheses refer to 1998

## Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:

		%
Authorised Absence	School	9.2
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.0
	National comparative data	0.5

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## Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

## Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is:

	%
Very good or better	2
Satisfactory or better	95
Less than satisfactory	5

## **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

### **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

#### **Attainment and progress**

1. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments indicate that overall standards at the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils leave the school, were well below the national average in English and above average in mathematics and science. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 was below average in English, and well above average in mathematics and science.
2. At the end of Key Stage 1, the 1999 National Curriculum results indicate that standards were well above the national average in reading and writing and broadly in line with the average in mathematics. Results of teacher assessments in science indicate that pupils' attainment was very high compared to the national average. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was very high in reading and science and well above average in writing and mathematics.
3. Inspection findings indicate that in the current Year 6, pupils are in line to attain the nationally expected standards in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2. In the current Year 2, pupils are in line to attain the nationally expected standards in English and mathematics and above the expected standard in science at the end of Key Stage 1. The school has a significant number of pupils with special educational needs, with an above average number of pupils requiring statements. There are a disproportionate number in the present Years 2 and 6. Although pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall in Key Stages 1 and 2, their results have a direct impact on the overall data for the end of key stage statutory assessments.
4. Variations in the results attained by different year groups have been a feature of the school's performance over the past three years, although overall the trend has been generally upwards. This variation is due to two reasons. Firstly, a high proportion of pupils throughout the school has special educational needs and the number in each age group varies. Also, the number of pupils taking the tests varies from year to year, from 11 to 23 in recent years, so in some years each pupil represents a larger percentage of the total. These factors render statistical comparison of performance unreliable.
5. Pupils' attainment in information technology is in line with national expectations by the end of both key stages.
6. There are no significant differences in the attainment of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background. Over time, the overall attainment of boys and girls has differed from year to year. This can be traced to the impact on particular classes of a combination of two factors, very uneven numbers of boys and girls, and significant numbers of pupils with special needs.
7. Inspection findings reflect those of the previous inspection in English, mathematics and information technology, where standards overall were in line with national expectations. In the previous inspection, standards in science were sometimes higher than the national average at both key stages.
8. Children enter school with a wide range of skills, but their attainment is below that expected for children of this age, particularly in personal and social development, language and literacy and mathematics. Boys and girls of all backgrounds settle quickly into school and make good progress in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world. In language and literacy, mathematics, creative and physical development children under five make satisfactory progress, although they often do not attain the standards normally seen with most children by the time they are five. Those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress overall. Children are happy and secure during their early

years, and this forms a firm foundation for future learning.

9. Often from a low starting point, pupils make good progress overall in English, mathematics and science at Key Stages 1 and 2. This results from overall good teaching and carefully planned and organised lessons. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments, pupils' attainment in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the average for similar schools, for pupils achieving both the expected and higher levels. At the end of Key Stage 2, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was below average, compared with similar schools. The high percentage of pupils with statements of educational need, focusing on the language and literacy needs, had an impact on this data. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was above average compared with similar schools.
10. In the 1999 tests and assessments in mathematics and science at Key Stage 1, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was very high in comparison with similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining a higher level was above average in mathematics and very high in science, compared with similar schools. At Key Stage 2, in mathematics and science, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected level was above average and the percentage of pupils attaining a higher level was well above average, compared with similar schools. Inspection findings showed good progress overall at both key stages.
11. Pupils are making good progress in speaking and listening and reading at both key stages. Pupils listen well and ask and answer questions appropriately, particularly during well-planned introductory and plenary sessions of the literacy hour. Reading progress is well supported by small-group guided reading sessions and a strong emphasis on using phonics to establish the meaning of unfamiliar words. Pupils' progress is also enhanced by regularly taking home a range of books. However, pupils make limited use of the library to extend their research and independent learning skills. Pupils make good progress overall in writing; but progress is limited in lessons when writing challenges are insufficiently demanding.
12. The school is successfully beginning to implement the National Numeracy Strategy. Pupils are making good progress in mathematics at both key stages. At Key Stage 1, pupils make good progress in learning about number, shape and measure. However, they make more limited progress in learning to use their knowledge in practical situations. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress across all areas of mathematics and gain increasing competence in using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division in a range of situations.
13. In science, pupils make good progress as they move through the school. At Key Stage 1 pupils gain the basic skills of scientific enquiry. They learn to conduct and record simple experiments well and carry out tests and investigations sensibly. At Key Stage 2, they plan and carry out investigations that are reliable and fair. Throughout both key stages pupils achieve an increasingly broad and secure level of understanding related to life processes and living things, materials and their properties and physical processes.
14. Pupils make satisfactory progress in information technology. As they move through Key Stages 1 and 2, they learn basic control of information technology based devices, simulations and models. Pupils learn well from teachers' clear demonstrations and explanations and gain increasing competence and confidence in word processing and data handling skills. They are beginning to use them to support work in other subjects, including mathematics and science.
15. Pupils make good progress in history. Teachers plan a stimulating programme, well supported by appropriate visits and visitors at both key stages. In art, design and technology, geography, music and physical development, pupils make satisfactory progress at Key Stages 1 and 2.
16. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. When support assistants have clear and specific objectives, support is well targeted and enables pupils to make good progress overall towards the goals set in their Individual Education Plans. Pupils with statements of special educational needs receive effective support from the support teacher and assistants and they are

fully included in all activities. Pupils who are higher attainers generally make the advances of which they are capable and this results in their attainment of the higher levels in national tests.

## 20. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**

1. Children under five settle quickly into the clear routines and expectations established by their teacher and develop in confidence and willingness to co-operate. They learn to relate appropriately to adults and to one another, although some children find it difficult to take turns. They listen increasingly carefully, behave well and begin to show independence when selecting activities.
2. Throughout Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils have positive attitudes to learning. They are keen to learn new subjects and listen well in class. They are happy to take part in class discussions, although they are not always able to express their thoughts clearly. They concentrate strongly during lessons and ensure a purposeful working atmosphere when undertaking written work. They appreciate the mutual benefits of working in groups, offering and receiving advice from each other and the teacher, quietly and sensibly. Occasionally, however, younger pupils tend to rely too much on their teacher's help and do not show enough determination to solve their own problems. Although most work is laid out well, pupils do not always take sufficient care with their presentation.
3. The behaviour of the pupils is good. They move around school sensibly and they play outside responsibly and happily. They show commendable restraint when, for example, the playing fields are unavailable and the playground is congested, and also when confined to the classrooms during a wet lunchtime. They behave well in class. They sustain concentration even when the pace of a lesson flags and do not easily become impatient when, for example, they are all unable to work at a computer. A few pupils can be self-centred and seek unnecessary attention, but this rarely causes a problem.
4. Pupils have good relationships with one another and the staff. They enjoy the gentle banter of group work and are respectful towards the teachers and other staff. Older pupils tend to help younger pupils quite naturally. For example, the older pupils in an early years' class helped the younger ones to change for a lesson of physical education. Older pupils intervene in the playground if there is a problem between younger pupils. Pupils are also very considerate, for example, showing commendable patience when listening to other pupils who are struggling to express themselves. Pupils respond readily to adults and appreciate their support; there is a relaxed air in the classrooms. They know they can turn to all staff for help, whether it is to obtain a receptacle from the secretary for a dislodged tooth or advice about a computer from the caretaker in the computer club.
5. The personal development of pupils is good. They are able to broaden their experiences through a good range of extra-curricular activities and they are heavily involved in the community and with the church. Every year, each pupil makes three 'Promises to Jesus'. These include such personal targets as working hard, being good in class, being kind to others and trying to keep the school tidy. They support a range of charities, even suggesting support themselves, such as the recent response to a Blue Peter Appeal. They volunteer their services to the school's Summer Fair, making crafts and manning stalls. Some older pupils offer their services to the teachers as monitors and spend their free time distributing and collecting worksheets and books. All in all, pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education.

## 25. **Attendance**

1. The attendance rate for the school is below the national average. However, taking into account recent figures, the trend shows an improvement on the previous three years. The co-operation of parents and the school's effective procedures ensure that there are no unauthorised pupil absences from school.
2. Pupils generally arrive in school on time enabling the registration process to be completed quickly, and for lessons to start promptly. This has a positive effect on pupils' learning opportunities and maximises

the time available for teaching.

## 27. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 27. **Teaching**

1. The overall quality of teaching is good. This marks some improvement since the last inspection, when it was judged to be sound and often good. Teaching is satisfactory in all but a small number of lessons. Teaching is particularly successful in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, where teachers have a good knowledge and understanding of the subjects and lesson planning is consistently thorough and well implemented.
2. The quality of teaching of children under five is satisfactory overall. However, there are weaknesses, and two lessons observed were unsatisfactory. Children are made welcome and quickly feel secure, due largely to the careful establishment of classroom routines. A calm and purposeful atmosphere is established and appropriate emphasis is placed on children's personal and social development. However, in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class, the focus of curricular planning is National Curriculum work. Planning does not take full account of the expectations set out in the Desirable Learning Outcomes, and insufficient consideration is given to the need to build on the learning of pupils arriving from nursery, or in a very small number of cases, arriving without pre-school experience. Also, assessment is insufficiently used to focus on the specific learning needs of the individual children under five.
3. In Key Stage 1, teaching is good in one third of lessons. In Key Stage 2, teaching is good in two thirds of lessons and in a small number of lessons teaching is very good. Teaching is most successful when teachers are clear and specific about what they want pupils to learn in the course of a lesson. Occasionally teachers in both Key Stages 1 and 2 share the objectives of the session with their pupils and successfully promote pupils' involvement and learning. Throughout both key stages, teachers consistently manage pupils well and achieve a good level of discipline, whilst maintaining positive and constructive relationships. They know their pupils well and respond to their efforts with consistent encouragement. Pupils' work is regularly marked. However, there is insufficient use of marking to reinforce teaching points made in lessons and to encourage pupils to focus on the improvement of specific skills. Also, there is insufficient use of regular, well-focused assessment to inform planning and ensure that tasks consistently challenge the range of attainment found within all classes.
4. All teachers have sufficient knowledge to teach the subjects of the National Curriculum. Teaching is good in history throughout the school and pupils make good progress. The curriculum is successfully planned to incorporate a stimulating range of artefacts, visits and visitors to motivate pupils' interest and promote learning. Standards of teaching are sound and promote satisfactory progress in information technology, art, design and technology, geography, music and physical education.
5. An appropriate range of teaching styles is employed. Classroom management and organisation are good. There is a successful balance between direct teaching of the whole class and interaction with groups and individuals, and between spoken and written responses. Worksheets are widely used as an element of follow-up work. Whilst some are well thought out and stimulating, they do not consistently provide an appropriate level of challenge to pupils and frequently limit the amount of writing pupils need to do. Questioning is used well throughout the school to extend pupils' thinking and check their understanding. Regular reading and spelling homework satisfactorily promotes and reinforces pupils' learning.
6. The quality of teaching of pupils with special educational needs is good. The support teacher and assistants work with pupils within the classroom and in small withdrawal group. The well-planned small-group sessions are particularly effective, as pupils are given work which is closely aligned to the targets in their Individual Educational Plans. Support staff work on pupils' specific weaknesses and use strategies that develop pupils' self-esteem. Support for pupils with special educational needs is less

