

INSPECTION REPORT

Stakeford First School

Stakeford

LEA area: Northumberland

Unique Reference Number: 122178

Headteacher: Mrs Jo Warner

Reporting inspector: Mr John Francis

Dates of inspection: 27th – 30th September 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707673

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
Type of control:	Community
Age range of pupils:	3 to 9 years
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Ms Angela Brindley
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- There is a high proportion of good and very good teaching.
- The headteacher provides very good leadership to the school; her teaching offers a very good model to others.
- Relationships within the school are good and there is a very positive ethos.
- The support and guidance provided for pupils are of a high quality.
- The school's partnership with parents and the local community is a strength.
- The school encourages, and achieves, good levels of attendance.

Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Pupils' attainment in English is below average, particularly in writing.
- II. Not enough time is given to teaching religious education, which limits pupils' attainment.
- III. While there is a high proportion of good teaching, there is insufficient monitoring to identify and address weaknesses that exist and so achieve greater consistency throughout the school.
- IV. The governing body is not sufficiently involved in producing the school's development plan and needs to expand its role as a 'critical friend' to the school.
- V. There is a significant amount of money held in the school's budget reserve that is not being used effectively.
- VI. Pupils' spiritual development is unsatisfactory.

The weaknesses are outweighed by the strengths, but they will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made improvements in many aspects of its work since it was last inspected. Weaknesses in long-term curricular planning have been addressed. It is now effective, provides a good overview for all subjects and ensures both continuity and progression in pupils' learning. The quality of teachers' short-term planning for pupils of all abilities is now good and has clear learning objectives; this is beginning to improve pupils' progress. Pupils' attainment in both design and technology and information technology has improved significantly through the efforts of the subject leader and the headteacher, and improvements in teachers' own knowledge of the subjects. The school's development plan, previously weak, is now an effective document. It is clearly linked to the school's identified priorities and provides clear direction to the work of the school for both the current year and over a longer time-scale. Issues relating to Child Protection procedures have been addressed. The school's capacity for improvement in the future is good.

Where there has been more limited improvement is in the provision of books to encourage wider reading and develop pupils' reading skills. The school has very recently created a new and potentially good quality library. However, the current stock of books is insufficient for the number of pupils in the school and there is not enough good quality modern fiction. This is also limiting some aspects of pupils' reading development, for example, more advanced reference and research skills.

Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

The information above shows that in 1998, pupils' attainment was below the national average in writing and well below average in reading and mathematics. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below the average in all of these subjects. A significant factor in comparing these results is that there are very few higher attaining pupils in the school. With the exception of reading, where just over ten per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 3, which was still well below the national average, no pupil attained Level 3 in any other of the tests.

Results show a slight decline in standards between 1996 and 1998. Much of the drop in standards in 1998 can be attributed to long-term staffing difficulties in the Year 2 class. The supply teacher covering the full-time teacher's absence had no experience of teaching, testing or assessing pupils of this age. The results of the 1999 National Curriculum tests show a slightly lower level of attainment in English and in mathematics. However, teacher's assessment of science shows that pupils' attainment was above the national average for the previous year. There have been great improvements in the standards achieved for information technology, particularly in Key Stage 2, but pupils' attainment in religious education is barely satisfactory. Not enough time is given to teaching this subject and this is affecting pupils' attainment. By five years of age, most children are making satisfactory progress and achieving satisfactory levels across almost all the areas of learning.

Quality of teaching

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 9 years
English	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Mathematics	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Science		Satisfactory	Good
Information technology		Good	Good
Religious education		Insufficient evidence	Insufficient evidence
Other subjects	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Teaching is generally good. It was at least satisfactory in nine out of ten lessons and good or very good in over half of all lessons. Around one lesson in ten was unsatisfactory. However, good teaching was observed in all classes. The most effective teaching is in the early years, and in Key Stage 2, for the seven to nine year olds.

· **Other aspects of the school**

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Good throughout the school.
Attendance	Good. Above the national average.
Ethos*	Pupils are keen and interested in their work and the aims of the school are reflected in its daily work and increasing expectations.
Leadership and management	The headteacher gives very good leadership and is well supported by staff and the governing body.
Curriculum	The curriculum for all pupils is broad and balanced and planning provides a clear structure and appropriate continuity throughout the school.
Pupils with special educational needs	There is satisfactory provision. Special needs teachers and classroom assistants give good support.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Good provision for pupils' social and cultural development. Spiritual development is weaker.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Satisfactory overall. Good quality accommodation for early years. Not enough books for the number of pupils in school, especially of good quality fiction.
Value for money	Satisfactory.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- VII. The school gives parents a clear understanding of what is taught;
- VIII. The school enables children to achieve a good standard of work;
- IX. The school's attitudes and values have a positive effect on the children;
- X. Pupils' behaviour is good.

What some parents are not happy about

- XI. No significant issues identified by

Inspectors' judgements support most of the positive views of parents. However, in the view of the inspection team, overall standards need to be improved in English and religious education.

· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

The governors, headteacher and staff should now take action to:

- XII. Raise pupils' attainment in English, particularly in aspects of writing, by providing greater opportunity for extended personal writing and improving the quality of presentation. (paragraphs 10, 12, 31, 87, 90, 99 of this report refer) #
- XIII. Improve pupils' attainment in religious education by giving an appropriate amount of teaching time to the subject. (paragraphs 15, 35, 116 of this report refer) #
- XIV. Find ways of allowing the headteacher to develop her professional and managerial role in monitoring the quality of teaching both to identify and address weaknesses and build on the strengths that exist. (paragraphs 26, 28, 40, 60 of this report refer)
- XV. Extend the governors' role as a 'critical friend' through having a greater involvement in setting the priorities in the school's development plan and developing further strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. (paragraphs 60, 62, 63 of this report refer)
- XVI. Make more effective use of the money currently held in reserve in the school's budget. (paragraph 69 of this report refers)
- XVII. Improve the spiritual development of pupils. (paragraph 45 of this report refers) #

The issues marked # have already been identified by the school and are included in the school's development plan.

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

- XVIII. Improve the quality of teachers' marking. (paragraphs 31, 93, 103 of this report refer)
- XIX. Improve the quality and range of books available in classrooms and in the library. (paragraphs 12, 68, 89, 96 of this report refer)
- XX. Address the most recent statutory requirements for schools. (paragraph 62 of this report refers)

- **INTRODUCTION**

- **Characteristics of the school**

1. Stakeford First School takes pupils between the ages of four and nine. It is situated in a village near the town of Ashington, and is a mixture of owner-occupied and rented accommodation. The last census showed areas of economic disadvantage. There is an amount of movement of population in the area due to the employment situation and this does cause the numbers of pupils to fluctuate. However, the present roll of 131 pupils in the main school is an increase on the numbers at the time of the previous inspection. The number of boys (74), is significantly higher than the number of girls (57). There are 59 children under the age of five: 37 who attend half time in the nursery class and 22 in the reception class. Children stay in the nursery for between three and five terms, and transfer into the reception class in the September of the school year when they are five. Pupils' attainment on entry is below average. There are 23 pupils on the school's register of special needs and of these, one pupil has a statement of special educational needs. Around 11 per cent of pupils are entitled to a free school meal, which is broadly average for schools of this type. All pupils come from homes where English is the first language.
2. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant change in teaching staff with the appointment of a new headteacher and four members of staff. The school aims to provide a happy, secure and stimulating environment providing the opportunity for all pupils to realise their potential, to promote the development of the basic skills of literacy and numeracy, and prepare pupils for their future life in the local community and beyond.

2. **3. Key indicators**

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1998	13	14	27

2. National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils	Boys	8	8	9
At NC Level 2 or above	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	15	15	16
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	84 (85)	83 (84)	89 (92)
	National	80 (80)	81 (80)	84 (84)

2. Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils	Boys	8	8	9
At NC Level 2 or above	Girls	7	7	7
	Total	15	15	16
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	72 (88)	72 (88)	39 (85)
	National	81 (80)	85 (84)	86 (85)

2.

4. Attendance

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

Authorised	School	4.8
Absence	National comparative data	5.2
Unauthorised	School	0.1
Absence	National comparative data	0.5

2.

