

INSPECTION REPORT

FARNE FIRST SCHOOL

Newcastle upon Tyne

LEA area: Newcastle upon Tyne

Unique reference number: 108455

Headteacher: Mr Ian Dixon

Reporting inspector: Dr Richard Perkin
14591

Dates of inspection: 12 - 14 March 2001

Inspection number: 185788

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	First School
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Marsden Lane Newbiggin Hall Newcastle upon Tyne
Postcode:	NE5 4AP
Telephone number:	0191 286 0268
Appropriate authority:	The Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mr K Williamson
Date of previous inspection:	30 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
14591	Richard Perkin	Registered inspector	English; English as an additional language; Art and design; History; Music	What sort of a school is it?; How high are standards? – The school's results and the pupils' achievements; How well is the school led and managed?
19446	Sue Wood	Lay inspector		How high are standards? - Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development; How well does the school care for its pupils?; How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
17085	George Mitchell	Team inspector	Education of children in the foundation stage; Equal opportunities; Science; Information and communication technology; Geography	How well are pupils taught?
15551	Pat Mitchell	Team inspector	Special educational needs; Mathematics; Design technology; Physical education; Religious education	How good are the curriculum and other opportunities offered to pupils?

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Farne is a broadly average sized first school catering for pupils from three to nine. It is situated in the Newbiggin Hall area of Newcastle upon Tyne, serving a large council estate, from which the large majority of pupils come. The ward in which the school is situated has one of the largest percentages of single parent families in the city and has relatively very few adults with higher education qualifications or children of high social class. Forty-six pupils receive free school meals though more qualify for them; at 28 per cent, this is above the national average. There are 184 pupils on role, including 40 children attending part-time in the nursery and 29 children attending full-time in the reception class and in a reception/Year 1 class. A substantial proportion of pupils (about 25 per cent) arrive at the school or leave at other than the usual starting or leaving dates, many of these being the children of army personnel. The school is in the process of changing from a first school into a primary school for pupils aged three to eleven. Almost all pupils are white; a very small number is in the early stages of learning English as an additional language. Twenty-nine pupils are on the register of special educational needs (16 per cent, which is below the national average); of these, four pupils have statements of special educational need (2.1 per cent, which is above the national average). Children's attainment on entry to the nursery is well below that expected for their age, particularly in language and literacy and mathematical development. The school is part of an Education Action Zone, which has provided extra funding and support, particularly for literacy and information and communication technology.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very effective school in which pupils of all levels of ability achieve well; those with special educational needs make very good progress. Standards in most subjects are in line with the national average and, in information and communication technology and art and design, they are above average. The quality of teaching and learning is very good in all parts of the school. The quality of leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff is excellent and the school receives very good support from its governing body. The school gives very good value for money.

What the school does well

- For pupils of all abilities, achievement is good in all subjects; in information and communication technology and art and design, it is very good.
- Pupils with special educational needs make very good progress because of very good teaching and other provision for them.
- Pupils' attitudes, behaviour and personal development are very good; there is a particular strength in the range of responsibilities taken on by the pupils.
- Teaching and learning are very good throughout the school; the nursery provides a very good start for children.
- A very rich curriculum is enhanced by a stimulating programme of visits and visitors; provision for pupils' personal development, particularly their spiritual, moral and social development, is very good.
- There is very good support and involvement by the parents.
- The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent and they are very well supported by a knowledgeable and committed governing body.

What could be improved

There are no major areas for improvement but the following less central areas for improvement have been identified:

- Teacher assessment in subjects other than nursery and reception, English and mathematics.
- The outdoor playground for nursery and reception children.
- Annual reports to parents and the school prospectus.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made very good improvement since the last inspection in November 1995 and the key issues from that inspection have been very effectively addressed. Medium and short-term planning has significantly improved and day to day assessment is now used very well to provide appropriate levels of challenge for pupils of all abilities. Schemes of work have been developed and are operating well and the programme for religious education now fully meets the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The senior management team, the subject co-ordinators and governors are involved in the systematic monitoring and evaluation of the curriculum and these processes are very effective in improving provision and standards. In addition to improvements relating to the key issues, the quality of teaching and learning has improved from the good levels identified at the last inspection and they are now very good. Similarly, the quality of leadership and management has improved along with the role of the governing body. The provision for pupils with special educational needs and their consequent progress are now very good. The implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies has improved provision for the development of pupils' skills in literacy and numeracy and met the detailed criticisms made in those subjects at the last inspection. Standards and provision for information and communication technology is significantly better now. Extra funding from the Educational Action Zone has enabled the enrichment of the curriculum in many ways. There is a strong commitment to and an equally strong capacity for further improvement

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on National Curriculum test results.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1998	1999	2000	2000
reading	E	D	D	C
writing	E	B	C	B
mathematics	E	C	C	A

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

The school's results in national tests for seven-year-olds have improved over time with a significant leap in standards between 1998 and 1999. The results in 2000 showed reading standards to be below the national average but in line with the results for similar schools. Standards of writing were in line with the national average and better than results for similar schools. In mathematics, standards were in line with the national average and well above average when compared to similar schools. The school has met its targets in reading, writing and mathematics in 2000 and has set challenging targets for itself for both seven and nine-year-olds for the coming year. Inspection judgements are that standards of reading for the present pupils in Year 2 have improved and are broadly in line with the national average. They are also in line for writing, mathematics and science, information and communication technology and religious education. The standards reached by nine-year-olds by the time they leave the school are also in line with the national average in English, mathematics and science. In information and communication technology and art and design, standards are better than average for nine-year-olds. In religious education, design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are at expected levels. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those who are gifted or talented, achieve well and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress. Children start nursery with low levels of attainment overall; by the time they leave the reception classes, their levels of attainment are still below those expected but they have made good progress. Children with English as an additional language make good progress because of the individual support they receive.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very positive. Pupils show great enthusiasm for their lessons and very good involvement in activities.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good in classrooms and elsewhere. Pupils respond very well to the teachers' high expectations of behaviour. They show a sensitive understanding of the impact of their actions on others and are quick to applaud other pupils' contributions.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. Pupils respond very well to the excellent range of opportunities for them to take on responsibilities. Relationships throughout the school are very constructive.
Attendance	Good. Pupils have responded well to the school's excellent systems to monitor and promote attendance and punctuality.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Very good	Very good	Very good

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

Sixty-three per cent of teaching and learning is very good or better; in one in ten lessons observed, the teaching was excellent. One hundred per cent of the teaching observed was satisfactory or better. The teaching of English is very good and the skills of literacy are very well taught. The teaching of mathematics is very good with very effective development of numeracy skills. Teachers work effectively with pupils of all levels of ability in all parts of the school; the teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good and these pupils are very well supported by effective special needs teachers and classroom assistants. There are particular strengths in the teaching of basic skills, in thorough planning with very clear learning objectives, in the brisk pace of lessons and the very effective use of support staff. Teachers use homework very well from nursery onwards. Often very effective classroom management is based on very constructive relationships. These qualities lead to very high levels of pupils' learning and, in particular, to very high levels of effort and productivity.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The quality and range of the curriculum is very good in all parts of the school. It is significantly enriched by a varied programme of visits and visitors, by the contribution of the local community and by the use of the local environment.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	Very good. Work is very well adapted to the pupils' individual needs and they are very well supported by knowledgeable and well-trained teachers and support staff.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Good. The local educational authority supplements the efforts of the school to provide appropriate work and support.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. Opportunities for pupils to reflect and to celebrate natural things are built into lessons. Teachers' very consistent class management reinforces moral messages from assemblies and the school rules and adults provide very effective role models. Many opportunities are provided for pupils to take on responsibilities, including a school council. Social skills are developed during residential visits. Pupils have good opportunities to work with artists and musicians. They experience customs and beliefs of other cultures in religious education lessons.
How well the school cares for its pupils	Good. There are excellent procedures for monitoring attendance and the monitoring of behaviour is very good. Assessment procedures are satisfactory for the most part, though they are not as effective in subjects other than English, mathematics and the early years.
How well the school works in partnership with parents	Very good. Parents have a very positive view of the school and their involvement in the work of the school greatly benefits pupils' learning. When the school was threatened with closure, the parents fought successfully to

keep it open.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	Excellent. The school has a very clear educational direction and is committed to raising pupils' standards of achievement as it expands into a primary school. Its aims and values are very consistently reflected in the life of the school. The deputy headteacher and co-ordinators fulfil their roles very successfully.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors fulfil their duties very effectively. They are well aware of the school's strengths and areas for development and are very well involved in school activities. Some required information is missing from the prospectus and the reception class annual reports to parents omit comment on some of the areas of learning.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good. The systematic monitoring of teaching contributes very well to staff development. Test results are analysed and used to set group and individual targets in English and mathematics and to identify priorities for the school. The school improvement plan is very effective in showing how those priorities will be implemented.
The strategic use of resources	Very good. Financial planning is very effective in supporting the school's educational priorities and the principles of best value are applied well. The funds provided by the Educational Action Zone have been used very well and are having a strong impact on standards and provision. Grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, are used very well. Financial control and the day-to-day running of the school are very efficient.
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources	The school is well staffed with high quality teachers and support staff who work together very effectively as a team. The accommodation is good and some aspects of the outdoor provision are very good. However, the nursery and reception play areas need resurfacing and marking out in ways that stimulate children's learning. There is a good level of learning resources in all subjects, particularly for English and information and communication technology.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their children like school and make good progress.• Teaching and leadership and management are good.• They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems.• The school has high expectations of pupils.• The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible.	There were no criticisms.