consistently effective in the classroom, where the role of support assistants is less well defined and developed.

7. The consistently positive relationships between the teachers and pupils are a feature of the school. Teachers clearly respect and value each pupil. Along with pupils' good attitude to work, this helps to promote a purposeful atmosphere for learning.

#### 34. **The curriculum and assessment**

1. The school's curriculum is appropriately balanced and reasonably broad. The school places emphasis very much on the core subjects of English, mathematics, science, and religious education. There is a reasonable amount of time for information technology but there is not enough specific time set aside for all areas of this subject. The school provides all other subjects but does not always allow sufficient time for their study, except for art, which receives ample time. The school timetables design and technology along with science and, in so doing, blurs the amount of time available for design and technology. The overall curriculum time is less than the nationally recommended minimum in both key stages.
2. The school successfully uses national schemes of work to provide structure to its curriculum. Teachers have introduced the key elements of the national literacy and numeracy strategies appropriately into their teaching, but also provide additional learning opportunities, such as extended writing sessions. The adoption of national guidelines in science, history, geography and design and technology has ensured appropriate coverage. Other subjects follow sound schemes of work. All subjects benefit from very thorough documentation which outlines aims and refers in detail to all aspects of teaching and learning.
3. The curriculum for children who are under five is inappropriate overall. The school has decided that, because Reception children and Year 1 pupils are taught in the same class, all pupils should follow the National Curriculum, suitable for pupils who are over five. This means that the curriculum for the children who are under five is not linked appropriately to the Desired Learning Outcomes for children under five, and does not allow sufficient play and practical activities appropriate for the development of the youngest children. They encounter a more formal curriculum which is difficult for them at the outset. However, it is evident that over time the attainment of pupils does not suffer.
4. The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school identifies such pupils early in their school life and prepares suitable learning experiences. The teaching staff meets weekly to discuss the progress of these pupils and adapt their teaching as appropriate. Each pupil with special educational needs has a very detailed Individual Education Plan which highlights their needs and specific learning targets. The school has recently introduced a comprehensive new format for these plans and teachers complete them very efficiently, in some cases, excellently. Teachers provide work at the right level for these pupils and enable pupils to be withdrawn from classes in order to gain faster progress. Teachers provide more challenging work for higher attaining pupils in the form of extension activities, but do not always allow them sufficient opportunity to explore areas of learning at their own speed.
5. The school does not at present have a policy to teach sex education. However, the school has recognised the need to introduce this topic and is currently preparing to bring it into the curriculum during the present school year. The governors will adopt sex education only after full consultation with teachers and parents. The subject will be taught as part of the science and religious education curricula.
6. The school has an effective homework policy which ensures structured learning beyond the classroom. It supplements this with half-termly projects for each pupil in Key Stage 2. The objective is to encourage pupils to pursue study in areas of interest to them and make use of different research opportunities, such as the local library.
7. Teachers plan the curriculum well. The yearly plans correctly reflect the overall scheme of work and this

information is suitably refined in the half-termly plans. Teachers then refine this further into their weekly or daily planning, specifying clearly their learning objectives and itemising the key elements of the lessons. They mostly provide work of reasonable challenge for pupils of all abilities, but do not always target the work sufficiently. Teachers try to overcome the problems of mixed year classes by mostly teaching to a curriculum suitable for the older pupils. This is demanding for the younger pupils but enables them to revise and consolidate their learning the following year. This system is less successful for lower attaining pupils in the younger classes who cannot respond readily to the curriculum and to the higher attaining pupils in the older classes who do not require consolidation.

8. The curriculum is enriched by numerous extra-curricular activities, educational visits and by visiting experts. The pupils benefit from involvement in football and netball teams, as well as the computer club and recorder group. Pupils have recently visited such places as Durham Archaeological Museum to boost their studies in history and to a local theatre to see 'Alice in Wonderland'. Some have taken part in a drama workshop with professional actors. Some pupils receive cricket coaching from the county club and the school's catering company periodically stage activities to raise pupils' awareness of food and health issues.
9. The school has sound systems to assess pupils' progress in some subjects. Teachers regularly test pupils' attainment in English and mathematics in written or oral tasks. Each half term they evaluate the progress each pupil has made in these subjects, as well as science and information technology. This system is new and teachers have yet to use it effectively. Teachers assess other subjects once a year. The school analyses the results of national tests at the end of both key stages and also sets other standardised tests for pupils in Year 4 in the main subjects. Teachers are currently moving from the previous system of individual reading records to a group evaluation. This system is not fully effective in all classes and does not consistently give precise details on the progress and needs of all pupils. The annual reports on pupils' progress are satisfactory and generally focus on individual progress yet, often, teachers' comments are bland and lack real detail.
10. The school has successfully introduced target setting in English and mathematics. Although in its infancy, the system is beneficial only when the targets are aimed more specifically at individual needs. Currently, many of the present targets are too broad and apply to most pupils in a class. Furthermore, teachers do not take sufficient advantage of marking pupils' work to give real advice, insist on corrected work or require neater presentation.

#### 44. **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

1. The school successfully promotes pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, through a range of activities, which reflect the values expressed in the school's Mission Statement, Personal and Social Education Policy, Policy on Bullying and Religious Education Policy. These findings broadly reflect those of the previous inspection, when the curriculum was found to provide good opportunities for spiritual, moral and social growth. However, it marks an improvement in the provision for pupils' cultural development, as the previous report noted fewer opportunities for cultural experiences and for understanding multi-cultural issues.
2. Pupils' spiritual development is very well promoted. Through regular assemblies and collective worship, and more occasional religious celebrations, pupils are given a wealth of opportunities to reflect, respond thoughtfully and develop self-knowledge. They also sing together joyfully at assemblies, and frequently join in prayers, some of which they have composed themselves. Pupils' awareness of beauty and sense of wonder are well promoted through art and science. Activities, including work in the school's grounds, walking, cycling and visiting the local farm further heighten pupils' appreciation of the natural world.
3. The provision for pupils' moral development is good. In assemblies and class discussions, pupils have frequent opportunities to reflect on moral issues, such as, "saying sorry" and the meaning of "forgiveness". The positive ethos of the school helps to build the framework for responsible, caring

attitudes. The school rules are clearly displayed in the entrance and pupils draw up codes for their own classrooms. They discuss acceptable behaviour in a range of contexts and are successfully made aware of what is expected of them and the difference between right and wrong. Good behaviour and achievement are recognised and rewarded, notably in the weekly Good Work Assembly, when a wide range of pupils' achievement is celebrated. Much of the school's provision is embedded in the everyday life and teaching of the school. The headteacher and staff provide good role models and consistently treat pupils, other members of the school community, and each other, with respect.

4. Pupils' social development is generally very well promoted. Assemblies focus on issues such as the needs of those in the Third World and being a good neighbour; class topics include "Ourselves" and "Families"; and, pupils regularly participate in co-operative and sharing activities, as when older pupils act as scribes for the younger ones in assembly. The supportive and constructive relationships between pupils and teachers successfully promote pupils' self esteem and social interaction. Pupils are given opportunities to develop a sense of responsibility. These increase as pupils move through the school, from taking the register to the office to acting as librarians. However, opportunities for pupils to develop independent research and learning skills are limited. Teamwork and a sense of fair play are well promoted through a good range of team games and inter-school matches and competitions. Older pupils also have opportunities to develop their skills of social interaction by participating in a residential trips to a field studies centre at Middleton-in-Teesdale. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the needs of others and support both national and international causes, including St. Cuthbert's Care and CAFOD.
5. Good provision is made for the cultural dimension of pupils' learning. Aspects of pupils' development are well promoted across the curriculum, particularly in history, art and music. Pupils learn about their cultural heritage through a range of activities, including visits to Bowes Museum, Stanley Civic Theatre and Durham Archaeological Museum. Pupils also benefit from visits to school by musicians, actors and the puppet theatre. Pupils' knowledge and understanding of the richness and diversity of other world cultures is promoted through the celebration of a range of cultural festivals, in assemblies at appropriate times of the year. Pupils also learn about the customs and traditions associated with major world faiths, through a well structured religious education programme.
6. Carefully planned daily acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian character and fully meet statutory requirements. They contribute very effectively to the school's provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.