2. 5. Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:		Number
	Fixed period	0
	Permanent	0

2. 6. Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is: %

Very good or better	16.2
Satisfactory or better	89.2
Less than satisfactory	10.8

2. **PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL**

2. **EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL**

2. **Attainment and progress**

1. In 1998, the last year for which national comparisons are available, the percentage of pupils who attained the expected Level 2, or above, in reading and writing was close to the national average, while the percentage that attained Level 2 or above in mathematics was above the national average. However, when the average level attained by all pupils, rather than the percentage, is compared with other schools that have similar characteristics to Stakeford, pupils' attainment in all three subjects is well below the average. A significant factor in comparing these results is that there are very few higher attaining pupils in the school. With the exception of reading, where just over ten per cent of pupils attained the higher Level 3, which was still well below the national average, no pupil attained Level 3 in any other of the tests. This has the effect of pulling the average down.
2. Pupils' attainment in science, as assessed by the teacher, was very low and the teacher's assessments of pupils' attainment in English and mathematics showed a significant difference from the scores pupils actually achieved in the tests. All of these were well below the level that pupils actually attained. The wide differences, including the very low science scores, can be explained by the inexperience of the teacher taking the class that year. The long-term supply teacher who took the place of the absent class teacher had no experience of teaching, testing or assessing pupils of this age, which accounts for most of these differences.
3. Test results also show a slight drop in average standards over the three years from 1996 to 1998, in part due to the factors mentioned above. During this time, while girls have generally had better scores than boys in reading and writing, boys have scored higher than girls in mathematics. However, while the results for boys are very close to the national trend, the results for girls show a marked under-achievement in reading when compared with girls nationally. The average of the results over the three years show the girls to be almost six months behind the national average for their age group.
4. The previous inspection report judged pupils' attainment in both key stages to be broadly average, although standards in reading, listening and information technology were below average for pupils of this age. There were also variations in progress between classes in both key stages. Evidence from this inspection indicates that current levels of attainment in English are still below the level expected of pupils of this age, although reading has improved and is much more in line with the national average. There has been a significant improvement in the standards achieved in information technology.
5. Pupils in the nursery and reception class make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and by the time they are five, the majority will have obtained the desirable

learning outcomes for entry into compulsory education in all of the areas of learning.² Having started with below average levels in language and literacy skills, children are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress through the nursery and reception class. However, their language and literacy skills are slightly below the national expectation for children of this age. Attainment in mathematics for children under five is satisfactory. They make good progress during the year. Children are able to count to ten and most can count to twenty. They are able to use numbers up to ten and can do simple practical additions or can add using a number line. They can sort and make sets, and a good example of this was seen in the reception class where children copied repeating patterns of two colours using a variety of objects. In other areas of learning the majority of children are on line to achieve the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five.

6. The attainment of pupils in Year 4 in English is still below the level expected for pupils of this age. However, it is early in the school year and the quality of teaching, particularly in Key Stage 2, is already beginning to improve the rate of progress pupils are making. Pupils' speaking and listening skills still need improvement to bring them up to the average for nine year olds, but good work, not only in literacy lessons but other subjects such as science, and the emphasis on small group work, is having the effect of improving these skills. Standards in reading are broadly average, but there is a need for a wider range of good quality literature throughout the school to develop this more fully. Writing is an area of weakness. There are too few opportunities for pupils to produce longer pieces of personal writing. There are examples of good presentation, but too much of this is untidy, it lacks a uniform approach and insufficient attention is given to the correct formation of letters and numbers.
7. In mathematics, pupils attain in line with what is expected of nine year olds and are making satisfactory progress. Overall, attainment in mathematics at the end of Key Stage 1 is below average. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory in both key stages at this early part of the year. Good links are made between mathematical skills and other areas of the curriculum, for example, information technology and science. Most pupils are confident when using numbers and calculate accurately in their work, but pupils in Key Stage 1 do not get through the amount of work they need to during lessons and this slows their progress. Pupils are beginning to develop skills in mental arithmetic, although the quick recall of number bonds and tables is not secure for many of the younger ones at their level.
8. Attainment in science is above average at the end of Year 4. No judgement was given in the previous report on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, but pupils in Year 4 were judged to be attaining in line with that expected for pupils of this age. Current inspection findings indicate that there has been an overall improvement in standards. Much of this improvement is through the increased amount of experimental and investigative work carried out. Small group work and discussions are proving very effective in helping pupils to analyse what they are doing and reach sound conclusions. A good example of this was seen in Year 3, where pupils identified the ingredients in prepared salad mixtures using sight, touch and taste and came to an agreement within the group.
9. There is insufficient evidence to give a judgement on pupils' attainment in religious education by Year 4, but interviews with pupils indicate that it is barely at the level

² These are the areas of learning that include language and literacy, mathematics, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development that are considered desirable for

expected for pupils of this age by the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus. Pupils are able to discuss some of the work they have done, for example, on the Hindu religion. They have some knowledge of Christian festivals and the Bible, but are unsure about the Old and New Testaments. Attainment is not as good as was reported at the time of the last inspection. One of the factors that affects this is the relatively low amount of teaching time given to this subject, much less than the amount recommended in the agreed syllabus.

10. Information technology, by comparison, is an area of significant improvement. The last report judged this to be an area of weakness and a key issue for the school to address. This has been done very well and pupils' attainment by Year 4 is above the average expected for pupils of this age. Much of this gain is due to the work of the subject leader and the headteacher in improving both its standing in school, and the confidence of the teachers in teaching the necessary skills and using information technology across the whole curriculum.
11. Starting from below average levels of attainment when they enter school, all pupils, including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in almost all subjects. Insufficient evidence was available to make a clear judgement on pupils' progress in either geography or history at this time. Pupils make better progress in Key Stage 2, particularly in science and information technology, which show good progress. Pupils in both key stages make good progress in design and technology. Pupils with special educational needs benefit from good support in the classroom and when withdrawn in small groups to follow up work introduced in whole-class lessons.
17. **Attitudes, behaviour and personal development**
12. Pupils' attitudes to learning and their behaviour in lessons is good, and standards have been maintained since the last inspection. Pupils' self-confidence and sense of security is well developed through positive feedback given to them by teachers. In the majority of lessons they pay close attention, listen carefully and show pleasure in their work and the achievements of others. There are times when pupils' concentration lapses, which results in some low-level disruption. This was seen mainly in Key Stage 1. Pupils' good attitudes to learning have a bearing on the progress they make. On the occasions in Key Stage 1 when pupils do not show good attitudes to their work, this is often due to a slow pace of work or unsatisfactory classroom management.
13. Pupils come into the nursery with good attitudes to learning and these attitudes are maintained and built upon effectively in the reception class. The behaviour of these youngest children in school is very good. All pupils work well together, share resources, take turns and can discuss work being completed. They are keen to produce good quality work and enjoy showing their finished work to others. They look after the environment well, and have a clear understanding of right and wrong.
14. The behaviour policy has clear rewards and sanctions and is well understood by pupils and adults, and is supported by parents. Behaviour in lessons for the majority of pupils is good, and enables them to work productively. A feature of the school is the good relationships that exist between pupils, and between pupils and staff. Pupils work well together in lessons and at other occasions, for example, at lunchtime when older pupils sit with younger pupils to eat, and during wet playtimes when they choose and play games together. There were no instances of bullying seen during the inspection or any recorded during the school year. and there have been no

politeness to staff and each other are evident in lessons, and when pupils move around the school.

15. Pupils enjoy taking the initiative, and respond well when they are given responsibility. Children in the nursery class and reception class perform well tasks such as setting out and tidying up their classroom and preparing themselves for physical education. In all years, there is a range of classroom responsibilities which all pupils undertake with commitment and enjoyment. Pupils are able to carry out tasks conscientiously, for example, gathering together play equipment at the end of playtime and returning the register to the office. All pupils are accepting the opportunities to become independent learners. They use the school resources well and care for the environment of the school.
16. Pupils with special educational needs are integrated effectively into most lessons and respond well to all the work and challenges given to them. Their behaviour is generally good, and where there are pupils with specific behavioural difficulties, teachers and learning support assistants manage this sensitively.

22.

Attendance

17. Attendance at the school has been consistently good since the previous inspection. Over this period, the attendance level has been typically around 96 per cent and this compares favourably with the national average, which is less than 94 per cent. Current levels are the same as past trends. This is achieved without any formal policy to encourage attendance or rewards for pupils who attend well.
18. Unauthorised absence is much lower than the national average and this is due, in part, to good co-operation by parents in providing appropriate information. Absences due to family holidays do occur, but this has not become a serious problem. The school has a strict policy not to authorise this type of absence for longer than two weeks and the practice is discouraged if national test results would be affected.
19. Punctuality is generally good and most pupils are present at 8.50 am when they are admitted into school. Only a few pupils are persistently late. Registration periods start promptly and proceed efficiently. This allows lessons to start on time.

