

INSPECTION REPORT

BARNARD CASTLE C of E (VC)

PRIMARY SCHOOL

Barnard Castle, County Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114219

Headteacher: Mr M Grainger

Reporting inspector: Mr C.D.Loizou
18645

Dates of inspection: 27 – 31 March 2000

Inspection number: 185917

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior
School category: Voluntary Controlled
Age range of pupils: 4 to 11
Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Green Lane
Barnard Castle
County Durham

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Appropriate authority: Governing Body
Name of chair of governors: Mrs. S. Bailes

Date of previous inspection: 16 October 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

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Mr. C.D.Loizou	Registered inspector	English Design and technology	How high are standards? How well pupils are taught? How well is the school led and managed?
Mr. D. Ashton	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development. How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mr. J. Stirrup	Team Inspector	Art Geography Music	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
Mr. A.J. Giles	Team Inspector	Mathematics History	
Mr. M. Routledge	Team inspector	Areas of learning for those children under five. Special educational needs. Religious education	
Mr. C. Taylor	Team Inspector	Information technology	How well does the school care for its pupils?
Mrs. V. Howells	Team Inspector	Science Physical education Equal opportunities	

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The Registrar, Inspection Quality Division
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school is situated in the town of Barnard Castle near to the River Tees in the west of County Durham. It is an infant and junior Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) school. The school is above average in size with 369 pupils on roll. Nineteen per cent of the pupils are on the school's register for special educational needs and seven pupils have a statement of special needs. Ten per cent of the pupils are entitled to free school meals, which is below average. There are no pupils who are learning English as an additional language. The pupils are admitted to the school at the start of the year in which they become five years of age. Their attainment on entry to the school covers a wide range of ability and is above average overall. At the time of the inspection there were 55 full-time pupils in the two reception classes.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is a very good school with many strong features. Standards in English, mathematics and science are above average by the time the pupils leave the school. All the pupils are keen to learn. There is effective teaching and support for the pupils and, combined with the excellent relationships that exist throughout the school, this is raising the pupils' achievement. The recently appointed headteacher, supported by a very capable deputy headteacher and staff, provides excellent leadership. The governors are very committed to improving the school further and are increasingly becoming involved in the management and oversight of the school. The school provides good value for money.

What the school does well

- The high expectations set by the school, the excellent relationships that exist throughout and the positive ethos fostered by staff and governors is resulting in the pupils achieving high standards in their work and behaviour.
- Good and very good teaching is seen in eighty-seven per cent of lessons.
- The youngest children in the reception classes are provided with a very good start to their education and achieve well.
- Very good provision is made to cultivate the pupils' personal development. There is a good level of care and support for the pupils.
- The headteacher offers excellent leadership, the deputy headteacher effectively leads by example, staff and governors support and monitor the pupils' performance very well.
- The parents think very highly of the school. They make a very significant contribution to children's learning at school and at home.

What could be improved

- The procedures that teachers use to assess the pupils' progress and how they use assessment information to help them match specific learning objectives to pupils with different abilities.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has made good progress in addressing the weaknesses pointed out in the last inspection in 1995. It has improved the information technology curriculum so that it is more structured across the school with clear programmes of study. An enthusiastic and capable teacher now co-ordinates information and communication technology. Together with the teaching and support staff, the co-ordinator has addressed most of the weaknesses identified in the last inspection. Lesson planning has improved considerably along with the school's medium term curriculum planning. Assessment procedures are now being adopted and the school has begun to analyse the information about the progress that pupils make and is well placed to make further improvements so that there is more consistency across the school. High standards have been maintained in English, mathematics and science and this is having a very positive effect on standards in other subjects. The strong ethos of the school has been maintained.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	Compared with				Key
	All schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
English	A	A	B	B	well above average A above average B Average C below average D well below average E
Mathematics	A*	A	B	B	
Science	A	A	C	C	

The results of the 1999 national tests for eleven year-olds show that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was above average compared with all schools and also when compared with similar schools. Science results were average compared to national standards and to those in similar schools. The results in English and mathematics were close to the school's own targets. In science, the teachers' assessments indicated that more pupils should have reached a higher standard than is expected for their age which would have matched the school's above average targets for 1999. The number of pupils taking the tests each year is approximately 50 and the ability levels of the pupils have varied significantly. Test results reflect this variation ranging from well above average in 1997 to average in 1999 for all three subjects.

Inspection evidence indicates that the school has identified the potential areas of underachievement, especially with higher attaining pupils so that there is more targeted and focused teaching. For example, in Key Stage 2, mathematics lessons are taught in targeted ability groups (setting) and this is having a positive impact on the standards achieved by all the pupils. In English, mathematics and science, standards were found to be above average and in all three subjects, the teaching is clearly beginning to focus on the achievement of different ability groups. Learning objectives are clearly displayed for all the pupils to see what they are learning and what the teachers intend to teach in each lesson. These objectives are not always broken down to match the needs of all the pupils according to their abilities and progress. The school has significantly increased resources to support information and communication technology and, as a result, achievement is improving and meets the expected standards with the pupils making good progress throughout the school. In religious education, the pupils are achieving higher standards than expected for their age when compared with the locally agreed syllabus. In art, design and technology, history and physical education the pupils make good progress in both key stages. In geography and music, they make satisfactory progress.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Very good. The pupils work hard and they are keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good. The pupils are polite and courteous. They help each other and co-operate in lessons and at other times during the school day.
Personal development and relationships	Very good. There are excellent relationships with the pupils willing to accept responsibilities.
Attendance	Good. There is no unauthorised absence.

The pupils enjoy school and attendance levels are above the national average. The pupils are considerate and friendly and older pupils are used as role models when they help younger pupils in lessons and during break-times. Relationships are excellent because there is always a pleasant and positive working atmosphere in classrooms. Outside lesson times the pupils conduct themselves responsibly and sensibly.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	Aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	Aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Good	Good	Good

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

The overall quality of the teaching is good with significant strengths across the school. All of the teaching seen was satisfactory or better. It was good or very good in eighty-seven percent of lessons. In forty-four per cent of the lessons seen the teaching was very good with some excellent lessons. The quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and in all lessons the pupils learn effectively, acquiring new skills and building on their previous learning experiences. Teachers plan their lessons very well. They ensure that tasks are matched to the different range of abilities. Although teachers make ongoing assessment of their pupils' progress, the school does not sufficiently use the information gathered to inform or adapt the planning. The teaching of the children in the reception classes and who are under five is good overall with a significant proportion (forty-four per cent) which is very good. Teachers across the school are very competent at teaching literacy and numeracy. The teachers set high expectations, manage the pupils very well and prepare structured homework to supplement and support the pupils' understanding. Teachers demonstrate a good understanding of the subjects they teach. Learning objectives are displayed for the pupils to see and particular objectives are used as teaching points in most lessons.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The pupils under five are provided with a very good range of learning opportunities. The curriculum in Key Stage 1 and 2 is interesting and relevant. Very good use is made of the local environment and community. The curriculum meets all statutory requirements.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	There is good support for these pupils and they make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good overall. There is very good moral and social development and good spiritual and cultural development. The pupils are provided with many opportunities to appreciate other cultures through art, music, drama and dance.
How well the school cares for its pupils	A good level of care is provided for all pupils. The monitoring of pupils' attendance, behaviour and personal development is particularly effective. Attention should now be given to using assessment information more to guide and adapt curriculum planning so that it matches the abilities of all the pupils.