50. **Support, guidance and pupils' welfare**

1. The strong ethos, which is a strength of the school, promotes a supportive, caring environment in which pupils develop self-esteem and make good progress over time and support staff provide good support for pupils' pastoral care. As a result, children under five and pupils at Key Stages 1 and 2, make good progress in their personal and social development. Parents express satisfaction at the care and support provided by the school.
2. Procedures overall for monitoring pupils' academic progress are satisfactory for children under five and for pupils at both Key Stages 1 and 2. However, there are some weaknesses. For children under five, day-to-day information relating to their development and attainment is not systematically recorded by all staff which limits the teacher's ability to monitor progress. For pupils in both key stages, the day-to-day monitoring of their academic progress is not systematically recorded by all teachers.
3. Pupils with special educational needs receive good support overall for their personal and academic development. The school's procedures for the early identification of these pupils, together with the very detailed and thorough Individual Education Plans, have a positive effect on their learning opportunities. As a result, pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall throughout the school.
4. Good procedures are in place for promoting and monitoring discipline and good behaviour. Teachers

have high expectations of pupils' good behaviour and the majority of pupils respond positively to the school and class rules, which are clearly displayed. The involvement of pupils in drawing up these rules is an important factor in their taking ownership of these ideals. Rewards for good work and conduct, and sanctions for unacceptable behaviour are applied consistently and are valued by pupils. The generally good behaviour of the majority of pupils has a positive impact on their learning opportunities. The school has successfully maintained the high standards of discipline and behaviour, identified in the previous inspection report.

5. The school's procedures for monitoring attendance are good. The effective working partnership between the school administrator and the education welfare officer ensures that all incidents of unacceptable or unexplained absences are systematically and routinely followed up. This contributes well to the continuity of pupils' learning by promoting consistently regular attendance at school. Parents confirm that the school is rigorous in its procedures to maintain the consistent zero rate of unauthorised absences from school. Parents are fully supportive of the school's initiatives to promote pupils' regular attendance.
6. Provision for promoting the health and safety of pupils, staff and visitors to the school is a high priority of the school. During recent extensive repairs to the school buildings, the headteacher pro-actively sought regular advice and guidance from health and safety and other appropriate professional bodies to ensure the safety of all within school. This very good practice ensured that pupils' learning was conducted in a safe environment and was subjected to the minimum of disruption throughout the period.
7. The systematic, twice yearly, whole school risk assessment, undertaken by the headteacher and caretaker, ensures that all areas of the school receive a thorough examination. Any areas requiring attention, together with follow-up actions, are recorded accurately. Annual records of visits for the inspection of fire fighting appliances, fire detection, equipment used for physical education, and portable electrical appliances are recorded accurately. Termly practices for fire evacuation of the school buildings are carried out consistently and records maintained. The school has a suitably trained person for first aid, and records of accidents and procedures for notifying parents are recorded. There is a designated person responsible for child protection issues and the school has suitable procedures in place for dealing with child protection matters.
8. The good relationships that are a strength of the school ensure that the welfare of all pupils receives effective and appropriate attention at all times. Parents confirm that their children like school. They appreciate the care that all staff provide for their children.

#### 58. **Partnership with parents and the community**

1. Relationships between parents and the school are good. The majority of parents are supportive of the school and recognise the good behaviour of children which the school actively promotes. In response to the parents' questionnaire, and at the parents' meeting prior to the inspection, a large majority indicated they would find it easy to approach staff with concerns or questions.
2. Parents of children due to start in the Reception/Year 1 class are supportive of the school's procedures for their induction. Parents appreciate meetings arranged in school, visits into school and visits by the teacher to the local nursery school. Parents indicate that the school encourages them to play an active role in school. During the inspection, parents were observed organising the Book Club and assisting with activities which extend pupils' learning opportunities. Inspection evidence confirms that the school is welcoming to parents and arranges occasional curriculum events in the evenings; for example, parents were invited to meet with the teaching staff and governors to assist parents in understanding the work of the school in the support for pupils with special educational needs.
3. The quality of information to parents overall is very good; some of the documentation is excellent. The annual governors' report to parents, in particular, provides an excellent and very comprehensive, detailed description of the work of the school. Included is a very thorough guide to progress made in addressing

the areas for development, identified in the previous inspection report, together with a comprehensive account of the progress in implementing the school's management plan. The weekly newsletters to parents are also of exemplary quality in the range and detail of information included. They provide excellent feedback to all parents, and in particular, to those who are unable to meet regularly with staff or attend meetings arranged for their benefit. The information contained in the Individual Education Plans for those pupils receiving special educational support is of a very high standard. The information provided for parents, together with the arrangements for their active involvement in their children's development is very detailed and comprehensive. However, information contained in the annual pupils' progress reports is less detailed and focuses on what pupils know, understand and can do. They provide limited guidance on how parents can assist with their children's education at home and do not consistently indicate areas for development. Of benefit to parents and school staff is the facility for pupils to comment on their perceived progress in school and to their personal preferences. This positive initiative promotes pupils' active involvement in their learning assessment. It promotes pupils' self-confidence and personal development. However, there is no provision for parents to comment or feedback to teachers, which limits the overall effectiveness of these reports. Information contained in the school prospectus is good and meets all statutory requirements.

4. The school has a detailed policy for the provision of homework, which increases as pupils move through the school. At Key Stage 2, pupils are expected to complete a half-termly homework project of their own choosing, which many of them indicate they enjoy undertaking. The school's active encouragement of pupils to join and regularly attend the community libraries for information, supports and extends pupils' literacy work in school. The school does not, however, sufficiently and systematically promote or make effective use of the school's non-fiction library for research information to assist pupils with their homework projects. During the parents' meeting prior to start of the inspection, and on the parents' questionnaires, a minority of parents indicated their concerns at the frequency of the homework project, and the commitment this work places on themselves. In addition, a small minority of parents are concerned that some parental involvement, for example using information technology to enhance the presentational quality of the homework, influences the grade awarded when the work is marked. Inspection evidence does not support these concerns and confirms that the school is diligent in ensuring that only the work of the pupils is taken into consideration when grades or comments are awarded by the headteacher. Reading diaries used at Key Stages 1 and 2 are not used consistently as a two-way method of communications between school and home. This limits their effectiveness in recording pupils' reading development or providing parents with guidance as to how they can assist with their children's learning at home.
5. A Home-School Agreement has been introduced by the school from September 1999. The document details very clearly, the school's aims which reflect its strong links with the Catholic Church and the Christian values it promotes. The Agreement seeks parents' involvement in promoting pupils' regular and punctual attendance, good behaviour and commitment to overseeing the completion of all homework. It also seeks the pupils' commitment to observing school rules and procedures. Parents indicate their support for the Agreement and together with their children, are willing signatories. However inspection evidence confirms that only a relatively small minority of parents attend school for meetings arranged for their benefit; a commitment also included in the Agreement.
6. The school makes good use of the local community in support of learning. Visits are systematic and regular throughout the school. They enrich the learning opportunities for all children and pupils in school. Displays of pupils' work clearly indicate the value these visits bring to pupils' knowledge and understanding across a range of curriculum areas, including history and geography.
7. The school has very good links with the local Catholic parish church in support of pupils' spiritual, moral and personal development. The church plays an integral part through its community involvement with the school, in promoting the Catholic values which are central to the school's ethos. Pupils receive appropriate instruction and guidance in school, in preparation for their First Communion in church. Members of the parish are actively involved in fund raising and other social events held for the benefit of the school. Attendance by pupils to ecumenical services in other local churches extends pupils' understanding and knowledge of other faiths. Pupils take part in local and other competitions and festivals. Pupils make visits to the neighbouring care home to entertain the residents for concerts and to

celebrate festivals. These additional activities enhance pupils' personal, moral and social development. Inspectors' evidence confirms the school's community involvement successfully forms an integral part of its aims and ethos, identified in the previous inspection report.

8. The school has developed strong links with the local Catholic secondary school to which the majority of pupils transfer. The involvement of Year 6 pupils in a Mathematics and Physical Education Challenge, enhances pupils' personal, social and academic development. In addition, it has a positive effect on familiarising these pupils with the school in preparation for their later transfer. Pupils take part in inter-school sporting competitions and enjoy a good level of success. This has a positive effect on their social and physical development.
9. There is an active 'Friends of Brooms' group, who work to generate funds and resources for school, and organise social events in school for the benefit of the school community. This supportive group has recently donated a computer system and has contributed to the re-decoration costs of the school. They are currently undertaking to raise a significant sum of money in support of the school's bid for information technology equipment.

## 67. **THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL**

### 67. **Leadership and management**

1. The quality of leadership and management of the school is good. The school has clear aims and priorities which it works hard to achieve, and does so very successfully. The headteacher provides caring, thoughtful and very effective leadership. She has a very clear vision of how to maximise the potential of the school and achieve consistently high standards. Her mission is shared by the staff, all of whom are involved in the decision-making process and development of the school. The headteacher has steered the school successfully through a difficult time of renovation.
2. All the teachers have several responsibilities which they carry out efficiently. They manage key developments in their subjects well, such as the introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours and thoroughly prepare new initiatives, such as the application to the National Grid for Learning which generated vital resources for information technology. Teachers and the headteacher monitor pupils' progress by looking at samples of pupils' work at regular intervals. The headteacher also monitors the quality of teaching informally and formally, when she provides written feedback. Subject co-ordinators, however, have little opportunity to work with colleagues. The school recognises this situation and is beginning to address it.
3. The school's governing body is supportive and active. The governors are suitably involved in the implementation of the School Development Plan and occasionally play a leading role in school initiatives such as the introduction of sex education. They help with practical issues such as the recent building repairs to the school and they give specific support to important areas of school life, such as literacy, numeracy and special educational needs. The governors monitor the progress of the school through its academic achievements and issue an excellent, very thorough and informative annual report to parents.
4. The school created an effective action plan after the last inspection. They have made good progress with the five issues, especially in the improvement of teachers' planning and in the provision for cultural development. There has been less urgency in the proper development of design and technology in Key Stage 2 and in the use of information technology. The school has recently laid appropriate foundations in terms of resources and training, but its success cannot yet be measured.
5. The school is very well managed on a daily basis. The headteacher has established sensible systems which run smoothly. For example, pupils' records are efficiently stored and easily accessible. In this, the highly effective work of the school secretary is a major factor. The school meets all its statutory

requirements.