25. **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

25. **Teaching**

20. At the time of the last inspection, the quality of teaching was judged to be a strength of the school. Since then, there have been significant changes to the staff, including the headteacher, and a number of newly qualified teachers have joined the school. However, in most respects this judgement still applies, with around nine out of ten lessons being at least satisfactory and half of the teaching observed being good or very good. While pupils' attainment is still below average, this good quality teaching is improving the progress made by the pupils and is beginning to raise standards in the school, particularly in certain subjects, for example, information technology, and science. Around one lesson in ten is unsatisfactory or poor; this is mainly due to inconsistencies in teaching certain subjects and inexperience in classroom management. There are also differences between the key stages, with the most

21. The best quality teaching comes from a combination of factors. The classroom organisation, control, and subject knowledge of these teachers are good. Very effective use is made of small group work in all subjects. Examples of this were seen in a technology lesson in Year 3, where pupils worked together to identify the ingredients in a range of prepared salads, and in a science lesson in Year 4. Here, pupils worked together well to analyse the food values of "health bars" to decide which ones really could claim to be a healthy snack. These lessons have a brisk pace and little time is lost in moving between activities.
22. Where teaching is unsatisfactory, teachers do not always make their expectations of work and behaviour sufficiently clear and often pupils produce too little work. There is also less consistency in applying the school's code of conduct and this does confuse pupils as to what is expected of them at all times. Classroom organisation is not well developed and pupils often spend too long sitting listening to the teacher. With the introduction of the literacy hour and the daily numeracy lesson, it is possible for pupils to sit on the carpet for quite long times during each day and teachers need to be aware of the impact of this.
23. The teaching of children under five years old in both the nursery and reception classes is generally good with six out of ten lessons being of good or very good quality. The teachers understand the needs of the youngest children and the activities they plan lead effectively towards the desirable learning outcomes for entry into compulsory education. Lessons have a good structure and sufficient opportunities are provided for the children to explore and experiment. For example, the learning directed by the teacher in the nursery has a good pace to keep children's attention and allows them to do things that excite them, such as getting their hands into cooked green coloured spaghetti and to make pictures with it. This practical involvement is important for these very young children, most of whom are only three years old.
24. Teachers' planning is good at all levels. Planning for English and mathematics follows the national guidelines. All teachers have a sound knowledge of these subjects and implement them effectively. Teachers in each key stage plan together. The result of this is good continuity in pupils' learning and appropriate progression: this is a strength of the system. What pupils are to learn in the lessons is clearly set out and the work is planned at different levels for pupils of differing attainment. Not all of this, however, is consistently linked to National Curriculum attainment targets. The daily planning used by teachers during the inspection is of a high quality and teachers should be encouraged to use this as a regular feature of their work. The clear learning objectives in these plans provide a good opportunity for teachers to check on pupils' knowledge and understanding and would effectively improve the overall quality of teachers' day-to-day assessments.
25. Teachers' expectations of pupils' work and attainment are increasing but there are still some inconsistencies throughout the school, for example, in the quality of presentation. The marking of pupils' work is an aspect the school has still to develop effectively. While all work is consistently marked and is supportive of pupils' efforts, too little of this clearly identifies pupils' mistakes or tells them what they have to do to correct these and improve their work. Some of the marking also over-praises pieces of work where there has been no improvement over time.
26. Teachers have good relationships with the pupils and use a suitable range of teaching

operative working. They generally manage pupils well throughout the school, although pupils in some classes are slower to settle and sometimes call out despite the teachers' best efforts.

27. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs. They draw up individual education plans and use their knowledge of these pupils to match the work effectively to these needs. Lesson plans make specific reference to these pupils. Learning support assistants are used effectively to support these pupils across many subjects of the curriculum. A new policy for homework has just been put in place and it is too early to make a judgement on the impact of this on pupils' learning.

33. **The curriculum and assessment**

28. The curriculum for the under-fives is broad and balanced, and successfully promotes all areas of learning for this age group. The curriculum offers pupils opportunities to study in the areas of learning that provide a suitable basis for the National Curriculum when they are five. This aspect of the curriculum meets the aims shown in the parents' guide. The guide describes clearly not only the subjects of the National Curriculum, but details of the homework policy and out of school activities. These present a useful and informative guide for parents about the school's curriculum.
29. The curriculum for both key stages is broad and balanced and covers all subjects of the National Curriculum. This is an improvement upon the findings in the previous report that identified an imbalance. However, religious education receives too little time to meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus and this has an effect on the standards pupils attain. The time allocated for the teaching of literacy and numeracy is used well and there are effective strategies for the teaching of these.
30. Statutory requirements are met at both key stages including the coverage of sex education, health education and personal and social education. Provision for personal and social education for children under five is good. The curriculum promotes successfully pupils' intellectual, physical, personal, spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. Pupils are prepared satisfactorily for the next stage of education and due regard is paid to the transfer to local middle schools.
31. All pupils have equal access to all aspects of the curriculum. There is an up-to-date register of pupils with special educational needs and everyone involved understands the school's approach to identifying and supporting these pupils. The teachers and the special needs co-ordinator maintain detailed records. The majority of the work for pupils with special needs is catered for in the classroom: a learning support assistant helps pupils with specific lessons. A teacher for pupils with special educational needs withdraws groups of children for support with specific activities planned with the class teacher. An effective example of this was seen in science, where the small group involved was able to concentrate fully on their tasks and talk about their work without being distracted by the work going on in the rest of the room. The school meets the requirements of the National Code of Practice for these pupils. This is an improvement on the findings of the previous report.
32. Teachers have developed the curriculum for Key Stages 1 and 2 significantly in recent months. Long-term planning has been considered fully through a rotating cycle of topics that are broad in nature. This planning also involves other local schools.

work are being developed for art, music and physical education. There are schemes of work for all other subjects, many of which follow guidelines from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority.

33. Teachers' short-term lesson plans identify clear learning objectives, resources required and the classroom organisation. Although this is effective, it is not consistently linked to National Curriculum Programmes of Study and, in particular, relevant attainment targets to assist planning and check coverage.
34. The headteacher has overall responsibility for monitoring the curriculum, but because of many other demands, has insufficient time to monitor the curriculum and planning, and increase its impact on raising standards. Time for monitoring the curriculum is allocated to subject leaders based upon the priorities in the school development plan, but at present there are no procedures in place for many of the subjects.
35. The school offers an appropriate range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils can participate in various sports, such as football and rugby coaching, and recorder lessons. This provision reflects the high level of commitment of the staff and parents and is an area the school plans to develop further.
36. A policy detailing assessment practice within the school has been written and is in the early stages of implementation. Procedures are clear and parents and children are involved in the assessment process at each stage, through the setting of targets. Assessment information provides a profile for each child, which is transferred to the next stage of education.
37. Pupils are assessed early in their school life and those who have special educational needs are effectively identified and their progress monitored by the class teachers and the special needs co-ordinator.

43.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

38. The previous inspection report notes: "The aims and ethos of the school encourage high standards of spiritual, moral, social and cultural development in pupils and these are evident in practice". Whilst this remains broadly true, the overall arrangements to provide actual opportunities for development in these areas are only satisfactory. There are weaknesses, particularly in the provisions for spiritual development. The topics will be incorporated in a programme of Personal and Social Education, which is under development. However, it will not be implemented until the middle of next year.
39. The school has daily acts of collective worship of broadly Christian character, sometimes only simply a prayer. Religious education does provide a basis for spiritual development and, for example, a reception class was observed when considering the question 'What makes me special?' However, generally throughout the curriculum, inspectors found little evidence of the promotion of spiritual awareness and few opportunities for reflection.
40. The school teaches the principles of right and wrong and the provision for the moral development of pupils is satisfactory. Elements of the behaviour policy provide a basis for moral development. For example, the school rules, which include the need for kindness and consideration, are taught successfully and pupils contribute to the development of classroom rules. Pupils are aware of these rules and they are able to

fairness and a respect for truth. Equal opportunities, for example, follow naturally from the school's ethos.