Inspection judgements strongly concur with parents' positive views.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

- 1 The attainment of children entering the nursery varies but overall is well below what is expected for their age. They achieve well in the nursery and reception classes because of the very good teaching but, by the time they begin Year 1, although their attainment is still below average in language and literacy, mathematical development, knowledge and understanding of the world and in creative and physical development, it is much nearer to the standard expected of children of the same age. Their personal and social development is at the level expected of this age group and children behave very well and settle to work confidently. Children with English as an additional language make good progress because of the extra support they receive. Children with special educational needs make very good progress because their needs are identified very early, work is adapted appropriately for them and they receive high quality support.
- 2 The school's results in national tests for seven-year-olds have improved over time with a significant leap in standards between 1998 and 1999. Pupils' performance in these tests in 2000 showed reading standards to be below the national average; this was true both for those reaching the expected level (Level 2) and for those reaching the higher level (Level 3). However, their performance was in line with that of pupils in similar schools. Standards of writing were in line with the national average, though no pupils achieved Level 3, and results were better than those for similar schools. In mathematics, standards were in line with the national average for pupils achieving both the expected level and the higher level. Standards were well above average when compared to similar schools. The school's internal tests in reading, writing and mathematics show a similar picture in writing and mathematics though in reading they show pupils comparing well with both national and Newcastle averages.
- 3 Teacher assessments for seven-year-olds were close to test results in reading, writing and mathematics. In science, teacher assessments showed standards to be well below the national average but close to the average for similar schools. The performance of boys and girls was similar in reading and maths. In writing, the efforts made by the school to promote boys' interest in writing were effective and boys achieved better than the national average for boys while girls achieved slightly below the national average for girls. The results of internal assessments in reading, writing and mathematics for nine-year-olds show that pupils in Year 4 are achieving standards that are similar to those of nine-year-olds nationally. The school has met its targets in reading, writing and mathematics in 2000 and has set challenging targets for itself for both seven and nine-year-olds for the coming year.
- 4 Since the last inspection, pupils' performance in all subjects has improved at the national average rate and, in art and information and communication technology, has improved even more. The inspection judgement is that standards of reading for the pupils now in Year 2 are broadly in line with the national average. Standards are also at expected levels in writing and speaking and listening. Standards in all aspects of English for nine-year-olds are at expected levels for their age. Pupils' attainment in mathematics is at expected levels for both seven and nine-year-olds. Because of the very effective teaching of basic skills in English and mathematics, pupils of all levels of ability achieve well and those with special educational needs make very good progress. Appropriately challenging work ensures that more able and gifted pupils achieve to their potential and pupils with special educational needs receive the support they require to make very good progress in the adapted tasks they are given. Standards in science are much better

than indicated in last year's teacher assessments and are at expected levels for both seven and nine-year-olds. The discrepancy is explained by the fact that the school's assessment systems in science are not yet sufficiently well developed and, in a small school, the scores of a few pupils can have a significant impact when comparing the school's results with the national standard.

- 5 Standards in information and communication technology are in line with the national average for seven-year-olds and above average by the time pupils leave the school at nine. The extra training for staff and the significant improvement in resources have enabled pupils to experience a wide range of activities in information and communication technology and they have responded very well. Standards in religious education are at expected levels by seven and nine. By the time they leave the school, pupils' attainment in art is above average, to a large extent because the rich range of visits and visitors stimulates often exciting art work. In design and technology, geography, history, music and physical education, standards are at expected levels.
- 6 Pupils of all levels of ability, including those who are gifted or talented, achieve well and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress throughout the school. In class lessons, especially in English and mathematics lessons, adapted work is provided at the right level for them. The work is carefully structured and based on an accurate assessment of their needs. The experienced and well-trained learning support assistants who work with them help them to learn and concentrate on the lessons. Sometimes pupils are withdrawn from lessons for extra help. Here pupils work with teachers to learn the skills identified in their individual programmes in small steps with much individual help. The teaching is very good and good communication between the support teachers and the class teachers ensures that pupils learn the same things as the rest of the class. Pupils are identified and helped at a very early age. This contributes to the very good progress they make. Pupils sometimes improve so much they are taken off the special educational needs register. Pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties make very good progress and are learning to control their behaviour and work well in the lessons. They have individual behaviour programmes and complete star charts as they try to reach their targets. One pupil with behavioural difficulties has recently improved greatly and does not now need a statement of special educational needs.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

- 7 Pupils' attitudes to school are very positive. They are very keen to come to school and show great interest in their lessons where they settle quickly to task and activities, often greeting the prospect of, for example, games about compound words with enthusiasm. Pupils listen very carefully in class sessions and are eager to respond to questions, giving answers that are sensible and pertinent to discussions. Pupils clearly know what is expected of them and they are often keen to please the class teacher by taking time to present their work in an acceptable manner. They work very quietly and almost always sensibly, usually sustaining concentration whether they are working as individuals, in pairs or in a group. They work very well together when asked and are generous in their appreciation of one another's contributions. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated very well into the classes and are able to work co-operatively with other pupils. They are interested in their work and join in all class activities and visits, including residential visits. All adults value their achievements and this helps to increase their confidence and self-esteem.
- 8 The pupils clearly know that the school expects very good behaviour and that they are encouraged to show respect to each other, the resources and buildings. Consequently, pupils' behaviour is very good throughout the whole school day. This is the result of very

good teaching that interests and inspires pupils to learn and that has high expectations of behaviour and hard work. The school is a very orderly community and pupils move around the building very sensibly. On the rare occasions when pupils behave inappropriately, teachers quickly address the problem without distracting from the focus of the lesson. The majority of pupils understand the impact of their actions on others and what results from inappropriate behaviour. There are no recorded exclusions in the last academic year.

- 9 Relationships are very good throughout the school community. Pupils know the daily routines and quickly respond to teachers' requests. All the adults who work in the school act as very good role models for the pupils. Pupils respond very positively to opportunities to take on a very wide range of responsibilities, such as selling apples for a break time snack and preparing the hall for assemblies. They read a rainfall gauge regularly and are responsible for play equipment at lunchtimes. Older pupils look after the younger ones in the dining room. The school council is made up of two elected members from each year group and they hold constructive and well-organised meetings to organise events and discuss school issues. Opportunities for responsibility are given to all pupils regardless of their age or ability. Every class also has an organisational structure for daily jobs such as giving out, collecting and tidying books. Pupils carry out such responsibilities very enthusiastically and are always eager to please. They are very polite to visitors, offering to open doors or help them find the room they are looking for. They show initiative through organising collections for the Blue Peter appeals, setting up a task force and organising fund raising events.
- 10 The very good attitudes of the pupils and the continuing very good behaviour are the result of the very good relationships that have been promoted by the school and these continue to have a positive effect on the school's caring ethos and consequently on the achievement of pupils.
- 11 The school's attendance figures are good and have improved significantly since the previous inspection. The regular attendance of pupils enables teachers to build on learning from previous lessons and this has a positive impact on the overall attainment and progress of pupils. The vast majority of pupils consistently arrive at school on time, ensuring that the school day starts promptly and little time for learning is lost.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

- 12 In the previous inspection, the quality of teaching and learning was good but there were shortcomings in the teaching of music. There has been a marked improvement and the quality of teaching and learning is now very good throughout the school and is a particular strength. The school has remedied the shortcomings in music. In fifty per cent of the lessons seen during the inspection, the standard of teaching was very good, a further ten per cent was excellent and about thirty per cent was good. No teaching was unsatisfactory. A similar pattern emerged for the quality of learning.
- 13 The very good quality of teaching and learning in the nursery and reception classes (the foundation stage) provides children with a secure and productive start to their school life. The nursery is particularly well organised and attractive, which helps to create a very appropriate atmosphere within which young children can learn quickly. The rooms are full of interesting, motivating equipment and displays designed to encourage children to learn across all the recommended areas of experience. The teacher ensures that all staff and visitors have a clear understanding of the underlying principles of early learning and, consequently, children receive consistent support through positive, encouraging relationships and stimulating activities. The important role of parents is recognised and they are kept fully informed about how the nursery operates and how their children are

doing. Parents are also encouraged to work alongside staff if they wish. Staff keep a close eye on each child's activities and progress, ensuring that they all have a full range of experience and make progress in developing skills and knowledge. This level of care continues into the reception classes where staff are very keen that children continue their development. Lessons are very well planned to provide purposeful and interesting activities so that children are keen to learn, work hard and make good progress, particularly in their language and social development. There are times in reception when lessons lose their usual rapid pace and pupils lose interest. Also the outdoor play area for nursery and reception has a loose surface and the markings do not enable the full development of children's language and physical skills. Nevertheless, teaching in these classes has a significant positive effect on children's all round development.

- 14 Through the rest of the school, the quality of teaching and learning continues to be very good, ensuring pupils' consistent progress. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects of the curriculum, which ensures that lessons are very well planned with clear and appropriate objectives that are shared with the pupils, helping them to understand what they are going to learn. Teachers are particularly skilled when teaching basic language and mathematical skills and this is reflected in the very good quality of literacy and numeracy lessons, where sequences of interesting and challenging activities help pupils to make good progress in their reading, writing, speaking, listening and mathematical skills and knowledge. A good example was seen in a Year 4 lesson, where pupils studied an interesting passage about a storm at sea, discussed how words had been used to create tension and then produced their own writing, successfully developing their own skills in using adjectives to create a desired atmosphere. The lesson ended with a game that made learning spelling both interesting and fun.
- 15 Teachers are well aware of the need to ensure that every pupil fully participates in all lessons. In discussions, questions at varying levels of difficulty are used to ensure that everyone is involved. All staff provide good role models, treating all pupils in the same caring manner regardless of gender, background, ethnicity or level of attainment. The teaching of pupils with special educational needs is very good. The targets set in individual programmes are specific and detailed and allow teachers to plan specially adapted work at the right level. Teachers use various methods very well to support pupils with special educational needs. Sometimes pupils work with others of a similar ability and receive extra help. For example, in a Year 4 religious education lesson, the teacher sat with a group of lower achieving pupils and, by discussing with them how they help others in school, enabled them to complete their work. Sometimes they work in mixed ability pairs or groups and help each other, sometimes specially adapted work is provided or they are withdrawn for individual or small group sessions. They enjoy their lessons and consequently work hard. There are very good relationships between adults and pupils and this helps these pupils to feel confident. The learning support assistants and support teachers are experienced, well trained and very capable. They provide very high quality support for the pupils.
- 16 Apart from discussions, which are well used to stimulate learning, teachers use a range of other appropriate methods to vary pupils' experiences and make sure that they do not lose interest. This was exemplified by a lesson in Year 2, where the teacher used a story, discussion, a game involving pupils forming groups, a problem solving exercise and the consideration of very interesting photographs to help pupils understand how human beings are the same yet different and how people change as they grow.
- 17 Whilst there are isolated incidences of inappropriate behaviour, pupils are generally very well managed by all the staff. The resulting very good behaviour helps to ensure that lessons are calm and purposeful and that pupils work without unnecessary interruptions. The very positive relationships established help pupils to operate confidently with a clear

understanding of what is expected of them and play a significant role in establishing an ideal atmosphere for learning.