6. The management and organisation of the provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. The thorough and detailed school policy document ensures that the school meets the requirements of the Code of Practice. The co-ordination is efficient, with the Individual Education Plans kept up to date and well stored. The regular weekly meetings to monitor the progress of pupils with special educational needs include not only teaching staff, but also support staff and the governor responsible for special educational needs.
7. The headteacher and the staff work hard to create a positive ethos for learning. Their firm but caring control, their high expectations and their efficient teaching produce not only respect in the pupils but also a genuine desire to learn. The headteacher makes a point of celebrating pupils' achievements in special assemblies.

74. **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

1. The school has a sufficient and appropriately qualified number of teachers to deliver the curriculum. Teachers have generally satisfactory expertise to meet the demands of the National Curriculum. There are however, some weaknesses in knowledge and understanding of the curriculum for the under-fives. There are appropriate levels of support both within and outside of the immediate classroom environment. The provision of additional support for those pupils with special educational needs is good throughout the school. It is most effective when supporting and working with pupils outside of the classroom, and makes a significant contribution to their overall good academic progress. The work of the school administrator is very effective and provides very good support to the headteacher, all staff and pupils. The 'office' is a focal point for parents and visitors to the school.
2. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are satisfactory. Staff are appropriately trained and have access to a range of opportunities for further relevant training from the local authority. The courses that staff attend are carefully monitored and evaluated. Much of the professional development of staff has concentrated on the delivery of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. In response to the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection report, all staff have received suitable training in the teaching and use of information and communication technology. Arrangements for newly qualified staff are good and procedures ensure that new members of the teaching staff have a smooth transition into the life of the school and continuing professional development. Teacher appraisal is ongoing.
3. The building is satisfactory for the number of pupils and provides a welcoming environment for all pupils. It is well cared for and well maintained by the dedicated and committed caretaker. Following the recent internal major structural repairs, the school is now operating effectively with access to all areas. Some of the classrooms are relatively small for the numbers of pupils. They do not restrict or limit pupils' full entitlement to, or delivery of, the National Curriculum for Key Stage 1 and 2. However, the size and layout of the Reception/Year 1 classroom for children under five is restricted. It limits these children's immediate and open access to the range of resources essential to their development. In particular, the role-play area is housed in a separate room built within the classroom. This room is also used for the storage of resources which makes it unsuitable for children to use without direct supervision from additional support staff who are not always present throughout the day. Additionally, other resources are stored outside the classroom in the corridor, which makes them unavailable for immediate use by children. This limits their personal, social and physical development and is therefore unsatisfactory. The school has a fiction and non-fiction library which are not used to their full potential. In particular, the non-fiction library is under utilised by pupils for independent research in support of their learning during lessons and for their homework projects. Storage of materials used in support of teaching are satisfactory and readily available to all staff. The shared areas are used to good effect and promote collaborative working by pupils. This enhances their social and personal development. The learning environment throughout school is used effectively to promote and celebrate pupils' achievements. Displays are well presented and relevant to the curriculum. The school successfully maintains these high standards identified in the previous inspection report.
4. The grounds are pleasant and well maintained. There are two hard play areas, but only one is currently in

use, due to the reduction in pupil numbers and associated staff available to supervise pupils' play activities. The remaining hard play area is relatively small for the number of pupils in school and does limit the range of activities that can be undertaken by pupils. In particular, ball games are prohibited in order to ensure pupils' safety. However, the school does have extensive, level playing fields which are made available whenever practicable. The use of this field provides all pupils with the freedom to engage in a broad range of play activities, supervised by an appropriate number of staff. An area has been developed to promote pupils' climbing and balancing skills. However, although it is adjacent to the early years' classroom, it cannot always be readily accessed by children during class time, as it is not secure and direct adult supervision is required.

5. Resources for learning in the school are generally satisfactory. Resources for English are good, particularly the range of books which support the National Literacy Strategy, and in science for investigation work. The school has purchased additional and satisfactory resource material to support teaching and learning in design technology and information and communication technology in response to the concerns expressed in the previous inspection report. Inspection evidence confirms that the introduction of some of these additional resources in school has not had sufficient time to impact effectively throughout the school. The range of musical instruments in school is generally satisfactory, but instruments from outside Europe are limited. The range of books in the fiction and non-fiction libraries are satisfactory and of good condition. The guided reading books provided by the school are of good quality and have been well selected to stimulate pupils' interest and promote progress.

79.

### **The efficiency of the school**

1. The headteacher and governors ensure that the school is managed efficiently and well. This marks an improvement since the last inspection, when financial management of the school was found to be sound and the systems for monitoring the work of the school, which were being established, were judged to be not yet effective.
2. Financial planning is very good. Financial priorities are identified appropriately, in accordance with the needs of the school. Curriculum development planning is reviewed regularly by co-ordinators and changes agreed by the whole staff. Professional development funding is soundly allocated to support school improvement initiatives, in addition to meeting the needs of individual teachers. Priorities for development are agreed by the whole staff and funding sources are identified in advance. Prudent decision-making with regard to the use of the budget in recent years has successfully turned around a projected budget shortfall into a current surplus. The governing body plays an appropriate part in the budget-setting process. There is good liaison between the headteacher, the finance committee of the governing body and the local authority's peripatetic bursar and budget-planning meetings are held regularly in school. The budget relating to special needs is used appropriately to promote the school's priorities in this area.
3. Teachers are deployed satisfactorily. All subjects have co-ordinators who oversee developments effectively. However, their role in monitoring teaching and learning is limited by a lack of non-teaching time. Special needs support staff make an effective contribution to pupils' learning and are suitably deployed overall. However, their objectives during whole class sessions are insufficiently well developed, particularly in the introductions to literacy and numeracy sessions. A new format for pupils' Individual Education Plans has been developed, aimed at making the teaching and the recording of pupils' development more efficient. The school makes satisfactory use of its learning resources and accommodation. Thought has gone into the development of all available space in school and imaginative use is made of rooms, for example using the carpeted fiction library for music/dance sessions. However, although pupils regularly borrow books, the two libraries are insufficiently used to promote pupils' independent learning and research skills. As the imaginatively designed early years' outdoor activity area gives access to the playground and school field, its use during class time is limited by the need for constant adult supervision. The grounds are well used for science and physical education. The facilities provided by the playing fields are particularly well used when local schools gather for competitions and league matches.

4. The efficiency of financial control and administration is very good. The last audit of the school, carried out by the local authority's audit staff, was completed with no significant issues arising. Computer networking and use of the education authority's budget software ensures that the school has ready access to updated financial information. The headteacher and school secretary carry out regular monitoring. The finance committee receives financial statements for information and discussion, and this is conveyed directly to the governing body at their meeting. The secretary provides very effective support for the daily needs of the school. There are well established procedures in place for the checking and processing of accounts and invoice payments, which are closely overseen by the headteacher. The secretary also deals very efficiently with the school fund, which is appropriately audited.
  
5. Most children enter the school with below average attainment for their age in aspects of their development. Pupils make good progress overall in English, mathematics and science and by the time they leave the school they attain overall standards in line with national averages. In some years, depending on the make-up of the cohort of pupils involved, attainment is above national averages. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall. Throughout the school pupils have good attitudes to learning and behave well. The quality of teaching is good overall, but there are weaknesses in the early years. The school's income is broadly average. Overall, in the light of the context of the school, the attainment of pupils on entry, the quality of education provided and the good progress made by pupils, the school provides good value for money.

## 84. PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 84. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

1. Children are admitted to school in the September before their fifth birthday, as part of a well-planned induction programme which allows children to be introduced gradually to school. Opportunities are provided for children to visit school prior to starting and links with home are soon established. Although a wide range of attainment is represented in the school's intake, overall, children enter school with under-developed skills, particularly in personal and social, language and mathematical development. Boys and girls of all backgrounds settle well and make good progress in personal and social development and knowledge and understanding of the world, successfully achieving the standards outlined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. In other areas of learning children under five make satisfactory progress. However, in language and literacy, mathematics and creative development they often do not attain the standards normally seen with most children by the time they are five. Those with particular needs are sensitively supported and generally make progress in line with other children under five. In the previous inspection, no specific judgements were made about the attainment or progress of children under five.

#### Personal and social development

2. Children make good progress in their personal and social development and successfully achieve the standards outlined in the Desirable Learning Outcomes. By the time they are five, the majority show confidence and increasing degree of independence in their response to activities and daily routines. They change for physical education with minimum adult help, although very slowly, and put on their own coats before going outside. The majority respond readily to their teacher's questions, in the class group. They settle to tasks and concentrate increasingly well for short periods of time. Children show consideration for others and the great majority handle books and equipment carefully. They are able to co-operate with one another in construction or role-play, although some children find it difficult to take turns when using equipment. Overall, children are well motivated and their behaviour is good.

#### Language and literacy

3. Language and literacy skills are often weak on entry to school. Children make satisfactory progress, although by the age of five most children do not attain the expected level in mark making and writing, speaking and reading. Listening skills are further advanced and children pay attention increasingly well and most respond appropriately to questions and in discussions. The majority of children have a limited vocabulary and lower than expected skills in self-expression. Good opportunities are provided in the role play area, for children to explore imaginative language, as they discuss outfits they would like to wear in the "doctor's surgery". Children quickly learn to enjoy stories and rhymes shared with their class. They understand that words and pictures convey meaning. Most children begin to recognise their names and a number of common words. They practice the formation of letters and some can write their own names.