41. The arrangements for pupils' social development are good. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility and all classes appoint helpers to carry out minor administrative tasks. Year 4 pupils supervise groups during lunch, which includes serving meals and clearing plates. Lunch is a valuable social experience for all pupils who have a school meal. Different age groups are deliberately mixed and food is served at properly laid tables with proper crockery, etc. In general, pupils get on well during breaks and in lessons and they contribute to the wider community through charitable donations and by supporting local old people. Good opportunities to develop confidence are presented at "Circle Times" which encourages involvement in discussions. All Year 4 pupils go on a residential activity break, which makes a major contribution to their social development.
42. Overall, the provisions for pupils' cultural development are good. There are many visits, for example, to local museums and art galleries. These provide cultural experiences and good use is made of outside expertise. Visitors to the school have included a children's author and a paper maker, and pupils have worked with an artist in an art gallery. Pupils' relatives are also invited into school to share their knowledge and experience. The school has been very successful in a national poetry competition about cricket. Local culture is promoted through regional songs and playground games. The promotion of non-British culture is less effective. Some non-Christian festivals and the impact of culture on food are studied, there is a display of Hindu artefacts and some use is made of a multicultural resource centre. However, there are no real multicultural experiences that could be provided, for example, by visitors from different cultural backgrounds or visits to mosques.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

43. The development of a happy and secure environment is a specific aim of the school, and this has been successfully implemented. Parents believe that there is a sensitive attitude to their children's welfare, a view supported by the inspection team.
44. The procedures to monitor academic progress are satisfactory and still being further developed. The monitoring of personal development is also satisfactory, although there are no formal arrangements other than a need for specific comments on the pupils' annual progress reports. Good relationships and pupils' confidence in their teachers, also reported at the previous inspection, provide a good basis for the monitoring arrangements.
45. There are good procedures to monitor and promote discipline. The behaviour policy is effective and based on clear rules, good teaching arrangements and high expectation, which are reinforced by rewards and sanctions. Pupils understand the policy and standards of behaviour are high. The rewards are given for good performance in different areas, including behaviour. Some parental concern was expressed about the scheme not rewarding all pupils equally, but inspectors observed no bias, and efforts are made by the staff to ensure this does not occur.
46. Monitoring and recording arrangements for attendance are satisfactory. All necessary procedures are in place and are understood by staff and parents. However, there is a need to define lateness more clearly and to remove some small inconsistencies in the

are monitored on a regular basis by the headteacher. Following some parental concerns, a system has been introduced to ensure that they would be informed quickly if their child was absent without reliable information about the cause.

47. The child protection arrangements are good and criticisms noted at the previous inspection have been addressed. There is a policy and a designated teacher, and all staff having direct contact with pupils have received some training. Lunchtime supervisors are competent and familiar with the requirement of their roles, for example, accident procedures. They have had training about the behaviour policy. There are good contacts with a range of external services such as speech therapy and educational psychology.
48. Health and safety arrangements were considered to be good at the previous inspection and the same judgement still applies. There is a school policy and staff are alert to possible problems. Governors are closely involved and there are suitable arrangements to inspect the premises. A local authority health and safety inspection has been carried out since the previous inspection and it concluded that the site was in good condition and well managed. No significant issues were identified during the inspection.
54. **Partnership with parents and the community**
49. Overall, the school has good links with parents and the community. A similar situation was reported at the previous inspection. Parents' views, as expressed in the survey and in the pre-inspection and other meetings, indicate widespread satisfaction with the school and its staff. No serious concerns were reported to inspectors.
50. The contribution made by parents to pupils' learning is satisfactory. There are about ten regular parent helpers and the "Friends of Stakeford" raise a substantial amount of money each year for school use. A significant proportion of this money goes towards paying for a residential visit for pupils in Year 4, which makes an important contribution to their social development. Parents are expected to support pupils' work at home, for example, by helping with reading, but inspectors did not find a lot of evidence of this occurring in practice. However, a homework policy and a home-school agreement have been developed and circulated to parents to clarify expectations and increase parental involvement.
51. The information provided for parents is good and most parents feel well informed about the school and their children's progress. Parents' evenings are well attended and considerable use is made of opportunities for brief discussions with teachers at the start and end of the school day. The approachability of staff and their willingness to address issues raised by parents is much appreciated. There are regular newsletters and meetings about curriculum issues and school policies. Pupils' annual progress reports comply with legal requirements and are generally of a very good quality. They are detailed and positive with constructive criticism and learning targets. The school prospectus and the governors' annual report are well presented and informative, although the former has a minor omission in the statutory contents.
52. The school benefits considerably from its links with the community, including contacts with local businesses who have sponsored a prestige project, the 'quad' garden. There are many visits to places of interest, such as local museums and a nearby power station. which have enhanced the curriculum. Visits are made to the local

locality. There is a major link with a bank that is providing support for the behaviour policy. Currently there are no industrial links. Plans to develop this are in hand and an industrial links co-ordinator has been appointed.

58.

58.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

58. Leadership and management

53. Since the previous inspection there has been a significant change to the teaching staff, including the appointment of a new headteacher. The headteacher provides very good leadership, and is responsible for the clear focus on the aims of the school, the all round improvements in organisation, and improvements in pupils' progress, particularly in subjects such as information technology and design and technology. She is respected by pupils and staff and promotes a strong feeling of community within the school. The headteacher and staff have created a very positive ethos in the school. They are committed to raising standards and are establishing an effective learning environment. This view was also clearly expressed by parents at the pre-inspection meeting.
54. In the absence of a deputy headteacher, the headteacher and senior staff work together as an effective management team. The headteacher carries out her administrative role very effectively and is successfully developing the expertise of all staff to play an important role in the development of the school. However, too little time is given to monitoring the work of other teachers and providing support and guidance for the more inexperienced members of staff. This is a limiting factor in securing a consistently high quality of teaching and improving teachers' skills where weaknesses have been identified.
55. All teachers have responsibilities as subject leaders, although some have only recently taken on these roles. There is a small amount of time for them to monitor their subject in line with the priorities in the school development plan. However, with the limited time available, this is not always as effective as it might be. While subject leaders all monitor teachers' planning, there needs to be more opportunity for them to fully monitor the impact of teaching and curriculum development, particularly the recent national strategies for literacy and numeracy.
56. The governing body has an appropriate structure and is supportive of the work of the school. A number of governors are involved directly with the work going on in the school, for example, the governors with the responsibility for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs, who make monitoring visits to the school and produce very perceptive reports on these visits. While the governing body receives information on attainment, for example, results of national tests, there is less evidence of them asking questions relating to standards of attainment. The governing body needs to develop its role as a 'critical friend' by developing further strategies for monitoring and evaluating the work of the school. The governing body substantially meets the statutory responsibilities which it has for the delivery of the curriculum and acts of collective worship, and those obligations which influence the welfare and progress of pupils, and reporting to parents. There are refinements to be made to the provision of religious education and to some of the more recent statutory requirements.
57. The previous inspection criticised the school's development plan for not being clear

successfully addressed. Procedures for producing the school's development plan involve all staff. Issues for development are clearly listed in order of priority and are of a manageable number. Key personnel are identified; the time-scale and the cost implications of all the developments are carefully assessed. Subject leaders prepare their own contributions to the plan and are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of this. One area of weakness in the process is the lack of involvement of the governing body at the planning stage. They monitor the progress of the development plan in their meetings through reports from the headteacher and a few very active governors, but there is insufficient involvement in setting the overall direction for the school.

58. There is a clear policy for special educational needs that reflects the requirements of the national Code of Practice. All teachers are aware of this and are involved in applying it in their classrooms. The special needs teacher and learning support assistants provide good support. The headteacher is the special needs co-ordinator but, again, has insufficient time available to monitor the quality of special needs teaching and support, or effectively manage the administration required.

64.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

59. The number and qualifications of the teaching staff and other classroom staff are adequate for the demands of the curriculum. However, as four of the six class teachers have four years or less teaching experience, the general level of experience is low. Consequently, the headteacher, who also has a heavy teaching commitment, plays a leading role in the support and co-ordination of curriculum subjects.
60. All teachers have appropriate job descriptions, and professional development needs are met as part of an overall structure linked to the school development plan. There is a suitable structure in place to support newly qualified teachers and teachers newly appointed to the school. Non-teaching and other support staff are well deployed and contribute effectively to the work of the school. Everyone in the school works together as an effective team.
61. Generally, accommodation is spacious, well decorated, clean and attractive, and provides a stimulating, good quality environment to support the teaching of the curriculum. There have been substantial improvements made since the previous inspection. These include the building of a new classroom, a new library and resources area, and a new staff room. Outside areas have improved and the school now has an excellent enclosed garden area used for study, in addition to a grassed area. The school playground is marked with five-a-side pitches and an impressive range of games and activities that provide additional stimulus for pupils at break time. The school hall is small and is used as a dining area in addition to other activities. As a consequence, storage of large items of physical education equipment presents problems. It also limits some of the activities that can take place. However, best use is made of the available accommodation. The Early Years Unit, consisting of the nursery and reception classes, is of a good standard and is spacious, attractive and has a good range of resources.
62. Generally, resources are adequate for the teaching of most subjects. However, the number of books in school is limited and all subjects could be better supported with a wider range of books. Classroom library areas in particular are poorly equipped. More resources are needed to support the teaching of religious education, history and

resources are well organised, accessible and used effectively.