The curriculum for the under-fives is carefully planned to incorporate all areas of learning so that the children reach the recommended early learning goals. This enables all the children in the reception year to begin to study the foundation stages of the National Curriculum earlier than expected for this age group. Across the rest of the school, there are good opportunities for the pupils to use their literacy and numeracy skills. The curriculum is carefully planned to ensure continuity and progression. There are procedures in place to assess the progress made by the pupils but the information is not always used to adapt the planning. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The headteacher provides excellent leadership. He is ably supported by a deputy headteacher who leads by her very good example in the classroom. There is clear direction for the school with the core management team of staff working hard to evaluate and improve further the work of the school.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	The governors successfully fulfil all of their responsibilities. They are clear about what needs to be done to improve the school further. They are increasingly becoming involved in the evaluation of the school's work.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There are well-established monitoring procedures in place since the appointment of the headteacher. These have had a significant effect on how the school evaluates teaching and learning.
The strategic use of resources	There have been substantial improvements to the internal appearance of the school. These include a central library area, displays of the pupils' work around the school and a specialist design and technology room. Resources are used well and there have been improvements to the information technology resources.

The leadership and management of the school is clear and purposeful. The headteacher and staff work as a team with good self-reviews and evaluations made to improve the school further. The aims and values of the school are clearly expressed in all its work. The school has a sufficient number of teaching and support staff to deliver the whole curriculum. Good use is made of teachers who have particular expertise, for example, in art, design and technology, music and information technology. Resources are well used to support teaching and learning and the new library has been conveniently located to enable greater access to non-fiction books and resources.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The quality of the teaching. The behaviour of the pupils. The approachability of the staff. The school's high expectations. The way that the school is managed and led. The way the school helps the children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school's provision for homework. The information provided by the school about their children's progress. The provision for extra-curricular activities.

The inspection findings support the parents' positive views. Homework is well organised and structured and is usually appropriate for the pupils across the school. There is a good range of extra-curricular activities outside lesson times. The school makes best use of these times given that most of the pupils use the school bus to come to school and to be taken home. The consultation evenings and information provided for parents about their children's progress were judged to be of good quality.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. The results of the 1999 end-of-key stage tests by age eleven show that the pupils' performance in English and mathematics was above the national average and above average when compared with similar schools. In science, the results were in line with the national average and average compared with similar schools. The results in English and mathematics were close to the school's own targets and in science, the teachers' assessments expected more pupils to have reached higher standards. The number of pupils taking the tests each year is approximately 50 and the ability levels of the pupils have varied significantly. Test results reflect this variation ranging from well above average in 1997 to average in 1999 for all three subjects. Over the past two years, the tests results show little variation between the attainment of boys compared with that of girls. Nineteen per cent of the pupils taking the Key Stage 2 tests in 1999 were on the school's special educational needs register.
2. The results of the 1999 end-of-key stage tests by age seven show that the pupils' performance in reading and writing was above the national average. In mathematics, tests results show that standards fell to below the national average. The pupils' performance in reading and writing over the last three years has improved steadily. In mathematics, results have varied from above average to below average.
3. The children enter the school with a wide range of abilities and, overall, their attainment is above average. Inspection evidence indicates that the children under five are making good progress and are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes well before the age of five in all the areas of learning. Most of the children in the two Reception classes are ready to start the foundation stages of the National Curriculum before they reach five. In Key Stage 1, the introduction of the literacy and numeracy strategies has resulted in a sustained improvement in reading, writing and mathematics standards. Standards in reading, writing and mathematics are above average.
4. The pupils in the two Reception classes make good progress in reading, writing and mathematics. They use their understanding of letter sounds to decipher simple words. The pupils are able to use picture clues and letter sounds to tackle unfamiliar words. In Key Stage 1, the pupils use a good range of strategies for sounding out the combination of letters and read with understanding and expression. Throughout the key stage the pupils use a very good range of word-building techniques to tackle unfamiliar words. The pupils also make good progress in writing. They form their letters clearly and consistently across the key stage and achieve a good standard by the age of seven. The standards attained in mathematics are above average, reflecting the good progress made since the pupils started school. By the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils have a good understanding of number. They can add and subtract numbers, sometimes using multiples of ten and the majority are able to recall number facts to 20, 50 and 100 quickly.
5. By the end of Key Stage 2, inspection evidence indicates that the level of attainment in English is above average. The pupils make good progress with a significant proportion of pupils achieving higher standards than expected for their age. Most pupils make good progress in reading, becoming proficient and confident readers.

They read widely, including fiction and non-fiction books and texts, and are able to access information from reference books in the school library with confidence and skill. The pupils make good progress in writing with the large majority of the pupils in Year 6 attaining standards that exceed the levels expected for their age. There is a good range of writing, which includes note taking, poetry, play-scripts, extended fiction and narrative. Many pupils throughout the key stage are able to link sentences together with accurate punctuation. More able pupils in Years 5 and 6 make very good progress in some English lessons where the writing involves a good range of styles and genres. Across the school spelling and handwriting are well taught. The pupils are provided with regular opportunities to practise spelling and writing and most of them have a very good cursive writing style. Speaking and listening skills are well developed with many opportunities to participate in plays, poetry and presentations. Throughout the school literacy skills are well used to support other subjects. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in literacy, especially during the additional literacy support sessions which help them to gain confidence and achieve well in English.

6. In mathematics, the school has maintained above average standards although in Key Stage 1 test results have fluctuated. Standards are above average at the end of both key stages and inspection findings indicate that the school has identified areas of underachievement and improved the teaching to raise standards further. Targets have been set for all pupils and, in Key Stage 2, the pupils have been grouped by ability for mathematics lessons with teachers better able to focus on particular groups of pupils to raise standards. The school's targets for 2000 are challenging and the planning reflects the school's desire to raise standards year on year. The pupils make good progress and by the end of both key stages the pupils have a secure knowledge and understanding of number facts. Higher attaining pupils by the end of Key Stage 2 use complex multiplication and division to solve problems presented as investigations. Teachers' planning has improved since the last inspection but there is now a need to build into these consistent procedures to help them make assessments about the pupils' progress. The school recognises the need to incorporate a whole- school assessment policy for mathematics to help the teachers plan lessons that extend and challenge the pupils as they move through each key stage.
7. The school recognises that over the last three years standards in science, according to test results, have declined. Inspection findings indicate that standards are above average at the end of both key stages. Lessons are now clearly planned and structured and they provide the pupils with more challenging and practical investigations. These have had the effect of raising standards in a very short space of time so that the school is now well placed to raise achievement in science. The improved planning and quality of teaching in science across the school is having a positive impact on the pupils' progress and their level of attainment.
8. The standards in information technology are average at the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Standards have improved because the information technology curriculum is well organised and managed. This is helping the teachers across the school to improve their own knowledge of the subject with more effective teaching taking place in every class. In religious education, the pupils exceed the standards expected in the locally agreed syllabus by the age of eleven. In all other subjects, the pupils attain the standards expected for their age. They make good progress in art, design and technology, history and physical education. The pupils make satisfactory progress in geography and music.