#### Mathematics

4. Children make satisfactory progress overall in developing their mathematical ideas. However, by the time they are five most do not achieve standards expected for their age. Most can count to ten or more and begin to recognise numbers. However, they have access to an insufficient range of first-hand and informal practical experiences to promote their use of appropriate language and to support their understanding of number. Children identify colours and with support most can recognise shapes and put them into appropriate sets.

#### Knowledge and understanding of the world

5. Children make good progress and, by the time they are five, most attain the levels expected in knowledge and understanding of the world. They learn about the properties of sand and water by handling them. Children make simple models and use tools, such as paintbrushes of different sizes and glue spreaders, with confidence. Children use the computer appropriately to support their learning, following the screen activities without hesitation and controlling the mouse accurately. Sound teaching of interesting topics, supported by a good range of stimulating experiences, encourages children's motivation and involvement.

These include local visits out into the community, for example to the shops and church, and trips further afield, including Durham Cathedral and Beamish. Visitors into school, including the vet and the school nurse, successfully support children's learning about topics, such as "living things" and "keeping healthy".

#### Creative development

6. Children make satisfactory progress overall in their creative development. However, by the time they are five, their creative development is generally not in line with expected standards. Children enjoy using paint and some do so confidently, although they have little experience of mixing their own paints and creating a range of effects. They draw, create simple models and stick a variety of textiles to produce a collage. However, pupils have limited opportunities to explore the qualities of sound, colour and texture in imaginative ways. Activities are often well prepared but are too closely prescribed and give children little opportunity to select and experiment with suitable equipment and methods. In class music lessons children have opportunities to use a narrow range of untuned percussion instruments. They sing a good range of action songs and nursery rhymes by heart.

#### Physical development

7. Children make satisfactory progress in their physical development and most achieve the expected standards by the time they are five. In physical education most children move safely and confidently. They work with increasing awareness of space, co-ordination and control when moving around the hall and forming stretched and curled shapes. They make satisfactory progress in pencil control and are able to use tools and a range of markers with growing dexterity. They use construction kits appropriately and show imagination in their work. Children enjoy using the outdoor early years climbing and balancing equipment and the good range of wheeled vehicles. However, their use of the well-laid-out designated outdoor area is limited, as staff supervision is required at all times because of access to the playground and playing field.
8. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall. The Reception/Year 1 class presents a secure and calm environment in which the children are encouraged to settle happily into school life within the context of a mixed age class. Good relationships are built up and the teacher's high expectations of children's behaviour are established. Sessions usually begin with a clear introduction; activities are well organised and resources are carefully prepared. However, the pace of the lesson is not always maintained, particularly when children's follow-up tasks are insufficiently well matched to their stage of development. The support assistant's contribution to children's learning is not always clearly planned and the impact is minimised by a lack of clear objectives when supporting children.
9. Provision for children under five is unsatisfactory overall. The curriculum in the mixed Reception/Year 1 class is insufficiently focused on the objectives for the nationally agreed Desirable Learning Outcomes. Planning is primarily based on the National Curriculum but does not sufficiently ensure that each of the six areas of learning for children under five are adequately addressed. Children are assessed at a suitably early stage, using the local authority baseline assessment. However, the monitoring of children's progress is not used purposefully to guide planning and ensure that children are presented with tasks which closely match their early stage of development. The special needs support teacher is appropriately involved in the identification of pupils with particular special needs, in order to determine requirement for appropriate support. There are sufficient resources for children under five. However, the classroom space is confined and, because the layout of the adjoining areas does not always allow for oversight by the class teacher, children under five often have limited space in which to pursue a range of activities appropriately. Moreover, they do not have ready access to a secure outdoor play area.

#### 93. **ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE**

#### 93. **English**

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests, pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 was well

below the national average and below average for similar schools. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher level was above average compared with similar schools.

2. The 1999 results of teacher assessments of speaking and listening at the end of Key Stage 1 were very similar to those of the previous year, when the percentage of pupils attaining the expected and higher levels was very high in comparison with the national average. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests in reading and writing, pupils' overall attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average. Pupils' results in reading were very high compared with similar schools. Pupils' results in writing were well above similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level in both reading and writing was also well above average compared with similar schools.
3. The number of pupils in each age group has varied from eleven to twenty three in recent years. Also, some age groups have a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs, which distorts the overall data for a particular year group. Consequently, few conclusions can be drawn from the test results of one year. In recent years, results have fluctuated but, overall, Key Stage 1 results have steadily improved from below the national average in 1996. At Key Stage 2 results also improved overall from 1996 to 1998, but this was not sustained in 1999. Notably, a high percentage of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 had educational needs focusing on language and literacy and three pupils had statements of educational need.
4. Inspection evidence indicates that at the end of Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, when pupils leave the school, the attainment of pupils is broadly in line with the national average. In both Year 2 and Year 6, there is currently a high percentage of pupils with special educational needs focusing on language and literacy, and this is affecting the overall picture of attainment. These findings at Key Stage 1 reflect those of the previous inspection. They do not fully reflect the findings of the previous inspection at Key Stage 2, where standards were found to be as expected or higher for pupils of this age.
5. Taking into account their attainment on entry to school, pupils make good progress overall in Key Stages 1 and 2. However, pupils' progress in writing is inconsistent in both key stages. Over time, the majority of pupils make good progress. However, in the course of a minority of lessons, pupils' progress in writing is no more than satisfactory.
6. Pupils' competence in literacy makes a generally satisfactory contribution to their work in other areas of the curriculum. Pupils' transfer their speaking and listening skills satisfactorily; for example, in a music lesson, Year 5 and Year 6 pupils demonstrate both careful listening and a thoughtful use of words, when describing the music of the Pied Piper. In history, pupils used their writing skills well when the older pupils wrote accounts of their visit to Eden Camp. However, opportunities for practising and extending writing skills are sometimes lost when the completion of a worksheet is used frequently to reinforce learning, for example in science. Pupils' handwriting and presentational skills are used well in work for topic booklets or display. There are also occasional examples of information technology being used effectively to support pupils' work in English; for example in the presentation of poetry at the end of Key Stage 2.
7. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to stories read with animation by their teachers. They respond appropriately, although a minority display a restricted vocabulary and have to be encouraged to extend their ideas and accounts. By the end of Key Stage 2 most pupils listen with understanding for an increased length of time, in lessons and in assemblies. They respond confidently to teachers' well-targeted questions, thoughtfully develop their ideas and readily make suggestions. Pupils generally display an appropriately broad vocabulary in a range of situations, including the introduction to literacy sessions and activities; for example, in art, when Year 2 and Year 3 pupils described, in simple terms, the smell and feel of herbs before drawing them.
8. Inspection findings indicate that in Year 2 and Year 6 pupils' attainment in reading overall is in line with the expected levels. The range of ability is wide, with a minority of pupils attaining both higher and lower standards. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils read familiar texts with accuracy and

understanding. They use their increasing knowledge of phonics, as well as pictorial and contextual clues, to establish the meaning of new words. However, some pupils need support in this. A small number of pupils develop their own interests in stories and favourite books and all have experience of both fiction and non-fiction texts. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils read independently and readily discuss the characters and key events of their current reading books. Some make appropriate references to the text to support their views. Most pupils enjoy reading and a few talk enthusiastically about their favourite authors and describe the kind of books which interest them, although these are seldom non-fiction.

9. Inspection findings indicate that in Year 2 and Year 6, most pupils attain levels expected for their age in writing. A small number of pupils attain higher standards and a larger minority of pupils attaining standards below the expected level. By seven, most pupils can express their ideas in simple sentences, often with correct basic spelling and punctuation. Most pupils' writing is often limited in length. Pupils' handwriting is clearly formed and by the end of Key Stage 1, many pupils are beginning to use a joined script. By the end of Key Stage 2, most pupils write for a range of purposes and in a variety of formats, including letters, diaries, stories and poetry. They write confidently in both narrative and non-narrative styles. Pupils are beginning to plan their writing effectively, as a means of organising and developing their ideas. When given the opportunity to write at length, many pupils express a variety of ideas, but their use of complex sentences, accurate punctuation within sentences and paragraphs is limited. Most pupils' handwriting is legibly formed and joined, across the range of their work.
10. Pupils' make good progress overall in the development of their speaking and listening skills. They talk and listen confidently in a range of situations. Pupils of all ages are absorbed when listening to a story. They talk with interest about the stories they share in the literacy hour and ask and answer questions appropriately. They make good progress in speaking clearly and using appropriate vocabulary as they answer questions posed by their teacher. Pupils working with a support teacher make good progress in successfully communicating simple messages to other members of the small group. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue satisfactorily to extend their vocabulary. At the beginning of the key stage, pupils of all prior attainment make good progress in expressing their ideas when they explain to other members of the class why they prefer poems that rhyme. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils increasingly develop their confidence in addressing the class group, as they share the work they have completed in the plenary session of the literacy hour and also through activities in drama, when they work with play scripts, such as "The Prodigal Daughter", linked to themes in religious education. Pupils also benefit from occasional opportunities to present readings and prayers in assemblies and school celebrations.
11. At both key stages, pupils make good progress in the development of their reading skills. Most pupils are well supported at home, particularly in the Early Years, and regularly take home books to share with their family. This has a positive impact on their progress. Pupils make good progress in extending their knowledge of phonics and increasingly use their phonic skills when approaching new words. Pupils continue to make good progress with their reading skills in Key Stage 2. The majority are reading books that are appropriately matched to their attainment and read with steadily increasing accuracy and fluency. Pupils of all ages enjoy being read to, and also join in readily with group reading as part of the literacy hour. Pupils regularly borrow library books to take home and when locating information in non-fiction texts they use the index and contents pages competently. However, as they move through the school, they make limited use of the library for the development of independent learning and research skills.
12. From a low baseline, pupils make good progress overall in writing at Key Stages 1 and 2. Pupils make sound progress in learning to read and spell high frequency words. This work is beginning to be reflected in the standard of spelling used in pupils' independent writing as they move through the school. However, at both key stages there is an over-emphasis on writing exercises and the completion of worksheets, which frequently require only the insertion of letters, single words or short phrases. Pupils' opportunities to develop extended writing skills are not consistently well planned throughout the school. Pupils' progress is most marked when more challenging work is presented: as when pupils in Years 5 and 6 studied authentic documents, linked to their work in history, before writing newspaper articles about the evacuation of children in the Second World War.
13. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different ethnicity, background or gender.