68. The efficiency of the school

63. The school's budget is clearly linked to the development plan and the headteacher and subject managers plan their spending around the priorities contained within it. The finance committee of the governing body is actively involved in setting the budget and meets regularly to receive up-to-date statements of the budget and to monitor spending patterns during the year. Day-to-day financial management is carried out very effectively by the school's secretary and the headteacher.
64. Special grants, such as allocations for professional development and supporting pupils with special educational needs, are used well. However, the school has a significant budget surplus held in reserve. Approximately £32,000, (over 13 per cent of the school's income), was carried forward from the last financial year into the current one. It is prudent for schools to have a contingency available for unexpected events; planned developments or a significant drop in the number of pupils the following year. However, money delegated for that year should clearly be used to benefit the pupils currently in school. There are a number of areas of the curriculum that still require additional resources, for example, the number of reading books in school is only just over half of the national average for all schools. There is also the issue of providing effective monitoring of teaching and learning. The governing body needs to give further consideration to how they can use the school's budget for maximum benefit.
65. Teaching and support staff are all deployed effectively. All teachers have curriculum responsibilities as subject leaders, and a small amount of time is available to enable them to monitor the curriculum in line with the priorities in the school development plan. The accommodation is good and used well to give maximum benefit to the pupils. The newly built classroom and refurbished nursery are very good. However, the small and awkwardly shaped hall makes it difficult to deliver all aspects of the physical education curriculum, although the school has devised ways of overcoming some of this through the use of a leisure centre. The newly created library is being used well but needs further investment to improve the range of books for both fiction and non-fiction. Resources for most subjects are generally sufficient, with the exceptions mentioned above, and the provision for information technology is good.
66. Overall, there is effective use of teaching and support staff and good use is made of the accommodation and learning resources. The running costs of the school are above the average for schools of this type. Pupils enter school with below average levels of attainment but make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and by the age of nine achieve broadly average standards in most subjects. The previous report judged that the school provided good value for money. However, currently in relation to its income and attainment, the school is judged to provide satisfactory value for money.

CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS**72. AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE**

67. There were no key issues for action relating to the provision for children under five in the previous report, and the quality of education for this phase was found to be generally satisfactory. The quality of teaching was judged to be at least satisfactory and most often good. This has been continued, and teaching in the early years is mainly of a good quality and consistently so in the nursery. The nursery nurse is well qualified and trained, and contributes very well indeed to the achievements made by the children.
68. Children come into the nursery at the start of the term following their third birthday. They feel safe and secure and this enables them to learn and explore confidently from an early age. In particular the role of play in children's development is well understood. After spending between three and five terms in the nursery they move into the reception class in the September after their fourth birthday. They make satisfactory and sometimes good progress and by the time they are five, the majority will have obtained the desirable learning outcomes for entry into compulsory education in all of the areas of learning. There is a smooth transition from this curriculum to the early stage of the National Curriculum.
69. Assessment is good. It is based on the local education authority's baseline assessment and is used to gauge individual progress in different aspects of learning and development. It is used well to influence planning to make teaching more effective. The documentation for the curriculum and planning are good.
70. Liaison with parents is good and this was reflected in parents' comments at the meeting held before the inspection, and in the questionnaires they returned. They are kept well informed about assessment. Induction procedures are suitable and pastoral care is good. Accommodation for the under fives is very good. Classrooms are spacious and pleasant, and allow for a variety of different forms of teaching and activity: access to the outdoors is good, and the outdoor area is safe and secure, and is well used. Resources are generally good, and support the curriculum for the under fives well, including the large apparatus.

Personal and social development

71. The personal and social development of children under five is satisfactory, reflecting the expectations for this age. Children can work or play as part of a group or independently and can take turns. Relationships with adults are good, and children feel able to ask for help when they need it. Children approach their work and play with enthusiasm. The youngest children, most of who are only three, show good powers of concentration and persevere with their task. They have good opportunities to develop their independence in selecting and pursuing an activity, and both free and structured play support children's social and language development. In both the nursery and the reception class children's behaviour is good and always well managed. Children with special educational needs are well supported.

Language and literacy

72. The attainment of children under five in language and literacy is slightly below the national expectation for children of this age. Having started with below average levels in language and literacy skills, children are making satisfactory and sometimes good progress through the nursery and reception class. Children are beginning to speak more confidently and express their ideas, opinions and needs. They listen attentively, and most children are able to respond satisfactorily. Role-play and free play offer good opportunities for the extension of language. Good work was seen in developing children's language skills during a lesson on 'hard and soft' in the nursery, where children were able to feel the difference between uncooked and cooked spaghetti and bread, before and after toasting. The children in the reception class recognise and write their own names. In writing, children know that marks on paper can carry meaning, and they make attempts at writing, ranging from play writing to emergent writing where letter shapes and simple words are recognisable. Most of the older children can attempt simple captions and sentences, for example, thinking of a message to write in a 'get well' card. The quality of teaching in formal aspects of literacy is generally good. Texts are chosen well to promote interest in literacy, and stories, rhymes and songs are enjoyed.

Mathematics

73. Attainment in mathematics for children under five is satisfactory. They make good progress during the year. Children are able to count to ten and most can count to twenty. They are able to use numbers up to ten and can do simple practical additions or can add using a number line. They are able to record answers, although sometimes the formation of their figures is rather uneven. They can sort and make sets, and a good example of this was seen in the reception class where children copied repeating patterns of two colours using a variety of objects. Some of the higher attaining children created their own patterns using three colours. Children use number games and apparatus, and also use toys and everyday objects for counting and gaining a sense of number, size and shape. Play with sand and water makes a foundation for later explorations of capacity and volume. Direct teaching of mathematics is done well and of good quality.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

74. Children's attainment is satisfactory and the progress they make is good. They show an interest in living things and in objects and events in the world around them. In talking with children in the nursery, one child was able to recount a story of how a pony had hurt its leg and had to be attended to. They know the routines for the day and understand there are different times for daily events. They are able to learn some simple skills of investigation, for example, into 'hard and soft' objects. They are also able to use the computer keyboard and mouse satisfactorily with simple computer programs suitable for their age. Teaching in this area is good and the activities chosen are imaginative and interesting.

Physical development

75. Children's manual skills are quite good at entry to school and they continue to make good progress throughout the early years, attaining above the level normally expected by the age of five. They use scissors, brushes and writing tools well, and they are skilful at large movements such as running and jumping or using wheeled toys. There is good provision for the development of both fine control, and control of larger movements, through a range of activities. Children in the reception class are able to change for physical education and store their clothes tidily. Teachers have high expectations of children's independence in these things.

Creative development

76. In creative aspects of development children show enthusiasm for art and are able to represent what they see and feel in a range of media. They learn to mix paint and can name colours. They show a growing appreciation of the effects of different textures, colours, shapes and patterns. Very good examples of children's artwork can be seen in the classrooms and in the corridors in the Early Years Unit. Children attain good standards by the time they are five. Occasionally, activities can be over-directed and reduce the freedom of choice for the children. They respond enthusiastically in a variety of ways to what they see, hear, touch and smell. The bright green cooked spaghetti they were handling to make pictures fascinated children in the nursery.

82.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

82. English

77. Pupils' attainment by the time they leave school at the end of Year 4 is in line with national expectations for reading, but below national expectations for all other aspects of language work. However, the good teaching evident in the Year 3 and Year 4 classes, together with the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy and a revised action plan for literacy focusing very clearly on writing, means that the school is well placed to improve standards.
78. Pupils' attainment, at the end of Key Stage 1, is close to the national average in reading, but below the national average in writing. Results from the national tests in 1998 indicate that when compared with schools nationally, pupils' attainment is well below average for reading and below average for writing. When compared with similar schools, standards in reading are well below average for both reading and writing. Pupils' attainment has been generally consistent over the last three years. However, the good teaching evident in the reception class, the development of resources, together with the full implementation of the National Literacy Hour are beginning to raise standards.
79. Pupils' listening skills are satisfactory. They listen attentively to their teachers and can, in most cases, concentrate well. They are eager to answer questions and make contributions from their own work, but there are insufficient opportunities for discussions that would enable pupils to extend their listening and speaking skills.
80. Standards in reading are just below those expected nationally. Younger pupils have few strategies for reading unfamiliar words. Higher attaining pupils in Year 2 use a range of skills when reading: they use phonic knowledge, read ahead for meaning,

show a marked under-achievement in reading when compared with girls nationally. The average of the results over the three years show the girls to be almost six months behind the national average for their age group.