9. The pupils with special educational needs are very well supported, particularly in literacy and numeracy and they make good progress in relation to their prior level of attainment. The additional literacy support provided for some groups of pupils in Key Stage 2 is particularly successful and effective. This is skilfully managed and delivered by the part-time literacy support teacher who works closely with the special educational needs co-ordinator to provide an effective programme of support to ensure that these pupils make good progress in English.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10. The pupils are very keen to learn and enjoy coming to school. They are taught to respect the views and feelings of others and the large majority of pupils work and play very well together. In the reception classes, the youngest children show great enthusiasm for the many interesting activities which are planned for them. Throughout the school, where the large majority of lessons are well planned with high expectations, the pupils respond very well and show very good attitudes towards their work. There is a positive and confident approach to the tasks set, resulting in high standards of work. The pupils present their work neatly and they co-operate very well in groups. Most of the pupils throughout the school show initiative and independence and they are proud of their achievements.
11. Standards of behaviour and discipline are very good throughout the school. There have been no exclusions and no bullying was observed or reported by parents or pupils. The pupils are polite, courteous and friendly to each other and to adults. Behaviour in assemblies is excellent and at other times it is usually very good. The very good behaviour and attitudes shown by the pupils has a very positive effect on teaching and learning in lessons. The pupils respect the teachers and other adults in the school, they care for school property including maintaining a flower garden and aquarium. They are happy to share equipment and often help each other. Relationships between the pupils and adults are excellent and this helps to create an effective learning environment.
12. The pupils' personal development is very good. The pupils take advantage of the many opportunities to take responsibilities. They willingly take on the role of monitors and older pupils are often asked to help younger pupils in some lessons, for example when working on computers. This encourages the older pupils to act as good role models for others in the school. The pupils respond well to the system of rewards and certificates for achievement in academic, sporting and social aspects of their work. The school has an extensive range of activities and provision for the pupils to take on additional responsibilities as part of their preparation for citizenship.
13. Attendance is good as it is above the national average and there is no unauthorised absence. Pupils are punctual and lessons start promptly. There are good procedures in place to monitor attendance and punctuality. The school has good arrangements in place to ensure that the staff are on duty to supervise the school buses at the start and end of each school day.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

14. The teaching in the two reception classes is usually good and often very good. It has improved since the last inspection. The teachers and classroom assistants work well as a team and they give high priority to the development of the children's language, literacy and numeracy. The teachers understand how young children learn and they are sensitive to the needs of the younger children under five years of age as well as the needs of those who are ready for the foundation stages of the National Curriculum early in the school year. The staff work hard to provide a stimulating learning environment, both classrooms are bright and very well displayed with pupils' work together with stimulating visual prompts. Planning and assessment procedures are very good and they help the teachers to plan work for all the children across the ability range. The lessons have very good pace and they help the children to become motivated learners. Relationships are excellent and the teachers set challenging targets for the children. Literacy and numeracy sessions are well organised, although more opportunities ought to be built into these lessons so that the under fives can explore more practical experiences, for example through sand and water play, while five-year-olds get on with more sedentary table-top reading and writing activities.
15. All of the teachers throughout the rest of the school have a thorough knowledge of the requirements of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. The skills of literacy and numeracy are very well taught. The teachers prepare their lessons very well with particular attention given to the needs of pupils across the ability range. In Key Stage 2, the mathematics lessons are grouped according to ability and this is helping the teachers to focus on specific learning objectives that are well matched to each group. In Key Stage 1, the teachers start with whole class discussions and then plan good independent and group activities which are organised so that pupils of all abilities make good progress. In both key stages, the lessons are organised so that the teacher can focus on specific skills or work with particular groups of pupils, and in this respect, the teaching is always focused and purposeful. In a very good Year 2 mathematics lesson, the teacher provided a very good range of activities which were differentiated according to the abilities of the pupils. For example, one group of pupils of above average ability calculated the price of different items up to £5 while the average ability group worked with amounts up to £2. In an excellent Year 5 and 6 English lesson, the teacher worked with a group of pupils when investigating the work of recognised poets while other groups worked independently on word searches using dictionaries to help them extend their vocabulary and knowledge of rhyming words in poetry. The Key Stage 2 mathematics lessons are well organised and because they are set into ability groups, the teachers can focus on the core learning objectives matched to the abilities of the pupils. Teachers throughout the school make good use of the mathematics objectives set out in the Numeracy Framework. They now need to adopt systematic assessment procedures to enable them to use the information they collect about the pupils' progress to plan future lessons.
16. There is good teaching in all subjects and in almost all lessons. The teachers set high expectations for both behaviour and achievement. The teachers often praise the pupils and this is helping them to gain confidence and to persevere with their learning. The pace of lessons is usually good but the introductions to some literacy and numeracy lessons sometimes last too long. This results in a slower pace and some pupils becoming fidgety or lose concentration. The teachers have a secure

knowledge of the subjects they teach and the improved planning arrangements have ensured that there is clear progression across the school in all subjects.

17. The pupils with special educational needs are provided with a combination of withdrawn support and also additional literacy support for those pupils who need extra reading and writing practise. The additional support teacher who works part-time provides well organised and effective teaching which develops self-confidence in the pupils and allows the time and space to progress at their own pace. This is particularly effective in ensuring that the pupils do not fall behind and lose pace with the rest of their literacy lessons. Special educational needs (SEN) is very well managed by the co-ordinator who has a thorough knowledge of all the pupils on the SEN register and can co-ordinate the most appropriate level of support in consultation with parents and outside agencies.
18. The pupils are given good opportunities to use their skills in literacy in history and other topics across the curriculum. Numeracy skills are also used in science lessons as the pupils' recorded work has many examples of tables and matrices used to present data.

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

19. The school provides a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum which meets all statutory requirements and reflects the aims and objectives of the school. The curriculum provided for the under fives is good and based on the agreed early learning goals.
20. The curriculum in Key Stages 1 and 2 covers all the areas of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. In most respects, the school has succeeded in maintaining an appropriate balance despite increased emphasis on literacy and numeracy, although there is some inconsistency on time allocated to some foundation subjects. The planning and staff training for literacy and numeracy has ensured the effective implementation of these strategies, with teachers using them in practice in an effective manner.
21. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' intellectual, physical and personal development and prepares them for the next stage of education. The school has good links with its feeder secondary schools which ensures smooth transition between the key stages of education.
22. Personal, social and health education is regularly promoted throughout the school. The governors have suitable policies for sex education and drugs awareness, with these two aspects of the curriculum being delivered where it is deemed to be appropriate, usually in science and planned personal, social and health education lessons. The school nurse, and the local police make a valuable contribution to these two areas of work.
23. Strategies to ensure that all pupils have equality of access to the planned curriculum are securely in place. The school fully meets the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. Individual education plans are well written, with clear targets, and appropriate strategies for improvement.