National Curriculum test results of boys and girls fluctuate from year to year. However, because of the impact of pupils with special educational needs on the overall results of pupils of different gender, trends cannot be securely identified. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported. Teachers are very sensitive to their needs and work is usually well matched to pupils' levels of attainment. Pupils' Individual Education Plans often focus on language and literacy targets and when the pupils benefit from specific, well targeted support they make consistently good progress. At both key stages, information technology is increasingly used to support and extend individual pupils' learning through word processing activities and appropriate language development programs.

14. Most pupils have a good attitude to learning at both key stages. They are attentive and eager to make contributions when lessons are introduced and are also ready to explain the work they have achieved, in the plenary session of the literacy hour. The majority of pupils engage purposefully with their tasks: working with good concentration, even when the teacher is focussing on another group. However, at both key stages, a small number of pupils lack perseverance and quickly lose concentration if the pace of the lesson slows. In general, pupils take care with their handwriting and when writing for a specific purpose, such as a booklet or display, they present their finished work particularly neatly. The majority of pupils are well behaved, respond positively to their teachers and co-operate effectively and sensibly when required to do so, as in group reading activities.
15. The quality of teaching is good overall. At both key stages teachers are interested in their pupils' learning; relationships with pupils are good; and, teachers have high expectations of pupils' application and behaviour. This has a positive effect on pupils' response and concentration during lessons. Teachers' subject knowledge is sound and questioning is often used effectively to promote learning and check pupils' understanding. Support staff work closely with class teachers, are well deployed throughout the school in support of individuals and groups of pupils and successfully enhance pupils' learning. However, their role during the introductory session of the literacy hour is not always efficiently used. The most successful teaching is characterised by a brisk pace to the lesson and sharply targeted learning intentions, which are sometimes shared with pupils, and can be used to check learning at the end of the session. Stimulating activities based on activities and materials which capture pupils' interest result in pupils' good progress in the course of the lesson; as when the lights were switched off to heighten the atmosphere and set the scene when Year 3 and Year 4 pupils worked on the writing of a scary story. Teaching is least successful and pupils' progress is limited when learning objectives in planning are insufficiently emphasised in the course of the lesson; for example, opportunities for promoting pupils' writing skills in Years 2 and 3 were lost when pupils' attention was not drawn to sentence punctuation in their own writing, although it had been a focus in the lesson's introductory session.
16. Pupils' efforts are responded to in terms of consistently encouraging marking and direct feedback. However, there are few examples of marking being effectively used to further teaching points made in lessons and to provide support for pupils in setting targets to improve their literacy skills. Useful records of pupils' progress in reading are being developed to support pupils' work in guided reading sessions. In addition, data gained from regular statutory and non-statutory assessments is used to direct support and to guide longer-term planning. However, information gained from on-going teachers' assessment is not consistently well used to inform short-term lesson planning. Regular homework successfully promotes pupils' reading and spelling development.

109.

### **Mathematics**

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments, pupils' overall attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. Pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 was broadly in line with the national average and well above average compared with similar schools.
2. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stages 1 and 2, pupils reach standards in mathematics which are broadly in line with national expectations. Significantly, a high proportion of pupils in the current Year 2 and Year 6 have special educational needs. This is having an impact on the

overall attainment in these year groups. In addition, the annual variation in size of cohorts makes it difficult to directly compare results from year to year. Inspection findings reflect those of the previous inspection, when standards were found to be generally in line with the national average.

3. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. They learn well about number, shape and measure but they do not sufficiently learn how to use their knowledge in practical situations. The youngest pupils learn how to recognise and write numbers correctly. They can put numbers in the correct sequence and make repeating patterns by using, for example, an alternating sequence of three colours. They can add and subtract single digits up to 10 and understand the concept of tens and units. In Year 2, pupils can add and subtract two and single digit numbers up to 20. They can identify numbers up to 100 and differentiate between odd and even numbers. They know the principles of simple multiplication and understand the notion of basic fractions. They recognise a range of two and three dimensional shapes, including cones and pyramids, and can produce symmetrical images of shapes on paper and using a computer program. They can measure objects using non-standard measurements like building blocks and using standard measurements, such as centimetres.
4. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make good progress. Pupils in Year 3, are able to multiply and divide by numbers up to five, and also ten. They understand the value of such fractions as  $\frac{3}{4}$  and can tell the time correctly using these fractions. They can draw lines of symmetry on two dimensional shapes and identify the shapes by the properties, such as the number of sides or faces. Pupils in Year 4 understand place value up to one thousand and can add and subtract three digit numbers. They have a good grasp of their times tables. They can draw different lines of symmetry in two dimensional shapes and learn the value of a right angle. They can produce a tally chart of a class survey to guide them to make a block graph of their findings. In Year 5, pupils learn how to estimate calculations and confirm them. They appreciate more complex fractions, like  $\frac{4}{9}$  and  $\frac{2}{7}$ . They know how numbers break down into different factors. They can measure angles using a protractor and calculate area by multiplication. They understand how to read four figure co-ordinates on maps. Pupils in Year 6 can calculate percentages and understand how they link to fractions. They understand place value to three decimal points and can multiply decimal numbers by tens, hundreds and thousands. They can perform long multiplication. They can calculate area and perimeter and give their results in the correct measures. They can identify all the features of such three dimensional shapes as tetrahedrons. They can present their findings of class surveys, for example of favourite crisp flavours, in appropriate bar line graphs.
5. Pupils have a positive approach to the subject. They listen well in class in order to understand new concepts and are particularly keen to join in the mental mathematics sessions. They behave well and settle to their tasks quickly and sensibly. They work productively in groups and engage in purposeful conversation. They work at a steady rate yet often show little sense of urgency or desire to present their written work neatly. They have good relationships with their teachers and can be trusted to work on their own.
6. The quality of the teaching overall is good. Teachers plan their lessons well, sometimes very thoroughly, and in accordance with the National Numeracy Strategy. They generally have good expectations of the pupils, although the work they set for pupils of different abilities is not always suitably targeted. For example, the preponderance of worksheets is a hindrance to the higher attaining pupils. Teachers control the pupils well, for example, swiftly moving a distracted pupil to the front of the class, without allowing the lesson to be disrupted. They are aware of the progress of the pupils, but do not record this effectively enough and do not use this information to influence their lesson plans. Although teachers mark pupils' work accurately, they do not use marking as a means of improving pupils' learning. Where teaching is especially effective, the learning objectives are clear and simple, the pace is brisk and there is sufficient time to consolidate learning.
7. The school has successfully introduced the National Numeracy Strategy. Staff have received the appropriate training and the subject is suitably resourced. Teachers are gaining confidence in the new structure and classroom routines. The strategy is especially useful to provide opportunity to use mathematics in practical situations. The whole school approach to mathematics is well supported by a new and enthusiastic co-ordinator. The new assessment procedures are sound and will provide useful

information in time. The school's new system of target-setting in mathematics is underdeveloped and, at present, the pupils' targets are not specific enough.

## 116. Science

1. In the 1999 National Curriculum tests and assessments, the attainment of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 was above the national average and well above average compared with similar schools. Teacher Assessment at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicated that pupils' attainment was very high compared to the national average and compared to similar schools. Inspection evidence indicates that by the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment is in line with national expectations. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils reach standards of attainment which are above national expectations. Variations in the small size of each year group and the impact of differing numbers of pupils with special educational needs, makes accurate comparison of year by year results difficult. Inspection findings for Key Stage 1 differ from those of the previous inspection, but findings for Key Stage 2 reflect those of the previous inspection, which were that attainment was in line with the national average and sometimes higher at both key stages.
2. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1. Pupils in the reception class understand how objects move when pushed, for example, by the wind, and that objects, such as trains, bicycles and snails, move at different speeds. They can sort different materials such as wood and plastic by their appearance. They appreciate where sound comes from and how sound, especially in music, can vary considerably. In Year 1, pupils experiment more with movement, testing to see whether pushing or pulling is more appropriate. They understand that objects move at different speeds on different surfaces. They can identify objects which are normally hot and cold, and determine which objects float and which sink. They can name obvious parts of the human body. In Year 2, pupils can conduct simple experiments and record their findings on a graph, such as the growing of cress or other plants. They can identify different species of wildlife such as butterflies, snails and other small creatures, and they can recognise suitable habitats for them. They can label the basic features of a plant and differentiate between living and inanimate things. They understand how heat affects materials, such as hot water on jelly. They can name a range of light sources and appreciate the concept of shadow.
3. Pupils continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. In Years 3 and 4, pupils can identify a wider range of creatures. They can specify the integral parts of a plant correctly and understand how plants grow. They know why materials are suitable for different purposes, for example, glass and plastic for bottles. They can categorise rocks by texture and composition and know how to mix and separate materials like sand and water. They appreciate the concept of fair testing and put this into practice by testing the strengths of various magnets. In Year 5, pupils develop these procedures when testing the different growth rate of plants. They also understand the process of pollination and can identify the different ways of seed dispersal in plants. They can draw electrical circuits, showing important features like batteries, switches and joints. They understand the properties of reflected light and how it is caused. Pupils in Year 6 learn to make sensible predictions about their experiments. They conduct more advanced tests such as the flexibility of textiles and the effect of the size of a balloon on the distance it can travel. They know about the food chain and appreciate, in particular, how plants feed. They know the health needs of a human body and can give details of the human digestive system. They can differentiate between permeable and non-permeable rocks. They understand how the processes of evaporation and condensation work. They can make an electrical circuit to make a light bulb work. They know how vibration through different objects causes different sounds.
4. Pupils have a good approach to the subject. They clearly enjoy the practical aspect of science, setting up and conducting tests. They listen well in class and sustain suitable concentration in whole class discussions and during group activity. They are respectful of other people's contributions. They behave responsibly when handling the science equipment and at those times in a lesson when the pace drops. Some pupils take care to lay out their work neatly, but many do not and produce untidy presentation.
5. The teaching of science is good. Teachers ensure that the pupils receive a broad curriculum and introduce them to advanced work at an early age. For example, they teach the concept of fair testing to pupils in