- 18 Lessons usually have a good pace, although there are instances where discussions last too long and time is wasted. Resources for learning, often made by teachers, are well prepared and help to ensure pupils' interest. Teachers also make good use of visitors to support small groups of pupils and support staff are used very productively to help pupils, particularly those with special educational needs. Learning is also enhanced by the very appropriate use of visits to near and distant places. There is particularly effective use of computers and the facilities and personnel provided through the Education Action Zone, with the result that pupils' progress in information and communication technology is particularly marked; for example, Year 3 pupils are not only able to operate digital cameras, they can also transfer photos onto computers and manipulate the images.
- 19 In most lessons, teachers make day-to-day assessments of progress and these are well used to plan future lessons that build on what pupils know, understand and can do. There are occasions, however, when assessments are not sufficiently rigorous and, consequently, future lessons are less successful than they should be because pupils are not fully prepared for the new learning.
- 20 The use of homework to help pupils practise and develop their knowledge and skills is a feature of school life. From the very beginning in the nursery, regular activities are provided to help pupils make good use of time at home. This very good practice goes a long way towards helping to improve the standards pupils achieve.

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

- 21 The quality and range of the curriculum provided are very good. All subjects of the National Curriculum are taught and literacy and numeracy are rightly prioritised. Within the science curriculum, the opportunities for investigative work are particularly good and in information and communication technology, pupils are able to learn to use the Internet. There are particular strengths in physical education and art. In physical education, pupils learn to play a wide variety of sports, including rugby and hockey, and take part in adventurous activities. In art, pupils study the work of a range of artists and sculptors in ways that enhance their own work. The geography curriculum makes very good use of the local environment and the history curriculum is supported by a number of visits and visitors. The National Literacy Strategy has been very effectively implemented, resulting in good achievement. Particularly good features are the teaching of phonics and basic reading skills for younger pupils and the consistently high quality of the teachers' planning. The National Numeracy Strategy has been very effectively implemented and opportunities for mental calculation and solving problems are well developed in all classes.
- 22 The curriculum for pupils in the nursery and reception classes is very good. Every area of learning is very carefully planned in ways that support the development of all the early learning goals. For example, a range of activities is provided for pupils to select from and make decisions about in order to encourage the development of social skills.
- 23 All subjects have useful policies and schemes of work to guide teachers in their planning of lessons. These reflect the National Curriculum and show an improvement from the last inspection. There are particular strengths in the policies for mathematics and physical education that provide good guidance and recognise the needs of the higher and lower achieving pupils. There is a well thought out drama policy that includes

opportunities for drama within the English lessons. A key issue from the last inspection was the lack of a coherent programme for religious education. This has been dealt with effectively and the school has developed a yearly plan for each class based on the locally agreed syllabus.

- 24 The school curriculum benefits from long term plans that spell out what each class will be learning about each term. Further detail is provided by the teachers' own well-developed medium term plans. These clearly show teaching and learning objectives and often include details of how and when pupils will be assessed. They now fully reflect the requirements of the National Curriculum. Very good progress has been made with planning, thus meeting a key issue from the last inspection.
- 25 There is very good provision for pupils' personal and social education through early learning programmes and opportunities throughout school for pupils to work together and share experiences during residential visits. Citizenship education is effectively promoted by an active school council, competently chaired by a Year 4 pupil, which involves pupils throughout the school in making decisions that affect them all. Pupils in Year 4 take on a wide range of responsibilities, including helping to care for younger pupils. The school takes healthy living seriously. For example, pupils in Year 4 sell apples during morning playtime. The school has won a healthy school award several times. There is a scheme of work for sex education that runs throughout the school and involves the school nurse. Drug awareness is sensitively taught as part of the science curriculum and involves contributions from the local police.
- 26 The provision for extra-curricular activities is good and contributes to the pupils' rich experience of school. There is a very good range of sporting activities and pupils have opportunities to play in competitions and tournaments; for example, Farne teams are often successful in local tournaments for football, rugby and cricket. There are other activities on offer that help to extend skills; for example, drama, music and computer clubs are appreciated and well attended by pupils of all abilities. There is a good range of visits within the locality and to other places of interest, including residential visits to Northumberland, the coast and the Lake District. All these activities are open to, and supported by, pupils with special educational needs.
- 27 All pupils have access to the school's curriculum. Staff are well aware of the need to ensure that pupils are fully involved in all elements of school life, regardless of gender, background, ethnicity or level of attainment.
- 28 The provision for pupils with special educational needs is very good. They receive the same curriculum as other pupils but it is adapted so that they can understand it and succeed in it. Any problems are identified at an early age and strategies are well thought out to help on an individual basis. The support provided, both by teachers and learning support assistants, is of high quality and well organised. Individual education programmes have clear targets for pupils to reach against which progress is reviewed regularly. The grouping of pupils for extra help is flexible and pupils move in and out of the groups as needs are met or identified. Pupils with special educational needs are full, respected and valued members of the school.
- 29 The school maintains very good links with business, the church and the local community that contribute to pupils' learning. For example, they use the local sports centres, undertake environmental work and work with elderly people. Constructive links with the local professional football club, sponsored by the Education Action Zone, enable older pupils to visit the club's computer suite where they are designing a web page for the school. Local firms provide food for residential visits and the school nurse, the

community policeman, the fire service and the fire brigade help school to deliver the personal and social education programme.

- 30 There are good links with local schools that benefit pupils. Schools join together for sporting, musical and theatrical events and staff train together. Pupils from the local high school visit each week to help pupils to use computers.
- 31 Provision for the pupils' spiritual development is very good. Collective worship meets statutory requirements and provides a clear message with elements of praise and celebration and a time for reflection. There are well-planned assembly themes and the messages given are of value and related directly to the lives of pupils. For example, the story of King Midas was told enthusiastically using visual aids that engrossed all the pupils in the story. Pupils reflected on what was precious to them and appreciated that the most precious things are not gold, but people. The weekly assembly performed by pupils is a good feature, promoting their personal development well. The local vicar leads the assembly every month. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 write their own prayers and class prayers at the end of the day provide a calm and reflective end to the school day. There are very good opportunities for pupils to develop spiritual awareness throughout the curriculum. For example, in the nursery, children become very excited when they see endless reflections of colour and light when experimenting with mirrors. Pupils appreciate nature and the environment in the wild life garden, where the recently arrived frogs are providing great interest.
- 32 Provision for moral development is very good. Moral values are promoted without an over dependence on rewards and sanctions but through the very good relationships between staff and pupils. Religious education lessons make a good contribution when pupils consider moral questions. For example, when they study William Wilberforce and the slave trade, they write with empathy about why people should not be slaves. Pupils are very clear about right and wrong and are developing a moral and social conscience. Within each class, pupils discuss and agree on their own class rules. They are helped to appreciate others' efforts and Year 4 pupils wrote enthusiastic letters of thanks to the person who made the bird table, listing the birds they had seen.
- 33 Provision for social development is very good. The desire to help others and to undertake responsibilities is developed throughout the school. Pupils from all classes are part of the school council, their latest meeting being to organise 'Red Nose Day' to raise money for charity. Pupils gradually take on more responsibilities as they get older and Year 4 pupils help younger pupils with reading and in the dining room and organise the 'sports bag' of play equipment for use at playtimes. There are many opportunities for all pupils to take part in performances and concerts and to be part of a regional recycling scheme. There are various opportunities for pupils to use their own initiative, for example to plan an assembly or to decide how to raise funds for charity. Residential visits and numerous other visits to support the curriculum lead to a sense of school community.
- 34 Provision for cultural development is good and pupils are tolerant, appreciative and show an understanding of their own and, in a more limited way, other cultures. Pupils enjoy a wide variety of experiences that the school plans. They visit museums and castles, the local church, a Cathedral, Synagogue and Hindu temple. They learn about other religions in their religious education lessons. As part of their art curriculum, they study the work of other artists and visit a sculpture park. Music lessons promote enjoyment of a range of music from other cultures and they join in the Newcastle singing for pleasure concert. In geography, pupils study life in other countries as well as using the local environment well. They are being well prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

- 35 The school continues to provide a very caring environment in which pupils can learn. The school has satisfactory procedures in place to ensure pupils' welfare, health and safety, and they deploy appropriate agencies to support the needs of individual pupils. The headteacher is responsible for child protection and ensures that all staff are aware of relevant procedures. Pupils are well known to staff and feel confident to approach any adult if they have worries or concerns. There are clear practices that are followed to report and record accidents. All aspects of health and safety in the school are documented and regular fire evacuation practices are held. However, the nursery playground surface is in poor condition and this restricts opportunities for the younger children's physical development.
- 36 The school's procedures to monitor pupils' attendance are excellent and this has had a positive effect on the overall attendance figures of the school. Parents are very clear about the procedures they have to follow if their child is absent. There are effective systems to support all pupils' needs during their time at the school. Pupils' academic and personal development needs are met through staff knowing each individual child well and they quickly recognise any change in behaviour or attitude. At a whole school assembly each week the special achievement or extra effort shown by individual pupils is publicly acknowledged. Pupils with special educational needs are very well provided for with personal needs included in their individual educational programs. The assessment of pupils with special educational needs is very good. As soon as a pupil is identified as having difficulties, these are assessed and strategies are put in place to deal with the problem. A detailed individual programme is written and progress towards the targets is assessed and recorded regularly, with new targets set termly. The provision specified in statements of special educational need is fully implemented.
- 37 The monitoring of behaviour throughout the school is very good. Pupils are regularly reminded of the school's expectations. The school clearly does not tolerate anti-social behaviour, such as bullying. There are suitable systems, which are followed consistently if there is any inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour.
- 38 The headteacher is the assessment co-ordinator. Currently there is an inconsistent approach to the gathering and using of assessment data. The school has very good systems for assessing and recording the work of the youngest children and older pupils' achievements in English and mathematics and the information gained is used effectively to inform future planning. Individual targets are set and reviewed regularly. The school is trying out systems to assess pupils' achievement in science. However, at present there is little or no formal assessment of pupils' achievement in the other subjects of the curriculum, although most teachers make informal assessments. The school plans to use a computerised assessment system to build up detailed tracking files for individual pupils to inform planning and to record progress.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

- 39 Parents of pupils have very positive attitudes towards the school and are very satisfied with what it provides and achieves. They say their children like to go to school, make good progress and are encouraged to become mature and responsible. They feel that the teaching in the school is good. Parents fought successfully to keep the school open when it was threatened with closure last year.
- 40 The school provides parents with considerable opportunities to become involved in their children's learning. Parents receive regular information through regular letters. The reading diaries provide useful two-way communication and are extensively used. The

very good homework arrangements also provide opportunities for parents to be involved in their children's work. Curriculum information is clearly displayed on all classroom doors to keep parents very well informed on the areas that their children are studying. This enables parents to support their children's learning by sharing first hand experiences or artefacts. The school also runs curriculum sessions for parents; for example, a recent mathematics afternoon helped to inform them of modern teaching techniques. Other courses related to, for example, computers and developing classroom assistant skills are also provided. Parents also enjoy and appreciate opportunities to share in their children's work through attendance at school productions and the schools sports day.