24. All subjects have a co-ordinator. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. These range from the Department for Education and Employment (DfEE) documentation, commercial and Local Education Authority schemes of work, as well as the school's own schemes of work based upon National Curriculum documentation. Most of these schemes of work offer clear guidance on the development of pupils' knowledge and skills. Teachers in parallel classes work effectively to ensure similar provision for all pupils in year groups. Work for all subjects is differentiated to three levels, and matches the needs of all pupils in the mixed aged classes. Planning for all subjects and years is good with all teachers using standardised medium term and weekly plans. Whilst this is a significant improvement on the previous inspection, the planning was deemed to be inconsistent and patchy when assessment information is not consistently used to inform further planning. Medium term plans are monitored by key stage co-ordinators, with the headteacher and the senior management team monitoring the whole curriculum. All areas for improvement identified in the previous report have now been addressed. The governors have an established curriculum sub-committee, and all governors are linked to all the subjects of the curriculum.
25. The school provides a good range of extra-curricular activities, including both sporting and musical activities. There is a gardening club, a computer club, a French club and a chess club. The school often hosts a number of artists in residence, as it was doing during the period of the inspection with all pupils in the school being provided with the opportunity to contribute a ceramic relief tile, with an individual motif to a Millennium project. This will be displayed both outside the school and in the school entrance hall. An extensive range of visits to museums, field trips and places of educational interest such as the Millennium Dome enriches the pupils' educational experiences. Regular visits by such people as the local vicar, local farmers, the fire and police service, paramedics, educational theatre groups and representatives from a range of local industries all make a valuable contribution to the varied and extended curriculum provided by the school
26. The school has a very good ethos in which all pupils are seen as individuals and are positively valued. This very much reflects the Christian nature of the school. It fulfils all requirements for a daily act of worship and provides pupils with the opportunity to reflect on the issues and ideas being presented to them. Pupils make a regular contribution to assemblies both in their singing and responding to teachers' questions, or at a more significant level in actually taking the school assembly. For example, during the week of the inspection, Year 5 and 6 pupils presented their own mini-concert version of *Joseph and his Amazing Technicoloured Dreamcoat*. Pupils recite prayers both in the dining hall and at the end of the school days. All this enhances pupils' spiritual awareness. With the exception of religious education there are few planned opportunities for spiritual development. When it does occur, it happens naturally rather than by planned intervention.
27. A strong sense of morality underpins the aims and ethos of the school, with pupils having a strong sense of right and wrong. Pupils are well aware of the responsibility they have for their own actions, and show a concern for the well being of others. This is reflected in the code of behaviour initiated by pupils and posted up in their individual classrooms. Very good behaviour is also enhanced by the school's rewards and sanctions systems with the emphasis very much being on the encouragement of good behaviour. Opportunities are provided in individual subjects for pupils to consider and reflect on moral issues such as concern for the

environment and the problems of the peoples of the third world. The provision made for pupils' moral development is very good.

28. The pupils develop very good social skills as they move through the school. All members of the school, including teaching and non-teaching staff, provide good role models for the pupils. The pupils recognise the high expectations of them in terms of their behaviour and respond in a very positive manner. Their understanding of good citizenship is well developed by regular fund-raising activities for charities, both local and national. They have been involved in sending items of food for street children in Rumania, and support the National Children's Homes. At a local level, pupils have been involved in activities at retirement homes for elderly citizens and the local hospice. Pupils develop a good understanding of the wider community and the world of work through the good links the school has with the local Education Business Partnership and local industries such as Glaxo Pharmaceuticals.
29. The quality of provision for pupils' cultural development is good. The large majority of pupils share a common cultural background, and are given opportunities to appreciate their local heritage through a detailed examination of the area they live in. In geography lessons, the pupils consider a range of life styles and cultures around the world. In history lessons, the pupils examine the changing nature of their own cultures, as well as that of other societies in the past such as the Romans, Ancient Greeks and Egyptians. In English lessons, they develop an understanding of their literary heritage by studying pre-twentieth century prose and the world of Shakespeare. In art, the pupils consider the work of great artists, whilst in music listen to and consider the works of established composers. In religious education lessons the pupils consider a range of world religions and the culture from which they evolved. The school has a range of books and materials that reflect different cultures living in Britain today.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

30. The school cares for its pupils well. The monitoring of pupils' progress is satisfactory, and the provision for the welfare and care of the pupils is good overall. Appropriate policies and procedures are in place to cover aspects such as security and child protection. The pupils with special educational needs are identified early in their school career, and appropriate measures are taken to support them. The teachers know their pupils well, they recognise their needs and respond to them. There are suitable facilities for the under fives to use large apparatus during structured play.
31. Measures to ensure the safety of pupils are in place. Appropriate procedures are in place to ensure safe passage of children around the school. At play times and lunch times, the pupils are supervised well and show very good behaviour. The pupils who travel to the school by bus are well supervised and behave in an orderly manner. Both teaching and support staff care for the pupils very well, and there is trust and respect on both sides. No instances of unduly aggressive play, bullying and harassment were noted during the inspection, and the pupils appear to respect and care for each other. There are excellent and effective monitoring procedures in place to track attendance and behaviour.
32. The school intends to set up procedures for taking the pupils' views into account, for example, a school council. It provides good support and guidance to pupils about personal development. The monitoring of their academic development is satisfactory, but as yet the school does not use assessment information effectively to guide

curriculum planning. Learning objectives are clearly displayed in all lessons and teachers make accurate assessments. The information about the pupils' progress helps the teachers to check on their progress but as yet the school has not consistently used procedures across the school to develop learning objectives as a result of the assessment information gathered. The school has recently introduced good procedures for the assessment and monitoring of the pupils' attainment and progress. Attainment on entry is made using the Local Authority's baseline assessment scheme, and throughout the reception year, teachers make appropriate assessments to chart the children's progress. In the rest of the school, the teachers have adopted consistent procedures for assessment and target setting for individual pupils in science and these are to be extended to English and mathematics. The school makes good use of a wide range of assessment materials including standardised English, mathematics and non-verbal reasoning tests to track the pupils' progress and to help teachers make assessments, especially at the end of Key Stage 2. However, these assessment procedures have not been in place long enough for teachers to use the information to fully inform lesson planning. Learning objectives are stated and tasks are provided for the different abilities across the school in most lessons. The school is now well placed to improve planning further by incorporating assessments into the medium term plans systematically across the school so that learning objectives are more clearly matched to the abilities of the pupils in all lessons.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