Year 3. They plan lessons well and show clear learning objectives. Their good subject knowledge is evident from the clear explanations and demonstrations they give to pupils. They have good expectations of both behaviour and progress and strive to create a positive classroom environment. They use resources well to clarify issues, such as photographs of a person at different ages to demonstrate growth and they round off lessons sensibly with an appropriate revision of the work in the lesson. There is a tendency for them, however, to use worksheets too much, which restricts pupils' own contributions. When lessons are especially effective, teachers encourage pupils to think for themselves, expect high levels of accuracy and presentation and provide a brisk pace to the lesson.

6. The school has successfully adopted a national scheme of work for science. This provides a real structure to the subject and offers suitable continuity to pupils' learning. The subject is well resourced and this enables pupils to conduct a range of experiments.

## 122. OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### **Information technology**

1. Pupils' attainment by the end of both key stages is in line with national expectations. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection.
2. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress. They become proficient in the use of computers as a writing tool. They know how to access a word document and how to produce text. Their typing is rather laborious but they can produce coherent pieces of writing, since they know the use of vital keys, like space bar, return, shift and delete. They can alter text, changing the size of the font or highlighting it with bold type. They can save and print their work appropriately. They also use the computer to produce pictures for use in other subjects. For example, they can use a paint program to show a symmetrical pattern in mathematics. They can also drag shapes across the screen to form plants, to support their work in science. They can access a simple reference program to seek information, but this ability is underdeveloped. Pupils also know how to program a floor robot to make it move in a specific way.
3. Pupils in Key Stage 2 continue to make steady progress. They develop their word-processing skills well and become quite confident. They operate the mouse and use the keyboard comfortably. They know how to load compact disks. They can type in text and manipulate it quite freely. They can import pictures from the clip-art section, position them and alter their size as appropriate. They can use different publishing formats, and save and print with ease. They use computers to embellish their work in other subjects. In English, for example, pupils typed up poems, gave them an interesting layout and decorated them with a variety of pictures. They can also use the computer to make graphs for mathematics. They know how to gain information from reference software, like an encyclopaedia, for example. They can select a historical game and follow its intricate path, using all options available. They know how to use information technology in a broader sense. They can create a program of commands to operate a set of traffic lights. They can programme Lego cars and models in design and technology to move in set directions.
4. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs are effectively encouraged and make satisfactory progress overall. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.
5. Pupils have a good attitude towards the subject. Pupils are so keen to use computers that it is to their credit that they show restraint when they cannot use them as, for example, in a whole class demonstration. They listen well to the teachers and, once at the keyboard, show a determination to complete the work successfully. They are very supportive of other pupils, and older pupils are especially helpful with younger, less experienced ones.

6. The quality of the teaching is sound overall. Teachers demonstrate techniques and procedures well and set clear and achievable learning objectives. Where teachers are confident enough, they use errors by the pupils as a learning tool. They have a good rapport with the pupils and can trust them to work unsupervised at a computer. They have good expectations of pupils and enable them to use information technology as an integral part of other subjects. Teachers do not always, however, enable pupils to have sufficient time, because of the limited numbers of computers available. Teachers do not effectively assess pupils' progress and so target learning better. The school has recently introduced a new system of assessment, but it is too early to evaluate its success.

128. **Art**

1. During the inspection, one art lesson was observed in each key stage. From these lessons, a scrutiny of teachers' planning and art displayed around the school, it can be judged that pupils make satisfactory progress overall at Key Stages 1 and 2. These findings reflect those of the last inspection. Pupils with special educational needs are encouraged and appropriately supported. They make satisfactory progress at both key stages.
2. At Key Stage 1 pupils begin to work with paint and have experience of different sized brushes. However, there was little evidence of mixing colours and experimenting with different effects. Pupils use tissue paper and textiles to produce large-scale collages associated with topic work; for example, a colourful display depicting the Great Fire of London, linked to their history topic. Pupils make sound progress in the development of their observational drawing skills. They look carefully at herbs and a range of Tudor artefacts, recording their observations carefully, using pencils and oil pastels. At Key Stage 2, pupils satisfactorily extend their observational skills. They demonstrate an increasing awareness of colour, shade and shadow in their pastel drawings of domestic Viking artefacts. Pupils maintain a sketchbook, but as their work is not dated nor annotated, these provide limited evidence of pupils' progress. At both key stages, pupils use a small range of art-based computer programs to support their work across the curriculum, for example in displaying creative writing. There is little evidence of pupils' learning about the work of famous artists, although pupils recall painting irises in the style of Van Gogh.
3. Pupils enjoy art. They are attentive to their teachers and follow instructions carefully. They concentrate well and this is reflected in their attention to detail and in the quality of their finished work. Pupils are proud of their achievements. They use resources sensibly. They are co-operative and readily share equipment.
4. The overall quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding of the subject and their planning is generally sound. However, limited attention is given to extending pupils' knowledge and understanding of the work of a range of artists. There are no formalised procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress and using the results of assessment to guide future planning. At both key stages teachers encourage pupils' efforts and value their achievements. This is clearly demonstrated by the carefully mounted artwork, which is well displayed around the school. Pupils' interest and experience is successfully promoted by visits, such as those to the Bowes Museum. Teachers manage art lessons well. This helps to establish a purposeful working environment, in which pupils focus well on the work in hand. Pupils' learning in art successfully contributes to their broader spiritual and cultural development, for example at Key Stage 1, when they observe with wonder the beauty of the natural world found in minibeasts and plants.

132. **Design and technology**

1. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. Inspection findings reflect those of the last inspection at Key Stage 1. At Key Stage 2, they mark an improvement on the previous inspection, when pupils' attainment was found to be below national expectations and progress was unsatisfactory.

2. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1. They learn how to construct simple objects. For example, they can make a camel out of connecting blocks and a simple car from card and wooden wheels. They know how to make a jointed body, using card and paper fasteners and they can create their own basic puppet-flowers and finger puppets using a variety of materials. They learn skills like cutting, gluing and sewing. They can recognise a variety of foods, in particular fruit. They know of such exotic fruit as papaya and mango fruit and can cut them up with other more common species to make a fruit salad. At this stage, pupils' ability to design their own creations is underdeveloped, but their practical skills are sound.
3. Pupils also make steady progress in Key Stage 2. They can design and create their own Viking shields out of card to supplement a historical study. They can decorate stones as paperweights designing them specifically for a relative. They can design and produce ornate cardboard picture frames to show off pictures of the Creation. They know to how lay out their plans, itemising equipment and detailing procedure. This is seen when pupils design and build a land yacht, using wood, dowels, string and wheels. They can also make a powered vehicle using a wooden frame. Pupils can design the vehicle, cut out the wood and other material with reasonable accuracy and assemble it suitably. They can also attach a motor and set up the drive mechanism to power the vehicle.
4. At both key stages, pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.
5. Pupils enjoy the subject. They particularly enjoy the tangible aspects of the subject when, for example, handling food. They are less enthusiastic, however, about tasting unusual fruit. Pupils do not always show enough patience or care when making designs but they do work hard to complete them, since they are keen to try them out. Pupils benefit from working in groups and discuss their designs well.
6. Teaching is sound. Teachers prepare their lessons well and supply a good range of appropriate resources to motivate and help the pupils. They control pupils efficiently and ensure that pupils are aware of health and safety issues at all times. They assess previous work well in order to guide future progress, yet do not give pupils sufficient freedom to design their own items, especially in Key Stage 1. In addition, they do not always provide enough opportunity for all pupils to discuss their findings with the whole class. They timetable design and technology as part of science and, since there is no clear time allocation, the actual time spent on the subject is unlikely to be enough. The scrutiny of pupils' work did not show a good quantity of activities. The school has just adopted a new national scheme of work for design and technology and this may strengthen the coverage of the subject.

138.

138. **Geography**

1. Pupils make satisfactory progress at both key stages. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection.
2. In Key Stage 1, pupils make sound progress in developing a knowledge of their own locality and make simple maps of their route to school. They can recognise familiar buildings and have some knowledge of the layout of the village, although most pupils are uncertain about actual directions. Pupils visit local places, such as a greengrocer's shop to ascertain their use. Pupils know about farms and can identify familiar farm animals. Pupils also know about the processes of rivers and how a river flows from the hills to the sea. They appreciate the various uses of water, such as drinking, washing and watering crops. In Key Stage 2, pupils further their knowledge of rivers by learning about the water cycle. They know how crucial water is to life. They strengthen their awareness of the local area, making more detailed maps and layouts, which identify streets and most buildings of note. They learn about different methods of transport and their impact on the environment. Pupils with special educational needs are successfully encouraged and make satisfactory progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.

3. Pupils have a positive approach to the subject. They show particular interest when the subject is directly related to their own life, such as the local area. They are more reticent with other areas of the subject and they do not always take enough care with their presentation of work.
4. Teaching of geography is sound and teachers broaden pupils' experiences with many visits to interesting and relevant locations. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress are not in place. Teachers use resources, such as maps, well to stimulate pupils' interest and effectively use open-ended questions to stimulate pupils' thinking.