- 41 The school's prospectus is a well-presented document but does not fully meet the statutory reporting requirements. It does not include the rates of authorised and unauthorised absence of pupils, the total number of registered pupils or the National Curriculum assessment results for seven-year-old pupils. The annual governors' report to parents is a document that reflects the work of the governing body and complies with statutory requirements for reporting to parents.
- 42 The parents are well informed of their children's progress through the annual written reports. They tell parents of progress made in all subjects over the academic year. Although they do not include areas for parents to support their children where they are experiencing difficulty, pupils' targets are regularly up dated at the front of pupils' exercise books, which are freely available for parents to see. The reports for children in the reception classes are of good quality but fail to clearly identify all the early learning goals for these young children. Consultations with the teachers enable parents to look at their children's work and discuss their progress and overall development in more detail. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are informed as soon as a pupil is identified as needing extra help. Any problems with behaviour are immediately discussed with parents. They are consulted at all stages to ensure a full understanding of their child's needs. Parents are invited to attend review meetings and have individual programme targets discussed with them. They are often involved in helping the pupils at home.
- 43 The school fully encourages parents to help in school in a variety of capacities. This includes hearing pupils read, baking, artwork and supporting pupils working on the computers. The school makes parents feel very welcome, and they feel comfortable and valued for their work by the pupils and staff. Several parents accompany pupils on school trips and they have also being involved in the Books and Beyond project, which is currently being run by the school to enhance pupils' reading standards.
- 44 The Friends of Farne First School organises a range of social and fund raising events to help provide additional resources for the school that have a positive effect on pupils' learning. The school fully appreciates the hard work and dedication of the group.
- 45 The school continues to work hard to keep parents fully informed about all aspects of their children's life at school and to look for ways to improve parents' involvement in their children's learning.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

- 46 The leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are excellent. The school has a clear view of where it wants to go as it expands into a primary school and is strongly committed to continuing to improve pupils' standards of achievement and to maintaining its role within the local community. The senior management team, consisting of the headteacher and the very effective and experienced deputy

headteacher, provides very strong leadership to the team of knowledgeable co-ordinators and to the other adults who work in the school. Subjects, particularly those which are priority subjects at present, are well led and managed by co-ordinators who know their subjects well and monitor both teachers' and pupils' performance. Each subject co-ordinator has an action plan that forms part of the school improvement plan; these are appropriately detailed and costed. The special educational needs co-ordinator has ensured that the good policy for special educational needs is appropriately based on the recommendations of the Code of Practice and emphasises early action to meet individuals' needs when there are problems. The policy is very effectively implemented throughout school and contributes to the very good achievement made by these pupils. Funding received from the delegation of the local education authority's support service has been very well used to employ a half time special needs teacher.

- 47 Both governors and staff contribute to the school's very effective school improvement plan, which is firmly based on a statement of intent that highlights the school's place in the community and its ethos of caring and sharing. It also states the school's commitment to achievement for all its pupils, whatever their background or capability. The school's ethos is very well reflected in practice in all aspects of the life of the school, from the friendly family feel of the dining room to the crowded corridors before and after school, when parents come to collect their children and talk to the teachers. The attractive displays that celebrate pupils' work also reflect the school's values. The school's shared commitment to improvement is seen in the way that the school's literacy and numeracy strategies have been successfully implemented and in the consistency with which the school's behaviour policy is applied. Imaginative approaches have been taken to improve the quality of pupils' reading and these are being successful in raising standards and promoting positive attitudes to learning. Membership of the Educational Action Zone is playing a significant role in raising standards, particularly in English, mathematics and information and communication technology. The extra staff provided have been perceptively deployed to produce maximum effect on pupils' achievements. Equipment for the very youngest children has been very well used. The funding for artists to work in school has not only enhanced pupils' cultural development but has also helped to raise standards in art. Pupils' high standards in information and communication technology are also to a significant extent due to the funding and support provided through the Educational Action Zone.
- 48 The school is very well supported by a committed and energetic governing body, led by a well informed chairperson. The governors take their role as critical friends to the school seriously and are not afraid to challenge decisions when necessary. Because of the number of governors who play an active part in the life of the school, the governing body is very well aware of the school's strengths and the areas in which it needs to improve. They are also well aware of the implications of expanding into a primary school. Governors with particular roles in, for example, working with subject co-ordinators, take their responsibilities seriously and ensure that they are well informed. The governing body fulfils its statutory duties very well, although the school's prospectus does not include all that it should do and reports for children in the reception class do not include all required sections.
- 49 The school has an effective strategy for managing the performance of teachers and staff development arrangements are good, contributing to the very high quality of teaching. There are very good arrangements to ensure that teachers new to the school are informed and supported. There are useful guidelines for supply teachers and for teacher training and other students working in the school.
- 50 The school's educational priorities are very well supported by its skilful financial planning. Financial decisions are invariably informed by up-to-date information about the school's

budget and take account of more than merely financial implications; they also consider, for example, the implications for the load the decisions place on staff and on the headteacher. The school is good at ensuring that decisions give good value and is very good at finding alternative and additional sources of funding. Particular grants, such as those for pupils with special educational needs, are used very well for their designated purposes. An excellent school administrator works closely with the headteacher to ensure that financial control and the day to day running of the school are extremely good. Largely because of her very well developed information and communication technology skills, the school uses information and communication technology very efficiently to expedite school administration.

- 51 The school is well staffed with teachers and support staff of high quality who are deployed to good effect. It is well supplied with learning resources in every subject and these are used very well in lessons and elsewhere. The good internal accommodation is used imaginatively, with the extra classroom proving particularly valuable for teaching pupils with special educational needs. There is ample space outside and this is generally used very effectively; for example, pupils designed and made the mosaic tiles that surround the pond and the wildlife area is well used in science. While the nursery and reception classes have generous outdoor play spaces, these need resurfacing and marking out to provide more stimulating learning opportunities for the children.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

52 There are no key issues to address but the headteacher, staff and governors should consider the following minor issues:

- Improve assessment practices in subjects other than English, mathematics and the foundation stage to assess and record the attainment and progress of individual pupils in order to ensure that future work is more closely matched to pupils' existing knowledge and skills. (*paragraphs 38,87,91,95,99,101,112,118,123*)
- Improve the surface of the outdoor play areas for nursery and reception children and provide more stimulating opportunities there for developmental play. (*paragraphs 35,62*).
- Ensure that annual reports to the parents of reception children include comments on all the areas of learning and that the school prospectus includes all required information about attendance and national test results. (*paragraphs 41, 43, 48*)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	38
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	33

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
10	53	29	8	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	20	164
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/a	46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	4
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	0	29

English as an additional language

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

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	22
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	35

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	5.6
National comparative data	5.2

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2000	21	20	41

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	20	19
	Girls	16	18	18
	Total	33	33	37
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	80 (79)	93 (90)	90 (83)
	National	84 (82)	85 (83)	90 (87)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	17	19	18
	Girls	17	18	16
	Total	34	37	34
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	83 (83)	90 (90)	83 (83)
	National	84 (82)	88 (86)	88 (87)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	0
White	135
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR - Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25
Average class size	23

Education support staff: YR - Y6

Total number of education support staff	4
Total aggregate hours worked per week	75

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	25

Number of pupils per FTE adult	10
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	2000
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	£
Total income	371210
Total expenditure	350379
Expenditure per pupil	1623
Balance brought forward from previous year	4112
Balance carried forward to next year	24943

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	184
Number of questionnaires returned	51

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	94	4	2		
My child is making good progress in school.	92	6	2		
Behaviour in the school is good.	78	18	2	2	
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	75	22	2		2
The teaching is good.	88	12			
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	80	16	2	2	
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	86	14			
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	84	16			
The school works closely with parents.	75	22	4		
The school is well led and managed.	88	12			
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	82	18			
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	70	26	2		2

Parents are very supportive of the school.

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

53 In the last inspection, children's standards in the early years were found to be in line with what would be expected; however, the nature of what is now called the foundation stage has changed and direct comparisons are not useful. The foundation stage includes the children who attend part-time at the school's 26 place nursery and 29 children in the reception classes. Whilst their abilities on entry to the nursery are in a wide range, overall their attainment is well below that found in most schools. Speaking skills are under developed, the children have difficulty in working with others and their experiences of the world are limited. However, as a result of the very good standard of teaching, children's progress through nursery and reception is good and by the end of the foundation stage, although they are still somewhat below average, their skills have improved in all areas of experience. These findings are supported by the outcomes of the baseline assessments made by the school at the beginning and end of reception.

Personal, social and emotional development

54 Children's progress in this area is very good, so that they are on line to have skills that would be similar to those expected in most schools by the end of the reception year. Rapid progress begins in the nursery where children learn to play and work with others, relate to adults and use the resources around them to advance their knowledge. They learn to care for one another and have respect for other people's feelings. Progress continues in the reception classes and some children are confident to contribute to group discussions and most work with concentration by themselves and with others. Their behaviour is consistently very good.

55 This progress is due to the quality and consistency of the caring relationships manifested by all the staff involved. They provide good role models for the children to follow, helping them to understand how to look after one another, to share, to take turns and the importance of perseverance. The range of interesting activities in the nursery helps to develop not only their academic skills but also their ability to make choices and the school lunch provided on alternate weeks also offers a good source of social training. In reception, there are jobs that begin to promote ideas about taking responsibility and greater challenges are placed on children's contributions to the life of the class.