33. The response to the questionnaire distributed before the inspection indicated that the parents think very highly of the school and they have positive views about their children's progress and the quality of the teaching. Parents are also pleased with the behaviour of the pupils, the approachability of the staff, the high expectations set and the way that the school is led and managed. A significant number believe that the arrangements made to provide homework, the provision for extra-curricular activities and the quality of information provided by the school should be improved. The large majority of parents approve of the current arrangements and inspection findings indicate that these aspects of the school's provision are at least satisfactory and often good. Inspection findings also support the parents' positive views of the school. There are good arrangements in place to provide structured homework, consultation evenings are well attended and information provided by the school about the pupils' progress is comprehensive and useful to parents. Given that the majority of the pupils arrive at school by bus, the school makes good arrangements to ensure that there is a broad and balanced range of extra-curricular activities. These include sport, musical performances, participation in charity events and fund-raising, and links with other institutions, for example, work experience students visit from a local university.
34. Relationships between the school and parents are very good. Parents and carers are welcomed and encouraged to visit and help in school. Several parents and grandparents help in classrooms and many support the school through fund-raising events and organising sporting and social events. These links have a positive effect on the pupils' learning experiences. The information provided by the school is comprehensive, easy to read and accessible to parents. There are regular newsletters and information is posted in the main entrance with copies of the prospectus, annual reports by governors and other useful information about the curriculum. Parents' consultation evenings provide good opportunities for further

consultation. Reading records are used effectively to enable parents and teachers to monitor the pupils' progress in reading.

35. There is a good range of educational visits, which further supports the pupils' learning as well as contributes towards their personal development. The parents of those pupils with special educational needs are appropriately involved in their child's learning and are kept well informed of their progress. Annual review meetings are held with parents. All statutory procedures are in place which relate to the special educational needs Code of Practice and the National Curriculum, and these are publicised in the school Prospectus. Reports sent home to parents about their children's progress cover all the subjects of the curriculum. These are clear and helpful and they contain suggestions about how parents might help their child to improve.
36. There is an effective Parents and Teacher Association which raises funds to support the work of the school. Other local groups and organisations are involved in the school and are often invited to contribute towards curriculum topics. These have the effect of making the pupils' learning experiences more relevant and help them to understand more about their local area and environment. The history curriculum is particularly enriched with local surveys and links with the museum in Barnard Castle.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

37. The headteacher, supported by a very capable deputy and core management team of staff, provides excellent leadership. In the short time since his appointment at the start of the school year, the school has gone a long way towards addressing the most important aspects of teaching and learning to raise standards further. Planning and organisation is sharp and consistent and there have been significant improvements to the internal appearance of the school in order to promote an effective learning environment for all the pupils. The headteacher has worked with all the staff to put in place good strategies to improve the quality of teaching. This has had the effect of sharpening the core focus of the school and to ensure that high achievement is sustained. As a result, the quality of teaching has improved significantly since the last inspection and with the support of the Local Authority the school is engaged in a good process of self-review. Planning and assessment procedures have improved and the school has set clear targets for raising attainment for all pupils.
38. The deputy headteacher was also recently appointed and she supports the headteacher very well. She leads by her very good example in the classroom and manages to motivate the staff as well as co-ordinate the management of change which has resulted in a marked improvement in teaching and learning across the school. The headteacher and core management team work well as a team and this ensures that all parts of the school, that is, the early years, Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2, work together to improve the school further. There is a refreshing willingness amongst the staff and governors to raise the profile of the school in its community and to involve parents in this process.
39. The governors fulfil all of their statutory duties well. They are clear about how the school can improve and there are now well established procedures to enable them to become more involved with monitoring and evaluation. Committees meet every term to discuss the different aspects of the school's work; these include the school's finances, its curriculum and the management of personnel. The school development

plan is a useful working document which helps the governors to have a clear view of the school's priorities. There are now link governors attached to every curriculum subject and this enables the curriculum co-ordinators to work more closely with governors when monitoring their own subjects. The headteacher has ensured that the strategic management of the school involves the governors more in the day to day oversight of the work of the school.

40. The resources of the school are used well. The development plan sets out the priorities for improvement and the deployment of staff and resources. The headteacher is eager to spend more of the school's unallocated funds than before which is helping the school to establish the principles of best value given the limitations of the school budget share. This is a significant improvement as in previous years the governors have held back large sums of money which have not been specifically allocated to staffing or the curriculum. The headteacher is particularly effective in securing additional grants or funds attached to specific projects. Good procedures are now established to re-locate the school library and to establish specialist rooms, for example the technology room. There are plans to establish a computer suite and the school is currently undertaking a refurbishment programme which is improving the internal appearance of the school.
41. The overall number, qualifications and experience of teachers and classroom assistants matches the demands of the school's curriculum, including the needs of those pupils with special educational needs. The needs of children under five years of age in the reception classes are being met as there is full time additional support shared between both classes. The pupil-teacher ratios are broadly average and the school makes effective use of specialist teaching, including additional literacy support for some pupils in Key Stage 2. New teachers have an effective induction programme. The school is well placed to offer placements for student teachers on initial teacher training. The number of midday supervisors available to supervise the pupils on the playground during the lunch-time period is sufficient.
42. The school receives very good quality administrative and financial support. The school secretaries manage these aspects of the school's work very well. The day to day routines are well established. The Local Authority audited the school's accounts recently and made a number of recommendations. The headteacher and financial secretary have established very effective routines to manage the finances of the school and governors are becoming more involved in these procedures. The site manager works very hard to maintain the accommodation and has made a significant contribution towards the recent refurbishment programme. The accommodation at the school is extensive with pleasant grounds that are well utilised to support physical education and other areas of the curriculum.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

In order to improve the quality of education further, the governors, headteacher and staff should:

*** Build into the school's curriculum planning:**

- systematic procedures to help teachers use the assessments they make about the pupils' progress to better inform the planning;
- learning objectives which are more closely matched to the abilities of the pupils in all lessons.

Other less serious areas for development which should be considered by the school

- * Develop further the direct involvement of the governors in the management, oversight and evaluation of the school's work.**

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	84
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	17

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	42	40	16			

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll		YR – Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)		369
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		36

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs		YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs		7
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register		70

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	7
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	6

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.0
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	24	32	56

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	20	22	21
	Girls	30	30	29
	Total	50	52	50
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	89 (90)	93 (93)	89 (89)
	National	82 (81)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	22	21	23
	Girls	30	29	30
	Total	52	50	53
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	93 (86)	89 (87)	95 (89)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	1999	20	27	47

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	12	15	16
	Girls	23	22	24
	Total	35	37	40
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	74 (88)	79 (86)	85 (86)
	National	70 (65)	69 (58)	78 (69)]

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	10	13	15
	Girls	24	24	24
	Total	34	37	39
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	72 (75)	79 (80)	83 (84)
	National	68 (65)	69 (58)	75 (69)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	
Black – African heritage	
Black – other	
Indian	
Pakistani	
Bangladeshi	
Chinese	
White	369
Any other minority ethnic group	

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	14.6
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	25.3
Average class size	28.4

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	90

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998/1999
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	£
Total income	498,309
Total expenditure	505,687
Expenditure per pupil	1,370
Balance brought forward from previous year	33,835
Balance carried forward to next year	26,457