81. Attainment in writing at the end of Key Stage 1 is below that expected for pupils of this age. The range of writing is limited and there are insufficient opportunities for older pupils to produce lengthy pieces of writing and draft and redraft their work. Their writing generally lacks fluency and consistently correct use of sentence structure and punctuation. Pupils learn to spell the most commonly used words accurately and make good phonic attempts at unknown words. The use of personal spelling books is proving to be effective in raising standards in spelling. Pupils practise their handwriting regularly, but do not always transfer the skills they learn to their written work. Letters are not always formed well and writing is not always legible. This is an issue throughout the whole school.
82. By the end of Year 4, pupils' listening skills are satisfactory although their spoken responses are not as well developed. They listen attentively to their teachers, take turns in discussion and follow instructions. However, spoken responses are usually brief and many pupils find it difficult to expand their ideas and add more detail. This is evident when they answer questions and in their conversations with each other and with adults.
83. Attainment in reading is average. However, pupils do not have access to an appropriate range of books. There are insufficient opportunities for pupils to read for enjoyment or choose from a range of books to read at home with parents. Few pupils can talk confidently about favourite authors, characters or a story's plot. Reference skills are satisfactory. Pupils have a sound knowledge of the structure of books, for example, what a glossary tells them; they can use the contents and the index pages of a book to help them find information. The recent development of the library is providing more opportunities for pupils to use the library independently for research tasks.
84. Pupils' attainment in writing is below the level expected for pupils of nine years of age. Pupils do not write a sufficient quantity in a range of styles such as narrative, letters, poetry and plays. Opportunities are not provided through other subjects, such as history and geography, to extend this range. Pupils are not familiar with drafting and editing their own work. Pupils are being encouraged to structure their writing using their experience of fiction. A good example of this was seen in the Year 4 class, where they were introduced to the idea of a story planner to organise their writing. The standard of spelling is unsatisfactory. However, the recent introduction of personal spelling books and the use of dictionaries is having a positive effect on this.
85. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and this progress is clearly linked to the growth of pupils' independence and interest in books and reading since the introduction of the literacy hour. This interest is evident in the Year 3 class when pupils learn the term 'calligram' and are keen to identify their ability to create their own calligrams during group work. The progress of pupils with special educational needs is also satisfactory. They are supported by the work prepared for them and by the help given by the learning support teacher and assistant. During the daily literacy session in the Year 4 class, the learning support assistant works with a group of pupils with special educational needs using the National Literacy Strategy's additional support material. This is effective support and the pupils make sound progress. Progress in reading is also supported by the home-school reading scheme.

86. Pupils' attitudes to English are always satisfactory and often good. They enjoy their work in the literacy hour and are enthusiastic. They listen attentively to the teacher, contribute to discussions, and concentrate on their work.
87. Overall, the quality of teaching is sound with examples of good and very good teaching being observed in both key stages, particularly in Key Stage 2. Where teaching is very good, for example in a Year 1 literacy lesson, the Framework for the National Literacy Strategy is fully established, the lesson had a brisk pace and was managed smoothly. Teachers question pupils thoroughly to check their understanding and have high expectations in terms of work and behaviour. They use guided reading sessions well and are effectively supported by learning support assistants during the independent group work. The plenary session at the end of the lesson is used well to revise the work done and check on pupils' progress. One area of weakness, however, is in the marking of pupils' work. While teachers mark and correct pupils' work there is less evidence of them identifying the errors and telling pupils what they need to do to correct these.
88. The requirements of the National Curriculum for English are being met and teachers base their planning on the detailed scheme of work that the National Literacy Strategy provides. All teachers carry out careful planning and effective use is made of the learning support assistant in maintaining progress, especially of pupils with special educational needs. Here, teachers link their planning to the targets in pupils' individual education plans. There are generally satisfactory systems of assessment in place that are used to plan future learning.
89. However, teachers do not always plan work to sufficiently stretch the higher attaining pupils.
90. A school library has recently been created and restocked. This will be a good facility for the whole school, but it does not yet contain a sufficiently wide range of reading material. Classrooms do not have an adequate supply of fiction and non-fiction books to fully support work done during the literacy hour.

96. **Mathematics**

91. Pupils' attainment by the end of Year 4 is broadly in line with that expected for pupils of this age and pupils are making good progress in this key stage. In Key Stage 1, test results from 1998, the last year for which national comparisons are available, show that the percentage of seven year olds attaining the expected Level 2 was above the national average. This is similar to the findings of the previous inspection. However, no pupil attained the higher Level 3, and this was well below the national average. Because no pupils attained this higher level, pupils' performance overall was well below the average for all schools and for schools with similar characteristics to Stakeford. The teacher's assessments were very low in comparison to what pupils actually attained in the tests. This was due mainly to the temporary teacher's inexperience both of this age group and the tests.
92. The results from the National Curriculum tests for 1999 show a drop in attainment compared to last year's percentages and, although national comparisons are not yet available for this year, a drop in comparison with the previous year's national averages. This is reflected in the current attainment of pupils in Year 3, although their rate of progress is improving.

93. Standards of numeracy are satisfactory in both key stages at this early part of the year. The school is taking positive steps to develop this. They are currently following national guidelines for numeracy, but have yet to decide on an overall scheme of work for the school. Most pupils are confident when using numbers and calculate accurately in their work. Number formation for some younger pupils is not consistent, and there are a few who form them incorrectly or reverse the figures when they write them down. Pupils drawing lines freehand, rather than using a ruler, also spoil presentation. Pupils are beginning to develop skills in mental arithmetic, although the quick recall of number bonds and tables is not secure for many of the younger ones at their level. Most teachers make good links between the oral mental work and the main activity of the lesson. For example in Year 4, mental work on multiplying and dividing by ten was used effectively in the following activity on measurement converting from metres to centimetres and millimetres. In the main activity of the lesson many pupils were able to measure accurately to within one millimetre, which is a high level of accuracy for pupils of this age.
94. The use of mathematics in practical work is satisfactory and there are regular opportunities for pupils to use these skills in other subjects. Good examples of this are seen in design and technology and science where pupils use their knowledge of measurement or use graphs to record their results. Information technology is also used effectively to support work in mathematics with pupils producing tables and graphs from the data they enter into the computer.
95. Pupils' progress in Key Stage 1 is satisfactory, but speeds up in Key Stage 2 where pupils make good progress. Here lessons have a quicker pace and teachers are very clear in their expectations. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress throughout the school and are well supported by learning support assistants.
96. Pupils have good attitudes and approach their work positively. Pupils' responses during lessons were generally good, although there are variations across the classes. The best response came from pupils in Key Stage 2 where group work was a strong feature of the lessons. The vast majority of pupils apply themselves diligently to tasks, are polite in their response to teachers' questions and co-operate well with each other. However, there is a small minority of attention-seeking pupils in Key Stage 1 who fail to concentrate on their tasks and cause low level disturbance in lessons. This affects the rate of progress pupils' make.
97. Overall, the quality of teaching is satisfactory throughout the school, with good and very good teaching observed in Key Stage 2. Here, lessons have a lively start and a strong feature is the use of quick fire questions in the mental arithmetic part of the lesson. The rare instance of poor teaching is mainly because the organisation of the lesson has not been given sufficient thought and pupils do not achieve the objectives the teacher has set for the lesson. Teachers' daily planning is generally good and links well to both the National Curriculum and the National Numeracy Strategy. All teachers have a satisfactory and often good knowledge of the subject and how to teach it and, in most lessons, time and resources are used well. Work is well prepared and matched to pupils' abilities. Numeracy is mostly taught well throughout the school and the lesson structure usually includes whole-class teaching, and consolidation through individual or group work. One area of weakness, however, is in the marking of pupils' work. Teachers mark and correct pupils' work, but do not always identify the errors pupils make and tell them what they need to do to correct these.

the school development plan, mathematics is currently the curriculum area being focused on. The commercial scheme previously used by the school has been phased out and discussions are underway among the staff to evaluate other, more relevant, material as the basis of a school scheme. The subject leader has a good personal knowledge of mathematics and the National Numeracy Strategy and is well supported by other members of the school's senior management team and a governor with a special interest in mathematics. All teachers and classroom support assistants have received training in teaching the daily numeracy lesson. Time is being provided for the subject leader to visit other classrooms and monitor the quality of teaching during numeracy lessons, but it is too early to judge the effectiveness of this. A significant amount of money has been given to mathematics and learning resources are mainly satisfactory, but there is a shortage of games and activities that the school feels would support pupils' learning at home.