Language and literacy

56 Although children arrive in the nursery with weak language skills, the close attention staff give to this aspect of development helps to promote good progress so that, although many children are still below average, by the end of the reception year, their language skills have improved, particularly in reading. They know about books and understand that words convey meaning, they are beginning to read and know the sounds made by individual letters. When speaking, some talk clearly, whilst others are still hesitant and have difficulty in expressing their ideas. Listening skills are developing and children are particularly attentive to stories. Most are able to write their own names and some are beginning to form sentences. They know a range of songs and rhymes and enjoy demonstrating their knowledge. Children with English as an additional language are well supported and make good progress.

- 57 The good progress results from the rich language environment created in nursery and reception classes. Books are readily available and used often; for example, children answering the register at the beginning of the day often sit looking at reading books, all children take home reading books, there are times during the day when children can decide to pick up a book and teachers use books to read stories and introduce ideas for activities. The nursery is full of photographs of the children themselves with sentence captions to explain what they are doing and to motivate them to read about themselves and their friends. Speaking and listening skills are developed constantly, sometimes formally when children are encouraged to respond to questions but often informally as staff and children interact in the course of the day; for example, in the well organised role play area. Teachers ensure that support staff are well briefed to bring out the language element from each activity.

Mathematical development

- 58 Whilst overall standards are not in line with expectations, children make good progress from a low starting point and a significant number are on line to reach the expected level. Children in nursery can count confidently and are beginning to relate numbers to articles. They weigh and measure and are beginning to use words such as 'longer' and 'shorter'. They recognise shapes when doing jigsaws and are beginning to learn the names of mathematical shapes. In reception, children count on and count back and are familiar with the names of numbers above ten. They measure and weigh 'babies' and are learning the names of the days of the week. Ideas about 'yesterday', 'today' and 'tomorrow' are still very vague and decisions about who is number one or number two in a line are uncertain.
- 59 Teaching is very good. This area of learning is also well supported by the quality of the classroom displays. Number lines, number questions based on photographs of the children themselves, mathematical shape pictures, daily records, weighing and measuring words, all help to keep mathematical ideas in front of the children. Teachers keep careful records of the progress of individuals and targets for development are noted in pupils' folders. Work in reception includes more formal numeracy lessons; for example, one was successful in helping children to begin to know the sequence of the days of the week. However, some sections of the session demanded too great a stretch of concentration for most children and their concentration and interest began to wane.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

- 60 Many children have well below average skills in this aspect when they arrive at school but they make good progress to the point where they are able to operate in all the recommended areas albeit with less success than might be expected. They can investigate the quality of objects using their senses, as when pupils had to decide what material would be suitable for a baby's nappy. Most were able to identify the softer materials as more appropriate. Others, in discussion with the teacher, tried to find the most waterproof of a range of fabrics. In the nursery, children learn about the needs of living creatures, such as fish and birds, whilst reception children can talk about how they have changed since they were babies. Children use simple materials to build models, such as robots made from glued and painted boxes. All the children enjoy using the computers and demonstrate good skills in creating and printing bright, coloured patterns.
- 61 Very good teaching provides children with a wide range of appropriate practical activities. The stimulating nursery is full of attractively organised resources, which provoke curiosity. A display of mirrors, torches and coloured gels produced imaginative responses to the wonder of the effects created. A display of a street scene helped children to learn about the activities of a town and to consider road safety in a secure

environment. In reception, children investigated a range of fruit using all their senses, discovering that fruit does not make a noise and that lemons are not as nice as they might look.

Physical development

- 62 Children's good progress is evidenced by their skills in manipulating simple tools such as scissors and glue to create models and paint and brushes for pictures. They participate fully in sessions in the school hall and enjoy using the outside play area, where they climb, slide and swing and use the toy vehicles well, co-operating nicely. In reception they move in reasonable time with music but find it hard to move slowly. They can find their own space but lack awareness when moving and bump into one another. In a drama session, pupils needed considerable prompting to follow instructions and had difficulty in producing imaginative movements.
- 63 Teaching is good. The school's resources to support children's physical development are good. The spacious hall is well used and the large outside play area is well equipped with apparatus and toy vehicles that can carry two or three children. The surface of the play area is crumbling, however, and the markings do not provide clear opportunities for children to practise precise control of the vehicles or to respond to more complex oral instructions, which inhibits their development to some extent. Opportunities for children to develop and control small movements are many, from the wide range of construction kits to sand and water play and tracing activities. Children particularly enjoy completing the increasingly difficult range of attractive jigsaws. Staff use praise well to encourage progress and four adults worked very effectively to help children develop their responses to a movement/drama session.

Creative development

- 64 The children make good progress in developing their creative skills across a range of media. Nursery children can paint with reasonable control, print using a range of objects and make exciting box models. Two dimensional work in reception includes paper collages of spring flowers, observational drawings of plants, 'plates of food' in a range of media, attractive free-brush paintings and neat prints. The children know the names of colours and can mix them when painting. Three-dimensional robots show sound control of shape and colour. The quality of their products is, however, below what would be expected of children at this stage. All the children know a number of poems and rhymes, which they sing with enthusiasm, a fine sense of rhythm and some regard for tune. Nursery children enjoy role play and those in reception are excited by drama, particularly when working in a group. In reception, the children show good control of the mouse when designing pictures of their own faces on the computer.
- 65 Teaching is very good, based upon an understanding of the kind of experiences that will promote children's creative development. Staff help children to become involved in creative activity and use language well to encourage improved results. Resources provided are attractive and encourage children sometimes to experiment and sometimes to follow guidelines, although there is a clear emphasis on the importance of individual expression. Stories, rhymes, songs and drama are regular features of life in the foundation stage.

Overall provision

- 66 The nursery teacher, who is the co-ordinator for the foundation stage, has a very clear understanding of children's needs and of the nature and implications of the new

requirements. Induction procedures are good, recognising the importance of keeping parents fully informed and of providing a gradual and secure start for the children. Links with home are maintained so that any issues can be dealt with quickly and harmoniously. The policies and planning which underpin work in nursery and reception are detailed and very effective. Children's progress is monitored daily to ensure that they experience the full range of activities and to observe and record the development of skills and knowledge. Any problems come to light quickly and children requiring special help are identified and supported, if necessary by outside specialists. The school also uses the local authority's system of assessment at the beginning and end of the reception year. The very effective organisation is founded on the high quality relationships developed by the staff who manifest a respect and regard for each individual child.

ENGLISH

- 67 Pupils' standards of attainment in speaking and listening, reading and writing are at expected levels by the time they leave the school. This maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. Results in the national tests for seven-year-olds in 2000 showed standards in reading to be below the national average but in line with the average in schools with a similar number of free school meals. Standards in writing were in line with the national average and above the average for similar schools. Test results for seven-year-olds over the past four years show a pattern of steady improvement though pupils' performance in writing dropped slightly last year. There was no significant difference in attainment between boys and girls in reading but the school's efforts to motivate boys' writing were reflected in the fact that boys' achievements were slightly above the national average for boys while girls' results were slightly below the national girls' average. The school's internal test results show sustained improvement, particularly in reading. The inspection judgement is that pupils' attainment in both reading and writing at ages nine and seven is in line with the national average and pupils are also attaining average levels in speaking and listening. Pupils achieve well in all aspects of English, including more able pupils and those for whom English is an additional language. Pupils with special educational needs achieve very well because teachers adapt work appropriately for them and they receive very skilled support from well-trained and carefully briefed classroom assistants.
- 68 In both infant and junior classes, many opportunities are provided for pupils to listen to the teacher and to each other and for them to work together on co-operative tasks. The high quality of teachers' reading aloud sets a good example and catches pupils' interest very well, encouraging good listening; effective follow-up questioning further ensures that pupils pay attention and listen with understanding. Teachers not only model expressive reading well but their lively, clear speaking leads to similar qualities in pupils' speaking. Less confident pupils are encouraged and supported by the teachers and other adults. Their self-esteem is raised when other pupils applaud their contributions, as in a lesson where a pupil was describing what he had been doing the previous evening; the boy was at first quite hesitant but soon responded to his audience's response and described his experience fluently and at length. Teachers use imaginative ways of promoting speech; for example, pupils in a religious education lesson used a microphone to speak in role as characters in Bible stories. Most pupils speak with reasonable confidence and clarity and more able pupils use humour to good effect. In many lessons, pupils use appropriate technical language effectively in their explanations of, for example, which words have consonant clusters. In a science lesson, older pupils explained clearly and accurately their methods for finding the most absorbent paper for the cleaners to mop up spills. Pupils respond well to the use of role-play in some lessons. Pupils elected to the school council take the opportunity to speak up well.

- 69 The school has targeted reading recently as a result of the analysis of internal and national test results and the introduction of projects such as Books from Beyond and the accelerated reading project has increased levels of pupils' reading and understanding. Both projects have been received with enthusiasm by the pupils, with boys in particular finding the competitive element motivating. The involvement of parents in the Books from Beyond project and their use of their children's reading diaries are also productive. Consequently, many pupils read a good range of books, in many cases producing a written summary or review to show their understanding of what they have read. Pupils in Year 4 read at average levels for their age, with a good proportion reading with mature understanding and good levels of expression. Most nine-year-old pupils have a good range of strategies for tackling unfamiliar words because of the very systematic and effective way these basic skills have been taught. Their skills in retrieving information from books are well developed for their age. Pupils in Year 2 also benefit from the very skilled teaching of reading and read confidently and with understanding from a range of fiction and non-fiction texts. They are confident in using the contents and index of a book to discover the information they need. Throughout the school, shared reading sessions very effectively promote expressive reading aloud and group guided reading sessions ensure that pupils of all abilities develop both basic and more advanced skills at levels appropriate for their age. The reading skills of lower attainers and pupils with special educational needs improve steadily because of the extra support they receive both in the classroom in individual and group work and when they are withdrawn to work with a special needs teacher or in a group following the Additional Literacy strategy. More able pupils are presented with more difficult books and benefit from the challenge these present.
- 70 Detailed writing targets are set for groups and individuals in each year and pupils are well aware of what is expected of them. Pupils are given a good range of opportunities to write independently for a variety of purposes and audiences. They successfully use a number of different structures and outlines to help them to give their stories and accounts a logical shape. They draft their stories before editing them to produce a final version, sometimes using the computer to word-process this. For most pupils, writing is of a satisfactory quality and for a significant number, it is good. For example, a more able pupil's version of a slave's diary extract written after a religious education lesson tells the tale well, showing a good understanding of the feelings of the slave in well chosen words that are for the most part spelt correctly. Lower attainers, whilst not reaching the levels expected for their age, nonetheless make good progress in improving their writing skills.
- 71 The pupils' skills in spelling, punctuation and handwriting are systematically developed throughout the school, building on the firm base established in the reception class, so that standards in all three are at expected levels by the time pupils leave the school. Pupils are confident to try to spell unfamiliar words but also are good at applying the spelling rules they have learnt or identifying words that are exceptions to the rule. By the time pupils are seven, many can use clear, joined and fluent handwriting with generally accurate punctuation; for example, they use speech marks correctly and reasonably consistently. These younger pupils also write for a variety of purposes and audiences in most subjects.
- 72 The quality of teaching and learning is very good for both infants and juniors. Teachers have a secure knowledge of what they are teaching and provide very good examples for pupils in reading and speaking with clear expression and in the accurate use of technical language. This very effective teaching leads to very good levels of learning for pupils of all levels of ability; for example, in one effectively planned lesson in Year 1, less able pupils reinforced their skills in matching words to pictures independently; pupils of average ability made gains in recognising and blending clusters of consonant and in