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	369
Number of questionnaires returned	175

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	53	41	5	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	44	49	3	0	3
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	53	1	0	5
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	29	51	18	2	0
The teaching is good.	48	47	2	0	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	25	48	23	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	61	37	2	0	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55	40	3	0	1
The school works closely with parents.	26	61	12	1	0
The school is well led and managed.	39	55	1	0	4
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	46	52	2	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	21	42	16	3	18

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

43. The children are admitted into one of two Reception classes at the start of the year in which they reach five years of age. At the time of the inspection, most of the children were five and there were under-fives in both Reception classes. The results of the baseline assessments indicate that the children enter the Reception year with a wide range of attainment and, overall, this above average. The inspection findings indicate that the large majority of the children are likely to achieve the Desirable Learning Outcomes for pupils entering compulsory education in all the areas of learning for children under five years of age. Most of the children are ready for the early stages of the National Curriculum well before the end of the Reception year and, in this respect, their level of attainment is above average. They make good progress because the teaching is mainly good and often very good. This is an improvement since the last inspection. There are very effective procedures in place to ensure that the planning matches both the needs of children under five and the needs of those children who have started the early stages of the National Curriculum. The teachers sometimes incorporate activities for the under-fives into the planning during literacy and numeracy lessons. This is not always enough for some children under-five or those who need more time to experience structured play activities specifically for the under-fives before moving on to more formal literacy and numeracy lessons or activities.

Personal and social development

44. The children make good progress in their personal and social development. They grow in confidence and independence through carefully planned opportunities in lessons, such as developing coloured patterns for Mothers' Day cards. The children confidently ask and answer questions in front of others and demonstrate independence when dressing for physical activities. They move around the school in an orderly manner and know what is expected of them at the end of practical activities. The children learn to behave well, such as when representing the school on outside walks in the local area. All the adults are excellent role models for the children, who are developing a strong sense of what is right and wrong. They respond very well during collective worship and become eagerly involved in learning about the world around them, for example, when looking for signs of Spring in the Bowes Museum parks. In class, the children's behaviour is very good. They are trustworthy and courteous in class and group work, like singing rhymes together, such as "Five Fat Sausages". Their relationships with adults are very good. They play together sensibly, use their imaginations well in creative or physical activities and show enthusiasm.

Language and literacy

45. The children make good progress in language and literacy. They develop speaking and listening skills well through the many wide-ranging opportunities planned for them. They respond confidently to stimulating questions which extend their vocabulary and encourage them to speak clearly in sentences, such as when making webs for Incy Wincy Spider. They listen carefully to the teacher and to each other and respond readily to instructions about the Postman Pat activities. The children develop a good interest in books and an enjoyment of reading, especially about

animals. They learn early reading skills effectively and use picture stories well to help them recognise words. They talk about events in stories. More able pupils read fluently and can suggest how stories might end. Most of the children are establishing secure writing skills, which they practise frequently. They know how to hold pencils and crayons and are writing letters with increasing accuracy. Many have learned story sequences about plants growing. The children know how to write complete sentences. The teachers have very good knowledge and understanding of the literacy and language curriculum for the under-fives and they know how young children learn and develop language. They plan thoroughly and systematically and there are very good links with other areas such as mathematics and creative art to promote interesting and relevant language activities. The teachers set high expectations which enable the children to make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills as well as their reading and writing.

Mathematics

46. The children make good progress in mathematics. By the age of five, the large majority have reached the recommended learning outcomes for five-year-olds and most are ready for the early stages of the National Curriculum. The children sing songs like "Ten Dancing Daisies" which successfully help them to strengthen their knowledge of number. They recognise patterns in numbers, shapes and simple puzzles such as, "What make five?" Children were observed in the dining area following directions to place themselves "on", "in" "under", "over" and "around" the special Little Tykes apparatus. The children recognise, match, order and arrange numbers up to 10, and most recognise larger numbers in their daily lives. They respond to relative values such as "more" or "less" with numbers up to 20 and are beginning to be aware of addition and subtraction activities. Some children can calculate number facts presented as a sum, for example, $9 \text{ take away } 4 = 5$. The children talk about their mathematical activities using the appropriate mathematical language and terms. The quality of teaching is good and the teachers build very effectively on what has previously been learned. There is good teamwork involving the classroom support staff which allows the teaching of groups to be small and manageable. Teachers make good use of mathematical resources.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

47. By the age of five, the children have made good progress in this area of learning. They are aware of the dangers of fire and know that a Teddy Bear is not alive because it cannot eat, sleep or move. The children use a wide range of tools with care and build coloured models with construction kits. When on local walks, the children identify different landmarks like the hospital for mapping routes. They conduct tree searches for new buds and signs that birds are nesting. Care is taken to note the colour of different plant types in gardens. Parts of plants are correctly named and this is demonstrated in displays of the children's work. The children are introduced to the computer early and most can use a simple colour painting program. Year 6 pupils are timetabled to help children under five use computers. The quality of teaching is good. Good use is made of resources, for example, when needles, thread and card are used effectively to make striking webs for imaginary spiders. Teachers set high expectations. They allow the children to explore patterns using materials, glue and paper. Good use is made of the local area to enrich the children's learning experiences as well as using spaces inside and outside the classroom areas to provide interesting role-play areas and themed activities. For example, a support assistant taught a group of children to use the Pelican Crossing

as part of a role-play activity in the corridor outside the classroom. Very good use was made of models simulating the crossing area and the session was well led and managed by the member of staff.

Creative development

48. The children make good progress and achieve well in this area of learning. They can paint imaginative pictures and investigate the use of colour, such as when they created sunflowers in the style of Van Gogh. The colours and patterns of Spring flowers are explored in crayons and felt-pens. The children have made repeating patterns which they investigate by matching colours and looking for similarities. The children sing with enthusiasm and they have learned a range of songs during collective worship in assemblies and in class. They can vary the pitch and rhythm of the songs with accuracy and can sing in time very tunefully. The teaching is good because lessons are well organised and the teachers manage the children well. The support staff are involved in the planning and supervision of group activities and this is a strong feature of the school's provision for the under-fives. The work of the children is highly valued and displayed very well.

Physical development

49. The children make good progress in their physical development. They use wheeled toys as often as weather permits and they can balance or steer the toys safely in confined areas well. Their co-ordination skills are maturing as they enjoy physical education lessons in the main hall. These enable them to develop and improve their body movements. The children learn to sequence actions on and across large gymnastics equipment and they develop an increasing awareness of space. They can jump, run, twist and turn, varying pace and direction. The children are beginning to move rhythmically to music as activities in different sized spaces are explored. Fine, manipulative skills are being very well developed as the children use pencils, crayons, felt-pens, brushes, scissors, needles and a range of materials. The quality of teaching is good and often very good because it is well planned and structured to ensure clear development in this area of learning. Physical education sessions and other physical activities contribute effectively towards raising the children's self-confidence.