142. **History**

1. On the evidence available from the lessons observed, pupils' work, displays, talking to pupils and examination of teachers' planning and subject documentation, pupils make good progress throughout the school. These findings broadly reflect those of the previous inspection, when attainment was found to be in line with or high in relation to national expectations at Key Stages 1 and 2.
2. In both key stages pupils' make good progress in acquiring historical knowledge and understanding. In Key Stage 1, the youngest pupils talk about history using everyday language. They distinguish between yesterday and today, aspects of the past and present, and of old and new, for example when describing their visit to historical sites in Durham. They gain knowledge of historical figures, such as the Tudor kings and queens, including Queen Elizabeth 1; and also begin to learn about significant events and their dates, within the context of the topic they are studying. For example, they make good progress in their knowledge of the Great Fire of London, when they are learn about the Tudors and Stuarts. At Key Stage 2, pupils continue to make good progress as they successfully study specific periods in history. With particular regard to the mixed-age classes, care is taken in long-term planning to avoid repetition of topics. However, less focus is given to the progressive development of pupils' historical research skills. Pupils' studies include the Vikings and World War 11. Within these areas of study they demonstrate a good knowledge of aspects of life in different times, for example, Viking clothes, travel and settlement, and details of how children were evacuated to avoid the Blitz in the Second World War. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in developing the skills, which enable them to investigate the past. They examine a range of sources of historical information, including copies of official documents and newspaper articles, printed during the War. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are well supported and encouraged and make good progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
3. In Key Stage 1, pupils have an emerging awareness of the passage of time, with reference to their own lives and the lives of their parents and grandparents. As they move through both key stages, pupils' sustain their progress as they increase their knowledge of people and societies of the past. At Key Stage 1 and the beginning of Key Stage 2, pupils gain a grasp of chronology, which is supported by their use of a time line. However, older pupils make little use of time lines and this limits the development of their sense of chronology. The introduction of a good range of historical artefacts to support pupils' topic work very effectively promotes their learning at both key stages. Throughout the school, a well-planned programme of visits successfully motivates pupils' interest and involvement in their history topics. These include trips to the Fulling Mill in Durham at Key Stage 1 and Eden Camp at Key Stage 2. Visitors to school, such as a "Viking" and "a man from the Tudor period", significantly enhance pupil's knowledge, understanding and progress.
4. Pupils enjoy history and readily discuss topics they have studied. Pupils' work is carefully completed and illustrated, particularly for display. The classroom walls and displays around the school reflect their interest and the enthusiasm of the staff.
5. The teaching of history is good overall. Teachers' knowledge of history and understanding is sound. Lesson activities are carefully planned and resources are ready for pupils' use. A stimulating range of activities is used successfully to promote and reinforce pupils' knowledge and understanding. Effective

use is made of the resources available in school and well-planned use is made of loaned project boxes. There is currently limited use of information technology to extend learning. A good feature of the subject is the way in which it is planned to link in with other National Curriculum subjects. For example, in English the oldest Key Stage 2 pupils used historical sources as a basis for their work on writing a newspaper article. Such links successfully extend pupils' knowledge and understanding and enrich the curriculum. Teachers respond appropriately to pupils' efforts and discuss their work in lessons. However, there are no procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress and using information so gained to guide future planning.

#### 147. **Music**

1. In the course of the inspection, one lesson was observed at Key Stage 1 and two at Key Stage 2. On the basis of the lessons and assemblies observed and examination of teachers' planning and subject documentation, pupils make satisfactory progress overall throughout the school. These findings reflect those of the previous inspection. Pupils with special needs are sensitively supported and encouraged and make satisfactory progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, background or ethnicity.
2. In Key Stage 1, younger pupils keep an appropriate rhythm in action songs and differentiate between loud and soft sounds. Pupils make sound progress in singing tunefully and memorising words to a wide range of songs rhymes and hymns. Pupils in Key Stage 2 maintain satisfactory progress in their knowledge and understanding of music and the development of their musical skills. They distinguish between long and short sounds, demonstrate controlled phrasing when using their voices and perform musical patterns by ear, using a range of untuned percussion instruments. Older pupils successfully improvised with their voices and percussion instruments to create musical effects to accompany the story of the Pied Piper of Hamelin. Pupils of all ages have regular opportunities to listen to selected pieces of music and extend their knowledge and understanding, on entry to assemblies and most notably at one assembly each week, during which music appreciation is a particular focus.
3. Pupils' attitudes to music are good. They enjoy taking part in music lessons and participate well in the singing of hymns during assemblies. Pupils listen well to their teachers. They behave well, share resources and join in sensibly with all activities. Pupils respond with great enthusiasm when their music lesson incorporates lively folk dancing as well as music making, as in a Year 3/4 lesson focussing on a German folk song.
4. The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teaching is good when the lesson is particularly well planned, the teacher is clear and confident about what she wants the pupils to learn and expectations of pupils' participation are high, as in a Key Stage 2 singing/dancing session. Teachers plan lessons in accordance with the suggestions of a commercial scheme of work. This provides appropriate guidance for the overall development of pupils' skills in music as they move through the school. Teachers respond appropriately to pupils' performances during lessons. However, there are no procedures in place for assessing and recording pupils' progress and using the results of assessment to guide future planning.
5. School concerts and occasional visits into school of musical ensembles promote pupils' interest and musical awareness. Older pupils also have opportunities to participate in extra-curricular recorder lessons and a visiting specialist from the local education authority provides tuition in violin and guitar. These activities promote pupils' involvement and have a positive impact on the progress of those involved.

#### 152. **Physical education**

1. Pupils make satisfactory progress throughout the school. These findings reflect those of the last inspection. Pupils with special needs are encouraged and make sound progress. There are no significant differences in the progress of pupils of different gender, ethnicity or background.

2. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 1. In gymnastics, pupils can move around an area with controlled movements and make the most of available space. They can form a variety of shapes with their bodies and hold the shapes for short periods of time. In games, pupils can throw a small ball and catch it, whilst standing or walking, and do so when the ball is at different heights. They can throw balls accurately to a partner and catch the return. They can perform the same exercise with a larger ball. Pupils continue to make steady progress in Key Stage 2. In dance, they can perform simple aerobics and sustain a reasonable routine in response to music. They can create and perform their own expressive dance steps and put them into a suitable sequence. They can devise good movements to express stealth and mystery. In gymnastics, pupils show appropriate balance. They can, for example, maintain distinct body positions, such as pointing toes and holding out legs in a precise movement.
3. Pupils have a positive attitude to the subject. They clearly enjoy participating in sport, seen especially in an aerobics routine. They are responsive in class and are thoughtful when creating their own movements. They are responsible when they move around the hall and when they handle equipment. They work equally effectively on their own or with a partner. However, they do not always show enough real commitment to produce refined and highly controlled actions.
4. The teaching is generally satisfactory. Teachers are well organised and structure the lessons sensibly. They are aware of proper warm-up routines and advise pupils about any safety issues, particularly concerning the piles of chairs and tables at one end of the hall. They explain and demonstrate techniques appropriately and encourage pupils' performances well, praising effort as well as skill. They control the pupils at all times, mainly by ensuring that all the pupils are very active and also by keeping the lesson moving swiftly. Teachers use resources efficiently and they bring in other aspects of the curriculum. For example, they give pupils the opportunity to discuss how the mood and rhythms of music influences dance, and they ensure that pupils know that exercise increases the heart rate. Sometimes teaching is less effective. This is when lessons lack pace and interesting activities, and when pupils are not active enough. Procedures for assessing and recording pupils' progress have not been developed. Pupils' interest and involvement are successfully motivated by opportunities for participation in a good range of after-school sporting activities and competitions throughout the year.

## **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

### **156. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

1. The inspection took place between 18 - 21 October 1999. It was carried out by a team of three inspectors, including a lay inspector. The team spent a total of 10 inspection days in school.

The evidence includes:

- scrutiny of policies, planning, schemes of work, records and other documentation relating to aspects of the school's work, including budget figures, systems of financial management and attendance registers;
- observation of 41 lessons, in full or part;
- observation of whole school assemblies;
- listening to a representative sample of readers from each year group, selected by the school to represent the range of attainment within the school;
- scrutiny of completed work from a representative sample of pupils from each year group, selected by the school to represent the full range of attainment within the school;
- discussions with pupils in each key stage about aspects of their work;
- discussions with the headteacher, governors and staff;
- discussions with parents prior to and during the inspection, including a meeting for parents before the inspection attended by 13 parents, about arrangements made for the education of their children;
- parental questionnaire returns.
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**DATA AND INDICATORS**

**158. Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR - Y6	112	3	33	26

**Teachers and classes**

**Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	5.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	21

**Education support staff (YR - Y6)**

Total number of education support staff:	3
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	56.8
Average class size:	28

**Financial data**

Financial year:	1999
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	£
Total Income	209598
Total Expenditure	200749
Expenditure per pupil	1618.94
Balance brought forward from previous year	5633
Balance carried forward to next year	8849

**PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	90
Number of questionnaires returned:	26

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	40	44	12	4	
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	50	35	15		
The school handles complaints from parents well	24	52	16	8	
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	24	56	8	8	4
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	32	52	4	12	
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	35	45	8	12	
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	31	42	19	8	
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	24	44	4	20	8
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	48	36	8	4	4
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	46	23	23	8	
My child(ren) like(s) school	35	53	8	4	

**Other issues raised by parents**

Parents appreciated the welcoming, caring approach of the school. Parents found the headteacher approachable and ready to listen at all times.

Parents of pupils in Key Stage 2 expressed concern about the homework projects: some regarded them as too frequent and burdensome, others were concerned that parental input could affect the marks or grades received by pupils.