using a range of reading strategies; and more able pupils made very good improvements in using the context of the story to help them to read unfamiliar words. The teaching of basic literacy skills is very good. Classroom displays support learning through useful word banks, story language phrases and lists of connecting words that pupils might use instead of 'and then ...'. Pupils make good use of these resources as well as dictionaries and thesauruses so that they are confident in working independently of the teacher when it is appropriate. Teachers are not satisfied with providing pupils a single tool to help their writing. For example, in a Year 3 lesson, three possible models were presented to help pupils to structure their story and the teacher made sure that each was well understood by the pupils; consequently, the stories that the pupils produced almost all had a logical structure to them and told the story well. Teachers and support staff working with pupils with special educational needs plan work very carefully to ensure the development of the pupils' confidence and self-esteem, providing them with very useful strategies and tools for them to learn basic reading and writing skills.

- 73 Teachers' planning for literacy lessons is very good, having clear learning objectives that are shared with the pupils and basing work for different groups on previous assessments of their work. Pupils respond very well to the high levels of challenge and to the lively presentation of material, often greeting activities with delight; Year 1 pupils were thrilled to be playing a game with consonant cluster boxes. Younger pupils participate in stories such as 'We're going on a Bear Hunt' with very high levels of participation and enjoyment. Teachers' very well developed classroom management skills, firmly based on constructive relationships, result in very high standards of behaviour and concentration; pupils work very productively. Homework is used very effectively to reinforce and extend learning in English. All pupils take their reading books home and many read to adults almost every day. Teachers set homework carefully; for example, in a lesson with Year 2 pupils, the teacher ensured that pupils were clear about the spelling homework set and provided strategies to help them remember spelling rules and exceptions to those rules. Most lessons have a very brisk pace and very little time is wasted; just occasionally, however, activities go on too long and pupils lose concentration. Support staff and other supporting adults are used very effectively; they are thoroughly briefed about their role and note the progress made by the pupils they are working with. In whole group sessions, classroom assistants support less able pupils unobtrusively so that they keep up with the other pupils. Literacy skills are developed well in other areas of the curriculum such as information and communication technology, religious education and history.
- 74 The subject co-ordinator has developed an effective literacy action plan. Many improvements have taken place in English provision since the last inspection partly due to the very effective and consistent implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and partly because of the various projects to support reading. English is well resourced and the library is pleasant and well organised with satisfactory stocks of fiction and non-fiction, supplemented by classroom collections. The co-ordinator has helped to improve teaching in the subject through monitoring lessons and has successfully encouraged the staff to moderate samples of pupils' writing and handwriting. The curriculum is enhanced by drama sessions, sometimes taught by a governor, and by the reading enhancement projects. Literacy is well supported by other subjects, particularly science, history and religious education. The subject has benefited from good levels of support from the Educational Action Zone in terms of additional funding that has been effectively used to improve pupils' standards of literacy.

MATHEMATICS

- 75 The standards reached in mathematics are similar to the national average and above those reached in similar schools by the age of seven. The number of pupils reaching

higher standards is above the national average. Pupils reach standards appropriate for their age by the time they leave the school. The targets set for 2000 have been exceeded. Although standards were judged to be average at the previous inspection, they have improved since then along with the national trend. Pupils start school with well below average skills in mathematics and so are achieving well. The improvements are made because of the very effective introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy, the consistently very good teaching, the interest and enthusiasm of the pupils and the very good progress made by pupils with special educational needs. The co-ordinator has developed termly assessment tasks for all pupils and makes very good use of these and national assessment results to find out where there are weaknesses and to do something about them. For example, problem solving was found to be a weaker area and this is now included in most lessons. This is effective in improving standards.

- 76 In Years 1 and 2, pupils of all abilities make good progress. They are given a thorough grounding in basic number skills and learn the correct mathematical vocabulary. Teachers plan very thoroughly for pupils of all abilities and their planning identifies the vocabulary to be taught. For example, in Year 1, they learn to read, write and put into the correct order the numbers from 0 to 100 using a number square. They practise this in an interesting way, as a 'what is my number?' game. This motivates the pupils, as they have to think of ways of giving clues. They learn to use the correct vocabulary; for example, 'it is between 10 and 20,' 'it is bigger than 20', 'the tens digit is 2'. Pupils with special educational needs join in using smaller numbers; higher achieving pupils work with larger numbers.
- 77 In Year 2, pupils build on the skills learnt in Year 1. All pupils have individual targets to meet, based on their previous work. More able pupils are given challenging work to do and are able to use a variety of different strategies to work out problems. The teacher encourages this by an excellent use of questions. For example, she asks them to explain how they know that 34 is bigger than 30, and what does 'between' a number mean. One pupil answers, 'when it is between it has to be more than the small number and less than the large number', showing her understanding. Higher achieving pupils respond well to the challenge, are excited by the work they are doing and choose to use large numbers. Mathematical games are well used to keep pupils' interest high and provide practice in manipulating increasingly large numbers accurately. Pupils solve problems using money and time and estimate and measure accurately using centimetres.
- 78 In Years 3 and 4, pupils of all abilities make good progress. Learning support assistants are well used and, during class and group lessons, sit with pupils with special educational needs and help them to understand and join in. For example, in Year 3, pupils use different strategies to double numbers. Some pupils double two digit numbers, while higher achievers double three digit numbers such as 776 and 999. Pupils with special educational needs work with a learning support assistant and, using apparatus to help, are able to double numbers such as 23 and 42. Expectations are high and pupils enjoy the challenges, working hard and concentrating throughout the lessons. They listen well to the teacher and to each other when they explain their strategies to the rest of the class.
- 79 In Year 4, pupils rapidly and confidently recall addition, subtraction, multiplication and division facts during the mental mathematics session. During the main part of the lesson, they extend their understanding of multiplication facts and use these, and associated division facts, to write number statements. Throughout the lesson, pupils enjoy the work and try hard. The plenary session at the end is well chosen to involve the lower achieving pupils as they write their number statements on the board and explain them to the class. This helps to boost their confidence.

- 80 Lower achieving pupils and pupils with special educational needs make very good progress in mathematics. Adapted work is always provided for them and they often receive extra support in the lessons. Some pupils have an individual programme with targets to be met in mathematics. They are withdrawn for extra help, in small groups, from support teachers. In these lessons, they work on the same topics as the rest of the class but use smaller numbers and receive individual help.
- 81 The quality of teaching is consistently very good and is monitored regularly by the co-ordinator. Teachers have very good knowledge of how to teach mathematics and are enthusiastic about it, thus motivating the pupils. Most lessons take place in a good humoured atmosphere of mutual respect which encourages pupils to speak out confidently, to be prepared to try new things and to want to work hard. Pupils' behaviour is very good, sometimes excellent, and they are highly motivated by the work set and the brisk pace of lessons. Teachers are skilled in questioning pupils and adapt their questions for pupils of different abilities so they can all take part in the lessons. They have high expectations of all pupils; this is demonstrated by work set for them, which really makes them think. Daily plans are evaluated after each lesson and this allows teachers to adapt their work according to how well pupils learn. Pupils have their own targets and this is helping pupils to know where they are and how they can improve. Teachers use a variety of strategies and methods to help pupils learn; for example, pupils all have number cards to put on the number square. Homework is well used to involve parents and help pupils to progress. Pupils take home mathematics games each week. Although information technology was not seen used during the inspection, it is well used to support the data handling part of the curriculum.
- 82 Numeracy skills are supported well in other areas of the curriculum; for example, pupils use accurate measuring in design technology and use tables and charts to record results in science.

SCIENCE

- 83 At the end of Year 2, teachers assess the levels that pupils reach in science. In Year 2000, the proportion of pupils reaching the average standard was assessed as being well below what would be found in most schools and the number reaching the above average standard was assessed as being below what would be found in most schools. In comparison with similar schools, pupils' standards were close to the average. The trend in standards is improving and work of the present generation of pupils seen during the inspection was consistent with average results by the age of seven. This discrepancy is explained by the fact that the school's assessment systems in science are not yet sufficiently well developed and, in a small school, the scores of a few pupils can have a significant impact when comparing the school's results with the national standard. Inspection evidence also indicates that pupils' standards in Year 4 are in line with those expected for nine-year-olds. There is no significant difference between the attainment of boys and girls and pupils at all levels of attainment, including those with special educational needs, make good progress.
- 84 In the previous inspection, pupils' standards were found to be similar to the national average although their understanding of science investigations was found to be weak. The quality of teaching and learning was good in Years 1 and 2 and satisfactory in Years 3 and 4. Assessment tasks were being developed and the scheme of work needed to be revised in the light of new national requirements. There have been some improvements: teaching and learning are now good overall with some very good lessons, the scheme of work is well planned and pupils make good progress in learning about investigations. Other elements have remained the same: pupils' standards are

still average and assessment tasks still need to be established. Overall, the school has made satisfactory progress.