ENGLISH

50. Standards in English are above average at the end of both key stages. This high standard of literacy makes a positive contribution to the work that the pupils do in other subjects. The school has managed to maintain the high standards achieved in the last inspection and the teaching of English has improved. Inspection evidence indicates that standards in reading and writing have improved over the last three years at the end of Key Stage 1. At the end of Key Stage 2, high standards have been maintained. Boys and girls achieve equally well and the school has incorporated the requirements of the national Literacy Strategy very well to raise standards further for all pupils. The effective monitoring of pupils' work throughout the school has resulted in more accurate targeting. The school is particularly successful at identifying pupils with special educational needs and who require additional literacy support. This support is of high quality and is having a very positive effect on these pupils.

51. In Key Stage 1, speaking and listening skills develop well as the pupils are encouraged to take part in class discussions and, through careful questioning, they offer their ideas clearly and with confidence. The teachers value what the pupils say and this encourages them to participate with confidence when explaining or describing something in literacy lessons. In the reception classes, the pupils are encouraged to answer in sentences and to speak clearly. In Year 1, the teachers encourage the pupils to talk about their books and their reading experiences. In Year 2, the pupils can explain very clearly what they are doing and what books they have read. Whole class discussions throughout the school take place at the start and end of most literacy lessons and this is helping the pupils to talk about their experiences and to listen to others in a group. In Key Stage 2, the pupils can explain very clearly what they are doing and they can discuss topics in small or large groups maturely and sensibly. They listen attentively to instructions and give thoughtful answers. Older pupils in Years 5 and 6, for example, discussed the meaning of different poetry and planned what mood their poem was going to create. The school makes very good use of drama lessons to encourage the pupils to practise their oracy skills and perform in front of an audience. During the week of inspection older pupils performed *Joseph and his Technicoloured Dreamcoat* in front of the whole school in a special assembly.
52. The early skills of reading are well taught in Key Stage 1 and the pupils make good progress. The youngest pupils in the reception classes respond well to books; they understand that pictures and text tell a story and they quickly learn the shape and sounds of the letters. Most of the pupils recognise a good range of words by sight before the age of five. Five-year-olds recognise key words in their reading scheme and use a range of clues to tackle unfamiliar words, including sounding out the initial letter sounds. In Year 1, the pupils are taught to read both fiction and non-fiction. There are very good links with other subjects, for example, the pupils study the growth of chicks as part of their science lesson and also read non-fiction books related to the topic. In one lesson, the pupils had a clear understanding of how to use an index and how to find information quickly in a reference book. In Year 2, the pupils study the fiction "Big Book" *The Three Little Pigs* and they use their reading skills very well to determine the nature of the characters, the plot and the setting. Throughout Key Stage 1, the pupils use their reading skills to predict, express opinions and discuss the main features of the stories being read.
53. In Key Stage 2, reading skills are developed further with the large majority of the pupils becoming proficient and independent readers by the end of the key stage. They are able to use their skills to access information from books and the majority of the pupils read widely for pleasure. All the pupils participate in guided reading sessions with their teacher during the literacy lessons and many are given support and encouragement to read at home. In a Year 3 and 4, lesson the teacher encourages the pupils to discuss the character in a mythological story. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils thoroughly explore poetry and different styles of writing. They understand that different poets have a style which creates different genres. The pupils who receive very good quality additional literacy support, are growing in confidence with their reading and are learning to express their ideas in writing. This level of special educational needs support is particularly effective in accelerating progress for those pupils who are finding it difficult to read to a level expected for their age.
54. Progress in writing is good in both key stages. This is also making a positive contribution towards the quality of writing across the curriculum. In Key Stage 1, the

large majority of the pupils form their letters clearly and consistently. Handwriting is well taught throughout the school and most pupils develop a legible, cursive style of writing. Through regular handwriting practice and the use of guide-lines, the pupils work to the teachers high expectations for their writing. Younger pupils copy, write and trace letter shapes to improve control and style. In Year 1, the pupils are encouraged to write extended sentences and literacy lessons are specifically aimed at linking their reading to writing. Year 1 pupils can spell accurately and have developed a good knowledge of vowel sound and spelling patterns. In Year 2, the pupils write sentences with confidence and many are writing to a higher standards where their writing is imaginative and lively. In a very good Year 2, literacy lesson the pupils were able to write a description of The Big Bad Wolf with a very good use of vocabulary and description. In Key Stage 2, the pupils learn to take notes during discussion sessions. These are recorded in their note-books and then the pupils transfer information into their writing books. The pupils demonstrate a very good understanding of punctuation, use an interesting range of vocabulary and grammar is well taught. For example, in a Year 3 and 4 literacy lesson, the teacher taught the pupils to change the strength of adjectives so that the emphasis changes using comparative adjectives. In Years 5 and 6, the pupils explore a range of poetry so that the pupils appreciate humour, mood and different genres. The evidence of the pupils' previous writing shows that a high standards is being achieved as the pupils write a broad range of descriptive, poetic and narrative forms of writing. In one excellent lesson, the humorous poetry of Charles Causley was compared to that of Kit Wright and Roger McGough. In another excellent writing lesson, the pupils were encouraged to add description and imagination to their writing when they discussed styles of poetry and descriptive language. In both writing lessons, the standards achieved were high because the majority of the pupils were able to use extended forms of language to enrich their writing, making it lively and exciting as well as descriptive or humorous.

55. The quality of teaching is good overall throughout the school with many strong features. This has a direct impact on the high standards achieved by the majority of the pupils. In Key Stage 1, literacy lessons are well planned, taking account of the abilities of the pupils. There are good introductions and plenary sessions which provide opportunities for the pupils to reflect on what they have learned. However, some introductions are too long and this has the effect of slowing down the pace in some lessons. Group work is well organised and very good use is made of support staff who are usually deployed to work with a specific group of pupils. In Key Stage 2, the teaching is good with some very good features. Two literacy lessons in Years 5 and 6 were judged to be excellent because the level of work was demanding and extended the pupils of all abilities. In very good and excellent English lessons the teaching continually monitors the pupils' work, marking and commenting on the standard of work the pupils produce. There is also good attention to detail and an expectation that the pupils must do their best. Good and very good teaching occurs when the pupils are expected to ask intelligent questions and are kept on task throughout the lesson. The work planned for more able pupils is often challenging and builds on their previous work. The work is also planned to match the abilities of all pupils and there is particularly effective additional literacy teaching provided for some pupils with special educational needs. The teachers relate well to their pupils and they set high expectations. There are clear instructions and purposeful activities which require the pupils to engage in a broad range of reading and writing. The high standard of teaching is having a positive effect on standards. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed.

56. The National Literacy Strategy has been successfully implemented. The English co-ordinator is well organised and has managed to produce an English policy with associated schemes of work that ensure that English teaching is consistent right through the school. The school has recently re-located the library so that it is more accessible to the pupils and staff. The library is well stocked with reference books and there is a good range of fiction books across the school. There are dictionaries available to all the pupils in every class and a good balance of non-fiction and fiction books are used in English lessons. Computers are increasingly being used so that pupils can organise their writing using a word processor and older pupils are beginning to use desk-top publishing skills to arrange their writing. The governors are now becoming involved in the monitoring of curriculum subjects and this includes a Literacy governor who has been assigned to link with the co-ordinator to monitor standards in English.