104.

Science

99. The attainment of the oldest pupils in school (Year 4) is good and higher than normally expected for pupils of this age. The teacher's assessment of pupils' attainment for the end of Key Stage 1 in 1998, at both Level 2 and Level 3, was very low in comparison with the national average. However, the temporary teacher had no experience of teaching this age group or administering the assessments required at the end of this key stage. The most recent assessments in 1999 are slightly above the previous year's national average and much more in line with the quality of work seen in the school during the inspection. No judgement was given in the previous report on pupils' attainment at the end of Key Stage 1, but pupils in Year 4 were attaining in line with that expected for pupils of this age. Current inspection findings indicate that there has been an overall improvement in standards.
100. Pupils in Year 4 have a good level of knowledge across all Attainment Targets. The current focus on nutrition is producing some very good quality work investigating the food values and manufacturers' claims for a range of 'health snacks' based on the amount of sugar and fat they contain. Pupils work well in pairs or small groups to carry out their investigations. They analyse the information, enter the data into a computer and produce their findings as graphs. They then compare their findings with those of other groups to come to a group, and finally a whole-class, judgement on the manufacturers' claims. Previous investigations in Year 3 and 4 into sources of energy produced some quite outstanding work. The interactive display of a working power station, which links science, design and technology and information technology, is very sophisticated and the computer control used to light up various parts of the process is of a very high standard for pupils of this age.
101. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1 and this is built on and improved during Key Stage 2, where progress is good. Pupils with special educational needs make satisfactory progress in both key stages, and good progress where they are supported by the special needs teacher or learning support assistants. The only aspect where progress is less evident is in the quality of pupils' written work. More attention needs to be given to the quality of presentation and display work created by pupils.
102. Pupils respond well, particularly to experimental science. In Key Stage 2 in particular, they work well in pairs or small groups, co-operating and sharing ideas and comments. This is a very positive feature that is having the effect of raising standards

therefore, make little progress. A small amount of this can still be found on some occasions but most teachers deal with it effectively.

103. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall, with good teaching being seen in Key Stage 2. Teachers have a secure understanding of the subject and lesson planning is good. Teachers plan effectively with the other teacher in the key stage, which makes for good continuity and progression in pupils' learning. In the best teaching, the quality of the group work is good and the teachers involve themselves effectively asking questions that require more of pupils than just repeating facts. The teachers' ability to draw the results of the lesson together to assess the gains pupils have made in their knowledge and understanding is a strong feature in improving attainment. Where teaching is less effective, pupils spend too long sitting on the carpet listening to the teacher and the practical group work is not demanding enough to keep pupils' interest.
104. The management of the subject is good. The subject leader monitors the planning of all teachers to check for appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum Attainment Targets and suitable progression. The curriculum is broad and balanced and there is a clear plan to show coverage and progression over a two-year period. Much of the work is effectively built into the topic approach used throughout the school. The previous policy and scheme of work were judged to be inadequate to the school's needs, and the school is currently following the guidance produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority. The development of a new policy and scheme of work is included in the school development plan and will be produced when science becomes the focus for the curriculum. Resources are sufficient and are added to as new topics are introduced. However, some of these are now quite old and are in need of upgrading and improving.

110. **OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES**

Information technology

105. Attainment in information technology for the oldest pupils is at least in line with national expectations, and for some pupils it is above what is expected for pupils of this age. Pupils are making good progress through Key Stage 2. Pupils can communicate and handle information effectively and use the mouse confidently to make choices on the display screen. A good example of this was seen in the Year 4 class when pupils entered information about the nutritional value of healthy snack bars into a data-program, and discussed different ways of presenting the results. Pupils understand how to control equipment to achieve a specific outcome by giving a series of instructions, correcting mistakes and recording them on paper. An example of this was seen in an impressive display of Blyth Power station. Pupils in Year 3 can load programs and find relevant information and files. They can amend text and add a short sound clip to a page of work.
106. Attainment at Key Stage 1 is in line with national expectations. Pupils understand that information can be presented in different forms and use information technology to create and communicate ideas. Pupils in the Year 2 class are able to use a data-handling package, and enter their own information about holidays. Pupils in Year 1 understand how to give instructions to a floor robot to make it move in different directions and record them one at a time.

through Key Stage 1, and good progress through Key Stage 2. They work with increasing confidence and independence. The school has identified a suitable scheme of work and long-term planning is linked with neighbouring schools in the 'pyramid' to ensure coverage and progression to the end of Key Stage 2. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection report.

108. Pupils work well in pairs and individually. They are able to share the equipment and wait for their turn sensibly. The quality of teaching is satisfactory overall and sometimes good or very good. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding. They are confident in using the equipment and software. They give good demonstrations in information technology, and the teaching points are clear and precise. Information technology activities are planned effectively into lessons in most classes. The number of computers and good quality software available for pupils' use is sufficient to meet the demands of the curriculum.

114. **Religious Education**

114.

109. There was a limited amount of evidence available for a clear judgement to be made on pupils' attainment and progress. Much of the work is done orally and the judgements made are based on the few lessons seen, discussions with pupils, and a scrutiny of their available work. The few lessons seen during the inspection were of good quality but insufficient for a judgement to be made about the overall quality of teaching.

110. Although all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make broadly satisfactory progress throughout the school, by the end of Year 4 standards of attainment barely meet the expectations of the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus for Religious Education.

111. By the time they are seven, pupils have a limited understanding of the richness and diversity of religion and religious concepts through their studies of Christianity. Some pupils are able to talk about how other people's religious beliefs are important to them and they understand that people have the right to choose in what they believe.

112. Pupils know that Christians believe in Jesus Christ, and that Christmas and Easter are important celebrations for people of the Christian faith. They are aware that the Bible is a special book for Christians and that there are stories about Jesus and others in the Bible. One pupil was able to relate the story of Moses receiving the Ten Commandments, but generally pupils are unclear about the Old and New Testaments. They understand the idea of the 'church' being the 'people' and not the building, and can relate this to their school community. Pupils are able to discuss the significance of baptism. Pupils in Year 4 are able to talk about work they have done studying the Hindu religion and related this to a display in the library. They can make limited comparisons between Hinduism and Christianity.

113. Throughout the school pupils' attitudes are satisfactory. They behave well in lessons and generally listen attentively. Pupils are developing a clear understanding of right and wrong and beginning to recognise the need for a moral code. For instance, pupils in Year 3 had been thinking about 'rules' and why we need to have them. They considered times when they had done something positive, and something negative, then discussed these with each other and the teacher. They thought about their feelings and a sense of 'fairness', and considered some simple moral dilemmas.

make any impact on the development of the subject. An action plan is in place and an audit of both the curriculum and resources has identified areas that need to be addressed. Provision for in-service training and monitoring is identified in the school's development plan for this academic year. The school follows the locally agreed syllabus, but teachers are still in the process of becoming familiar with this. A draft policy and scheme of work are being developed in consultation with other staff and an outside specialist. However, curricular planning is in place for all year groups and is being followed by all teachers. Resources are limited. There is also a discrepancy in the time given to the teaching of religious education. This is currently less than the required five per cent of the Northumberland Agreed Syllabus and is a contributory factor to the low standards.

120. **Art**

120.

115. Too few lessons were seen for a judgement to be made about the quality of teaching. However, based on the few lessons seen, discussion with pupils, and a scrutiny of their work, pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards in line with those expected for pupils of this age.

116. Pupils are involved in a wide range of activities across the school. There are opportunities to express ideas and feelings, and to experiment with line, texture and colour, and to make observational drawings. The quality of much of the artwork in classrooms and public areas of the school is good and well displayed. Pupils in Year 2 work with pastels and chalk to produce large, confident drawings of pirates for a classroom display. Pupils in Year 4 work with oil pastels and experiment with blending and colour mixing techniques, to produce clear observational drawings of a variety of fruits. This work is of a good standard. Some pupils have studied paintings by the Dutch artist, Van Gogh, and responded with their own interpretations as an aid to developing their own skills and techniques. Information technology, using drawing programs, is also used to support the art curriculum.

117. The curriculum leader, appointed to the post this term, has good subject knowledge. At present art is not a priority of the school development plan and there is no policy or scheme of work in place. While there is no formal monitoring of the subject, the curriculum leader scrutinises the quality of pupils' work on display. Planning for the subject is left to individual teachers, but does not always build adequately on what pupils have already achieved. The previous inspection report highlighted some of these issues and the need for them to be addressed. However, the curriculum leader has a clear understanding of the issues, has identified priorities and is currently writing an action plan.