- 85 From Year 1 to Year 4, pupils' knowledge and skills improve. For example, Year 1 pupils learn that pushes and pulls are forces, whilst in Year 4, they are beginning to appreciate the effect of friction on moving objects. Year 2 pupils learn how to separate materials into different groups; Year 4 pupils build on this when they learn how temperature can change materials from solids to liquids to gases. In their study of living things, pupils build upon early learning about the differences between living and non-living things as they consider what living things need for healthy growth. Pupils' practical skills also progress as they develop observational and recording skills and their appreciation of how investigations can be carried out.
- 86 Teaching is marked by detailed planning which results in lessons that have clear objectives. Teachers tell pupils what they will be learning and sometimes write objectives on the board so that everyone knows clearly what the lesson is about. This clear focus means that, through the school, pupils make good progress in learning scientific knowledge and skills. The fact that they enter Year 1 with below average knowledge and understanding makes their progress all the more commendable. Teachers place a significant emphasis on the development of pupils' investigative skills; for example, a very good lesson in Year 3 involved the creation of a fair test for absorbency. The topic was related to the need to clear up after school dinner making a link with real life and creating a reason for doing the work. Pupils were encouraged to offer a reason for their methods, decide how they would measure their results and give explanations for the outcomes of their tests. During the lesson, the teacher's prompting and questioning helped pupils to develop their appreciation of how investigations can be constructed and of some of the problems that arise in ensuring that a test is fair. Teachers demonstrate good knowledge of the subject and as a result are able to help pupils explore scientific ideas as well as skills. This was exemplified in a Year 2 lesson about variation in living things, where the teacher used a well organised sequence of activities, based upon a clear understanding of the topic, to help pupils appreciate that although human beings are similar in many ways, differences can be seen when we look more closely.
- 87 The quality of relationships is also a very positive feature of science lessons. Teachers treat pupils with respect, providing clear and demanding guidelines about what is expected. Pupils know that they have to behave well, to have respect for others and to work hard at challenging tasks. The resulting very good behaviour, keenness to learn and high levels of concentration lead to calm and purposeful lessons, where pupils make good progress not only in their understanding of science but also in their ability to work together with an appreciation of other people's ideas. Teachers pay attention to equality of opportunity, making sure that everyone is involved in all the activities and particularly those pupils who have special educational needs. These pupils are very effectively supported, sometimes by well briefed non-teaching staff, ensuring that very good progress is made.
- 88 Science lessons make a good contribution to the development of pupils' numeracy and literacy skills through stimulating discussions, writing reports and collecting, measuring and recording data from practical activities. Computer skills are also linked to science work; for example, in a Year 1 lesson about sound, pupils used a CD Rom to find more information about the musical instruments they were studying.
- 89 The fact that assessment systems are not yet fully established in science leads to a weakness in teaching and learning. The teachers have not been involved in sharing ideas about the levels at which pupils are working, either within the school or with other

schools; assessment activities that could be used to establish levels of pupils' understanding have not yet been fully developed. This means that, occasionally, pupils are expected to work on ideas that they do not fully understand, which inhibits their ability to make the most of new activities.

- 90 The subject has a knowledgeable co-ordinator who has been involved in monitoring teaching and learning and who has, rightly, placed emphasis on the practical element in science. As a result, lessons contain significant first hand experience for pupils and offer them plenty of opportunities to develop their own ways of recording the outcomes of investigations, thus improving pupils' attainment and independence. The teacher is aware of the need to improve assessment procedures and a new system is now being trialed, indicating that the school is well placed to continue its progress.

ART AND DESIGN

- 91 By the time pupils leave the school, their standards of attainment are above the expected levels for their age; this is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils of all levels of ability, including those with special educational needs, achieve very well because of the effective teaching and a very rich curriculum. The curriculum is enhanced by a stimulating programme of visits and visitors that enables pupils of all ages and abilities to experience a wide range of art in a variety of media.
- 92 The knowledgeable subject co-ordinator ensures that pupils are introduced not only to a wide variety of the art of the past (as far back as cave paintings) but also encounter the work of today's artists. Such experiences produce fertile opportunities for pupils' learning. For example, pupils visited Newcastle Quayside to look at the sculptures there, produced work based on their observations back at school and then worked with a sculptor to refine and vary their own sculptures. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 worked with an artist to produce impressive mosaic tiles to place around the school pond and used wooden off cuts to create convincing wooden sculptures. A visit to a castle and a museum led to group projects resulting in decorated paper pulp shields and striking fabric wall hangings with a Tudor theme. The skills of weaving were developed during a recycling project when pupils wove plastic bags together to make a bath mat. Year 2 pupils have a good knowledge of the qualities of the work of painters such as Mondrian and Kandinsky and talk knowledgeably about patterns in nature, comparing them to the kind of patterns they observe in work of those artists. They produce their own paintings and computer generated drawings that show a good understanding of the artists' styles. Pupils' skills of observation and recording in a broad range of media are developed systematically as they move through the school. Year 1 pupils produce self-portraits in the style of two different modern painters. Older pupils study David Hockney's use of line in his portraits and then use what they have learned to draw their own self-portraits. By the time they are in Year 4, pupils use their sketch books to experiment and practise before they draw and paint from life and from the inspiration of other artists, with often good levels of skill.
- 93 The quality of teaching and learning is good and sometimes very good. Teachers have high expectations and very well developed class management skills that lead to very high standards of behaviour and a very productive work rate. Their stimulating choice of material catches and holds pupils' attention and promotes careful observation that is further developed by the teacher's sensitive questioning. Activities are skilfully presented in ways that promote pupils' independence and experimentation. They discuss their own and other pupils' work and are generous in appreciating the qualities they see. Lower attainers are encouraged when the teacher and class value their opinions and contributions and there is challenge for pupils of all levels of ability. Classroom support is very well used to enable less confident pupils to achieve well and relationships are

invariably constructive. While teachers know what each pupil is capable of, assessments of pupils' work are informal and not consistently recorded.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

- 94 No teaching was observed during the inspection but scrutiny of pupils work and discussions with teachers show that standards reached by the pupils at the age of seven are at the level typical of pupils of this age. Pupils reach appropriate levels for their age by the age of nine. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well. Teachers display the pupils' work well in the classrooms and this encourages pupils to try hard.
- 95 By the age of seven, pupils are able to design a glove puppet using a labelled drawing. They list the materials they will need to make the puppet and consider how it will be joined and how it will be used. They make a paper pattern, select the appropriate tools and materials and explain why they have chosen them. They use a variety of materials and demonstrate pride in their work with the attention to detail and the care taken in the making and decorating. They learn from their mistakes and their finished puppets are carefully designed to fit their hands.
- 96 By the age of nine, pupils are able to design and make a money container. They examine commercially produced money containers in detail and then design their own, using a labelled drawing. They show an awareness of the need for it to fulfil certain conditions, for example, who it is to be made for. They choose a variety of materials to work with, including knitting, and show care and attention to detail when making it. They evaluate the finished model and answer questions about how they can improve it. For example, one pupil made a wrist purse in the shape of a watch. It was evaluated as being a bit difficult to open easily and safely.
- 97 Pupils receive a curriculum based on national recommendations from a scheme of work that builds on skills and promotes continuity and progression throughout school. At the last inspection there was no scheme of work. This has been rectified. The co-ordinators informally monitor the standards of work done but there is no systematic assessment of pupils' achievements.

GEOGRAPHY

- 98 In the last inspection, pupils' standards were found to be in line with what would be expected but there was no co-ordinator for the subject. Only one lesson was seen during the present inspection but evidence from this, the sample of pupils' work and the geography portfolio indicates that all pupils, from being below average on entry to Year 1, make good progress so that by the end of Year 2 they attain average standards and at the end of Year 4 they are attaining average standards for their age. The school has also established a co-ordinator for geography. These factors indicate satisfactory progress since the last inspection.
- 99 There is every indication from observations in other subjects and the sample of pupils' work, that the geography lesson seen reflected the general quality of teaching. Year 3 pupils were involved in discussing and recording similarities and differences between life in the local area and a village in India. They worked very hard with interest, using a range of suitable resources, including the Internet. Relationships between teacher and pupils

were caring and positive and resulted in very good behaviour, with pupils operating confidently within the clear guidelines set. In the final part of the lesson, everyone, regardless of their level of attainment, was able to talk about their findings, whilst the rest of the class listened attentively to the range of relevant information that had been gathered. As a result of a very well organised lesson, pupils made good progress in acquiring knowledge about another country and developed their skills in using different sources to gather information – a key skill. There is also ample evidence of the very effective use of visits and visitors to help bring pupils' experiences to life.

100 As they progress through the school, pupils' knowledge and skills improve; in Year 1, they learn about addresses and make sketch maps of their journey to school, Year 2 pupils learn about a map of the British Isles and the types of farming in different places, pupils in Year 3 learn about the clothing that is suitable for the different climatic regions of the Earth, whilst Year 4 pupils know about countries such as India and Australia and build upon their weather studies by learning how to measure local weather patterns. Written reports provide effective practice for pupils' literacy skills and map and direction work links well with numeracy. Computer skills are well developed through the word processing of reports and as pupils use CD Rom and the Internet to research information.

101 The effective co-ordinator monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning to ensure a well balanced curriculum. Assessments of pupils' learning across a class group are done but a system to monitor the progress of individuals is not yet in place. There are plans to enable the co-ordinator to monitor the quality of teaching and learning, which will help the school to continue its good progress.

HISTORY

102 No history lessons were observed so no judgement is made about the quality of teaching and learning. It is clear from looking at pupils' work and talking to them that their standards of attainment are at expected levels by the time they leave the school; this maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

103 Pupils in Year 4 have a sound knowledge of the history of the Second World War, how it started and the conditions under which people lived. They write letters home with some understanding as evacuees. They feel the anxiety felt by Anne Frank as she hid from the Germans. Pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the life and customs of the ancient Egyptians, which is enhanced by their study of modern Egypt in geography. They also know about the history, customs and music of the American Indians. A programme of visits and visitors enhances the curriculum and is particularly valuable in helping pupils to apply their learning to their own experiences. Making paper pulp shields after a visit to a museum, for example, enabled pupils to learn about the qualities needed for a shield to function properly. A visit to a local lighthouse helped them to understand the bravery of Grace Darling. This learning was very effectively reinforced when a teacher read aloud from a book about Grace Darling and helped the pupils to relive those experiences vividly; pupils were totally engrossed.