123.

123. **Design & Technology**

123.

118. There was little direct teaching of design and technology observed during the period of the inspection. However, evidence was taken from photographs of previously completed work, discussions with pupils and staff, teachers' planning and displays around the school. The previous report found standards to be below those expected for pupils of this age. Since then there has been a significant improvement both in standards and the quality and range of pupils' work, and pupils' attainment is now above that normally found for pupils of this age.

of Key Stage 1, pupils can use pictures and words to show their design ideas in preparation for making them. A good example of this is seen in the plans for making pirate ships in Year 2, which include quite technical drawings of pulleys to raise a flag.

Most pupils are capable of commenting on their designs and can suggest further improvements. They can use simple tools and equipment to make their designs, and their finished models are completed to a satisfactory standard in a range of materials.

In Key Stage 2, pupils plan and make things for a particular purpose, for example, insulated bags for keeping snacks and drinks cool; or very sophisticated models of how a power station works, with lights that can be switched on and off using a computer program. This makes good links between design and technology, information technology and science.

120. Progress in lessons and over time is satisfactory in Key Stage 1 but improves in Key Stage 2, where pupils make good progress and their skills are becoming well developed. Pupils are interested in their technology work and persevere with their work even when things do not quite work out as they expected the first time. They work well together, either in a small group or with a partner, and lessons, especially in Key Stage 2, are carefully planned to develop these skills of co-operation. Pupils frequently support each other in many practical ways.

121. The teaching that was observed was at least satisfactory, and in Key Stage 2, very good. A particular strength of this very good teaching comes through the subject leader's own high level of knowledge about technology, and the enthusiasm she has brought to the subject. Teachers extend pupils' learning effectively, for example, developing from making simple pulleys using dowel and cotton reels, to using construction kits to make more advanced block and tackle pulleys.

122. The school does not have its own policy or scheme of work at present, but design and technology is included in the school development plan and these will be produced when it becomes the area of focus for the curriculum. In the meantime, the school is using national guidelines produced by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority as the basis of their work. This is effective in providing sound development of pupils' skills and is suitably modified to fit in with the topic approach used in the school. Teachers in each key stage plan together and are supported effectively in this by the subject leader. All of the planning is retained and will form part of the school's syllabus for design and technology. There are sufficient resources to allow the whole range of the subject to be taught. Day-to-day issues of health and safety are covered effectively.

128.

128. **Geography and History**

128.

123. History was not being taught during the inspection week and only one lesson in geography was observed. Judgements are based on discussions with teachers and pupils, and scrutiny of teachers' planning and pupils' work.

124. In geography, pupils in Year 2 know, through their work on seashores, that other places exist beyond their own locality. They are able to express views on features found at the seaside. They can use secondary sources to find information.

125. The scheme of work for geography, produced in co-operation with other local schools, ensures appropriate coverage and progression. The curriculum leader for geography monitors teachers' medium-term plans to check for coverage. There are insufficient

school development plan. An annual residential trip gives pupils the opportunity to study a contrasting locality.

126. There is a scheme of work for history, linked with the long-term planning produced in co-operation with other local schools. This ensures continuity and progression to the end of Key Stage 2. The curriculum leader for history collects medium-term plans termly to check for coverage. There is an emphasis on 'living' history. Pupils are given many opportunities to experience history first-hand through the organisation of visits and visitors to the school. This was evident in the displays of 'Granddad's Day' and photographic record of pupils in Victorian dress.

127. There are insufficient history resources, although the school does borrow artefacts and books. There is a planned development for history in the school development plan.

133.

133. **Music**

133.

134. Few lessons were seen during the inspection week, making it difficult to come to a judgement on the quality of teaching. Judgements about attainment and progress are based on the few lessons seen and discussions with pupils. By the time they are nine, pupils have made satisfactory progress and their attainment in line with that expected for pupils of this age.

128. Pupils have good attitudes and are keen to participate in musical activities. A number of pupils take part in recorder lessons offered as an extra-curricular activity. Pupils are also involved in performing in the local community. For example, at Christmas time, groups of pupils sing for a community group and at the Methodist chapel. They also perform regularly for parents. They are currently preparing for millennium concerts to be held at large venues next year, and involve participation with other schools.

129. The subject leader, who has been in post since April, has good subject knowledge. Music is identified as a priority in the school development plan. An action plan, and draft policy, are in place, and are being implemented. There are plans to adopt the scheme of work produced by the local education authority. There is no specialist teaching of music, or of instruments other than the recorder. However, this is to be reviewed as part of the action plan. There is a strong commitment to raising attainment in the subject, and recent expenditure has ensured an adequate range of instruments to support the teaching of music.

130. All staff took part in extensive in-service training during the spring and summer terms, working closely with a specialist advisory teacher. This has raised the profile of music in the school and staff feel more confident teaching the subject.

137.

137.

Physical Education

137.

131. Judgements about pupils' attainment and progress are based on discussions with pupils and other evidence of work in school, including observations at break times and extra-curricular sport. Pupils make satisfactory progress across the school and standards of attainment are in line with what is expected for pupils of their age.

teaching. The school provides opportunities for pupils to practise, improve and refine their skills. There is a good programme of extra-curricular sports, including competitive team games, that is available to both boys and girls. Good use is made of outside coaches for the teaching of rugby, football and swimming. There are opportunities to participate in tournaments involving teams from other schools. Pupils in Key Stage 2 have taken part in 'Kwik Cricket' and attended a golf tournament as spectators. They also benefited from a 'celebrity sports day' when a gymnast visited school to work with the staff and pupils. This is to be repeated in the summer term. Pupils in both key stages have participated in 'Aerobothon' and 'Hectorsize', which were led by visiting coaches.

133. The curriculum leader was appointed to the post from September this year. There is no policy or scheme of work, but an action plan is being drawn up. However, all staff have received 'Top Play' training, and are making good use of this teaching programme and its resources in both the planning and teaching of games skills lessons. There is no monitoring at present but this is included in the action plan.
134. Resources are adequate and generally in good condition. However, the hall is very small and a difficult shape for teaching physical education. This limits the school's ability to cover all elements of the curriculum in school. However, pupils in Key Stage 2 have weekly lessons at the local swimming pool and the sports hall.

INSPECTION DATA**141. SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

135. The inspection was carried out by a team of four inspectors who spent a total of 12 inspector days in school. Thirty-seven lessons or parts of lessons were observed as were a number of registration periods, assemblies, playtimes, lunchtimes and extra-curricular activities. Time spent observing teaching, scrutinising the work of pupils and checking their attainment by working with them during the inspection was 30 hours and 45 minutes; 7 hours and 35 minutes at Pre-Key Stage 1; 9 hours and 25 minutes at Key Stage 1 and 13 hours at Key Stage 2. In addition, a further 13 hours and 40 minutes were spent on other inspection activities listed below:-

- . Discussions were held with all teaching staff and some non-teaching staff;
- . Many pupils were heard to read and were questioned about their mathematical knowledge and understanding;
- . Three samples of pupils' work across the full range of ability in all year groups were inspected in addition to work examined during lessons;
- . All available school documentation was analysed;
- . Attendance records, pupils' records kept by the school and teachers' planning documents were examined;
- . The budget figures were inspected;
- . Discussions were held with pupils, parents and governors;
- . A meeting was held with parents before the inspection, and the views of the 10 parents at this meeting and those of the 40 families who responded to a questionnaire were taken into account.

- **DATA AND INDICATORS**

- **143. Pupil data**

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y4	131	1	23	14
Nursery Unit/School	18.5	0	0	N/A

- **Teachers and classes**

- **144. Qualified teachers (YR – Y4)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	5.4
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	24.25

- **145. Education support staff (YR – Y4)**

Total number of education support staff:	1
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	15

- **146. Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	18.5

- **147. Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)**

Total number of education support staff:	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	40.5

- **148. the school**

Average class size in

Average class size:	24
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· **149. Financial data**

Financial year:	1998 - 1999
	£
Total Income	224,876
Total Expenditure	219,837
Expenditure per pupil	2,198
Balance brought forward from previous year	31,809
Balance carried forward to next year	36,848

150.
SURVEY

PARENTAL

Number of questionnaires sent out: 133
Number of questionnaires returned: 40

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	46.2	46.2	5.1	2.6	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	67.5	30	0	2.5	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	32.5	52.5	12.5	0	2.5
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	47.5	47.5	5	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	50	42.5	5	2.5	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	59	41	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	55	37.5	7.5	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	42.5	37.5	12.5	7.5	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	50	42.5	7.5	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	50	40	10	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	65	27.5	5	2.5	0