104 As they move through the school, pupils develop their understanding of different kinds of evidence. They experience first hand evidence during their visits and teachers use classroom displays to prompt pupils to discover what a particular piece of evidence can tell them about, for example, the ancient Egyptians. They recognise that interviewing people can provide insights into the past and that reading first hand accounts can give them valuable information. Pupils in Year 2 learn that travel now is different not only from a long time ago but that it was even more different a long, long time ago. They learn too

that the hospital where Mary Seacole and Florence Nightingale worked was very different from hospitals today. The subject makes a very good contribution to pupils' cultural development by helping them to understand their local culture as well as customs and practices in other parts of the world. The humanities co-ordinator effectively monitors pupils' work and teachers' planning and has clear ideas for the development of the subject. However, assessment is informal and the progress of individual pupils is not systematically tracked and recorded.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY

- 105 The school has made good progress since the previous inspection when there was insufficient evidence for a judgement to be made about pupils' standards although they were found to have a reasonable level of competence in keyboard skills and used CD Rom to access information. Evidence from the present inspection indicates that pupils make good progress in learning computer skills through the Years 1 and 2 and by the end of Year 2, their attainment is similar to that found in most schools, whilst by the end of Year 4, they have made very good progress and are achieving standards better than expected for their age. Boys and girls do well and there is no evidence of significant differences in their attainment. Pupils at all levels of attainment and pupils who have special educational needs make similar progress.
- 106 Whilst little direct teaching of computer skills was seen, there is evidence to show that teachers have a very good understanding of how programs can be used to enhance pupils' learning across the curriculum. Computers in classrooms are used regularly and independently by pupils who have good keyboard skills and are increasingly familiar with pull down menus and mouse controls. Their good progress is exemplified by word processing skills; in Year 1, they design and print their own Christmas cards, Year 2 pupils type instruction lists using 'shift' and 'return', in Year 3, pupils can alter the size, type and colour of letter fonts for recycling logos, as well as producing well organised, paragraphed, printed essays, whilst Year 4 pupils have access to a full range of processing skills. In one brief example of teaching, attentive pupils were given clear instructions about how a graphic program could be used to produce images similar in style to the Russian abstract artist, Kandinsky. The teacher referred appropriately to previous learning and made effective use of a visiting student from a local high school to help small groups of pupils practise the skills explained.
- 107 The development of pupils' literacy skills through word processing and language games is a feature of the school's work; there are also appropriate opportunities for the enhancement of numeracy skills through the collection of information in surveys, with pupils using the power of the computer to organise the resulting data. Links with other subjects include the use of CD Rom to find information about, for example, geography, history and science topics.
- 108 The school makes very good use of resources available through the Education Action Zone. Laptop computers have been acquired that are easy to transport and can be linked in a small network so that groups of pupils can work together, learning from one another. The advantage of this was seen when the expertise of a non-teaching member of staff helped pupils to learn how to use the Internet in an after school club. All the pupils in Year 4 regularly visit a local centre to use a computer suite, under expert tuition, where they are developing a web site for the school. A technician visits school to ensure that systems are in working order and the information and communication technology consultant from the Educational Action Zone works with groups of pupils. The advantage of these resources can be seen in the level of understanding that pupils acquire; for example, pupils in Year 3 took a series of photographs with digital cameras,

entered the resulting files into a central server, accessed the files through their laptops and manipulated the size, shape and background of selected images.

- 109 The outcome of this good provision is not only that pupils make good progress but also that they develop good working habits. They behave very well when using technical equipment, working with interest, confidence and concentration. Year 4 pupils readily recall their experiences, talking enthusiastically about word processing, data handling and how a robot can be programmed to produce a desired pattern of movement.
- 110 The subject is well co-ordinated by the headteacher who has been effective in acquiring suitable resources and providing a scheme of work that supports teachers well and is linked to the recommendations of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. Assessment files are being established, which help teachers to monitor pupils' progress and ensure the progressive development of skills. The school is well placed to continue its good progress.

MUSIC

- 111 Only one music lesson was observed so no judgement is made about the quality of teaching and learning. It is clear from looking at pupils' work and listening to them sing in assemblies that their standards of attainment are at expected levels by the time they leave the school; this maintains the standards seen at the last inspection. Pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.
- 112 In the one lesson seen, Year 2 pupils sang with tuneful expression and enjoyment. They showed a good grasp of tempo and were able to keep the beat well when playing against other groups using a different tempo. Pupils' singing in assembly was tuneful and enthusiastic, with the words clearly enunciated. Pupils have composed their own work calypso in traditional West Indian style and older pupils have created their own rounds. Pupils listen to the work of a variety of composers such as Vivaldi and have listened to music from different parts of the world; for example, the music at the beginning of the school assembly was an American Indian rain dance. Visiting musicians have played for the school. Older pupils learn to play the recorder. Pupils have a range of opportunities to perform both in school and in larger choirs alongside pupils from other schools.
- 113 The teaching and learning were excellent in the one music lesson observed. The teacher's choice of songs and the tasks related to them immediately engaged the pupils' interest and enthusiasm and, as a result, the class learned a great deal about tempo and how to control it. Excellent class management and control built on excellent relationships and led to very high standards of behaviour and very high levels of productive effort from the pupils. The pupils responded to the spirit of the lesson by spontaneously applauding other pupils' contributions. Music makes a very strong contribution to pupils' spiritual, social, moral and cultural development. The assessment of pupils' individual attainment and progress in music is informal, as is the recording of assessment.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

- 114 Standards reached by the age of seven are at the level typical of pupils of this age. Nine-year-old pupils reach at least similar standards with a significant number of pupils reaching higher standards. The standards seen at the last inspection have been broadly maintained. Teaching and learning are good, both boys and girls enjoy the subject and make good progress in all areas of the physical education curriculum. This is very broad and includes a wide range of sports, including hockey, rugby, football, cricket, swimming, and tennis as well as cross country running, athletics, dance and

gymnastics. Adventurous activities take place during weekend residential visits. There are well-established links with Newcastle United football club, Gateshead rugby league club and Newcastle Eagles basketball club who all provide coaching for the pupils. There are good links with the local sports centres and pupils benefit from the use of their facilities. There are many extra-curricular activities that are very well supported and contribute to the progress made. Pupils in the football and rugby teams regularly win matches and sometimes the league.

- 115 Pupils in Years 1 and 2 achieve well. They develop good body control and learn to move confidently and safely in the hall. They work hard and by the age of seven they are starting to improve their performance by practice and by watching others demonstrate. For example, pupils in Year 2 develop skills in throwing and catching a ball in a variety of ways. The teacher gives guidance as to how to improve their accuracy, pupils listen and watch very carefully and also watch other pupils demonstrate. They practise and improve. The teacher encourages a faster pace to challenge them further. They show pride in their achievements when they demonstrate their work confidently.
- 116 Pupils in Years 3 and 4 make good progress and acquire the skills needed to play competitive games and perform a dance sequence to music. Pupils in Year 3 use the stimulus of 'The Peacock', an Indian folk tale, to represent strutting peacocks. Year 4 pupils use gymnastic apparatus to build up a sequence of movements, taking the weight on different parts of the body and moving like a cat. They choose an imaginative range of movements and, as they watch others perform, they improve their own co-ordination and control. They work well co-operatively, in groups, to get out and put away the apparatus safely.
- 117 Pupils in Year 4 have weekly swimming lessons at the local leisure centre. All learn to swim at least 25 metres and some progress to achieve survival awards. They take part in an annual swimming gala.
- 118 The quality of teaching and learning is good. Activities are well planned, with clear aims, which develop skills. Teachers have received training and are confident in what they teach. Pupils work hard, with energy and enthusiasm, and become out of breath. They listen carefully and respond quickly to instructions. Demonstrations are given so that pupils know what is expected and how they can improve. Teachers pay good attention to health and safety and pupils learn how to use the space and the equipment safely. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated well into all the activities.
- 119 The school has applied for the 'Sports Active Mark', a nationally recognised award for achievement in sport. The junior playground has been re-laid and marked out for a variety of sports. The co-ordinator has put together a useful scheme of work that provides continuity and builds up skills as pupils move through school. However, there is no formal assessment of standards achieved.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- 120 Standards reached by the pupils at the age of seven are at the level typical of pupils of this age. Pupils are on target to reach similar levels by the age of nine. There was not enough evidence to judge standards at the last inspection. There is a useful overview of the work to be completed in each year, based on the Agreed Syllabus. This enables teachers to know what to teach over the year and helps pupils to build up their knowledge as they move through school. This is an improvement from the last inspection. Teaching is good and all pupils, including those with special educational needs, achieve well.

- 121 Pupils in Year 2 know about rules. They discuss what is right and wrong, learn about the Ten Commandments and make up their own class rules. They learn about festivals and celebrations in the Christian and the Jewish religions. These are taught in imaginative ways that capture the pupils' interests. For example, they design Hanukkah cards and make and eat special celebration food. They learn about the Lord's Prayer and this is made meaningful for them as they write their own prayers. One pupil writes, 'Thank you God for a loaf of bread. I like white square bread with ham'. Year 2 pupils learned the story of the Good Samaritan. They discussed the characters of the people in the story and expressed moral opinions, the priest and robbers being mean, selfish and uncaring, the Samaritan being kind and caring. Pupils really enjoyed acting out the story and using the microphone when they spoke their parts. Pupils then thought up a modern playground story to illustrate being a good neighbour. The teacher used the lesson very well to give very clear messages about tolerance and equality.
- 122 Pupils' knowledge and understanding increase in the junior classes as they learn about Christianity in more depth and also find out about other major religions. This is made real for the pupils by visiting a Hindu temple, a Synagogue and a Cathedral. They learn about special people who cared for others and they write sympathetically 'a slave's diary'. Pupils in Year 4 reflect on the many ways they help others and take responsibilities. They recognise that what they do can make a difference around school. They also consider social issues such as looking after the environment and conserving the earth's resources and they take part in a regional recycling scheme.
- 123 The standard of teaching and learning is very good. Class management is very good resulting in very good behaviour. The very good relationships that exist mean that lessons take place in a pleasant atmosphere where pupils feel confident to speak out knowing their contribution will be valued. Stories are told enthusiastically and capture the attention and interest of pupils. The personal and social education of pupils is fostered well in religious education lessons and pupils discuss sensitively their own feelings and emotions as well as wider aspects of life and religion. Pupils often act out Bible stories. This they enjoy and it helps them to speak confidently. They watch and listen well while other pupils perform.
- 124 Religious education lessons and assemblies are used well to improve pupils' speaking and listening skills. They contribute well to the pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. The lessons extend pupils' knowledge and understanding of other cultures and beliefs and collective worship celebrates special dates and festivals and provides opportunities for reflection. The co-ordinator monitors the standards of work informally and has provided a good range of books and artefacts. However there is no systematic monitoring of standards achieved.