MATHEMATICS

57. Inspection findings confirm above average standards in mathematics at the end of both key stages and pupils of all abilities achieve well. At the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are at least achieving expected levels. They understand place value in tens and units and are adding and subtracting to 20. Knowledge and understanding in shape and appropriate measurement is secure, they understand the reasons for collecting data, can compare examples and represent findings in simple tables. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have developed flexible and effective methods of computation; they record and use these with good understanding. They have a good understanding of relevant multiplication facts, use mental strategies for solving problems and understand and use the relationships between the four mathematical operations. The vast majority of pupils achieve national expectations for the end of Key Stage 2 and a significant number achieve standards that are above those expected for their age.
58. The school has made satisfactory improvements since the previous inspection and generally has maintained high standards. There has been some inconsistency and slower progress in developing whole school assessment procedures. Although teachers now consistently use National Curriculum schemes and the National Numeracy Strategy guidelines to initiate planning, there is still a lack of an updated policy and scheme of work to guide pupils' mathematical learning as they progress through the school. The school is working towards consistent and systematic procedures for assessing mathematics and is addressing these issues.
59. The overall quality of teaching is good in both key stages, with many examples of very good practice. Weekly plans show a very good understanding of the National Curriculum and expectations for all levels of ability. This is a major contributory factor as to why the majority of pupils achieve, or exceed, national expectations. The successful introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy has further strengthened mathematical provision. Teachers expertly devise exciting and challenging mental activities in their lessons. Pupils listen attentively to questions and are eager to contribute to these sessions. This especially has given less able pupils the confidence to articulate their thoughts in practical contexts. In a lower Year 5 and 6 maths set, expert questioning and practical demonstrations enable a group of pupils who struggle with numeracy to make very good progress in visualising rotation and clock-wise angles of turn. Older pupils in the school show a mature ability in their investigative work. Teachers enhance these skills with their high expectations of pupils' application to practical problem solving situations. Year 5 and 6 pupils achieve this well in comparing compass bearings and angles of turn. The most able

pupils measure and draw accurate angles when plotting imaginary space travel. Teachers consistently have high expectations in all aspects of the lesson. In the vast majority of lessons observed, the pupils' responses to these expectations are very good. They enjoy the structure of the numeracy lessons and as a result they work hard and are very keen to do well. Their endeavours produce good quantity as well as quality of work, further enhanced by regular homework. Some Year 3 and 4 pupils do not sufficiently extend their knowledge of graphical work through the interpretation of data. They struggle to explain probability when investigating patterns or similarities. Teachers are addressing and identifying areas of under-achievement, for example, in last year's Key Stage 1 national tests where standards were below average. Additional pace and rigour in lessons is taking into account the higher levels within the National Curriculum mathematics framework. Very good numeracy teaching is extending the most able pupils' strategies for using number bonds to add and subtract two digit numbers and they apply these skills well in money activities. Overall, the quality of day-to-day assessment is satisfactory. Teachers effectively interact with their pupils, they respond to their needs and offer praise and encouragement in class and through marking. The results of assessment are not always taken into account when areas of work are revisited. Activities are sometimes given which consolidate understanding rather than challenge and extend it further. This prevents some pupils from achieving standards that would be considered well above those expected.

60. The co-ordination of mathematics throughout the school has been disrupted through staff illness. The present co-ordinator has begun to address the need for a mathematics policy and a scheme of work and has initiated a detailed audit of resources. Very good progress has been made to ensure consistent planning across all years. However, there are inconsistent procedures being adopted to assess what the pupils do and then apply this information to plan future lessons. The current arrangements do not help the staff to set individual attainment targets for the pupils.

SCIENCE

61. Inspection findings show that standards in science are above average at the end of both key stages. This is a significant improvement as standards in test results over the last three years have declined. The school has recently focused on providing practical experiences that enable the pupils to achieve through investigation and observation in well planned science lessons. This has had a significant effect on the standards achieved in science. Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 has improved since the last inspection and the pupils achieve standards that exceed those expected for their age. At the end of Key Stage 2, the above average standards found in the pupils' science work is beginning to reverse the trend over the last three years of declining standards because the school has focused on practical investigations.
62. Pupils of all abilities make good progress. In Key Stage 1, the pupils have been studying forces and the work displayed demonstrates a good understanding of the effects that forces have on objects. Younger pupils' knowledge of animals as living creatures is good. During the inspection, the pupils in Key Stage 1 were waiting excitedly for the hatching of chick eggs which were kept in an incubator. The pupils in Year 2 have constructed simple electric circuits using wires and batteries to make bulbs and buzzers work and they insert switches to break and connect the circuit. The pupils' knowledge of the principles of fair testing is improving so that by the end of Key Stage 1 the large majority of pupils are able to organise their investigations

fairly making sensible predictions about the outcomes of the experiments. The pupils record their work well although insufficient use is made of information technology to support scientific investigations.

63. The pupils in Years 5 and 6 have investigated the nature of bacteria and have benefited from studying with a microbiologist from the local pharmaceutical company in the area. Throughout Key Stage 2, the pupils are developing an increasing understanding of the process of scientific enquiry and can apply basic skills when observing and recording their work. The pupils make good progress because the teaching is well planned and organised to ensure continuity and progression.
64. The quality of teaching is good overall and often it is very good. The teachers' planning indicates clear learning objectives that are well linked to previous learning. Good use is made of open-ended questioning to further the development of the pupils' thinking skills. The science lessons observed were well planned with tasks well matched to the learning needs of all the pupils. In the most effective lessons, teachers use the summing-up parts of the lessons to extend their pupils' ideas and find out what they know or have learnt during the lesson. Particularly good subject knowledge in some lessons enables those teachers to ask challenging questions that extend the pupils with good investigative tasks set during the practical sessions. Throughout the school teachers set high expectations of all the pupils. The school has recently introduced good procedures for assessment and has compiled a very useful collection of pupils' science work for portfolio demonstrating the different levels of attainment. This ensures that all teachers have good examples of the different levels so that they are better able to make their own judgements about the standards achieved by the pupils. In this respect, the school has gone a long way towards developing assessment procedures that will help to inform the teachers' planning. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. Teachers place appropriate emphasis on the health and safety aspects of the subject to ensure that the pupils adopt safe working methods. Homework is used effectively to enhance learning in science. There are good links with other subjects, for example, in art, where some collage work done in Key Stage 1 is successfully used to illustrate the life cycle of a frog.
65. The management and co-ordination of the subject is good. The co-ordinator has a clear vision for the development of the subject and has devised secure systems to ensure that improvements are made throughout the school to raise standards further. She receives good support from the core management team and the headteacher to develop and extend her role as the subject leader. Standards, planning and the pupils' progress are regularly and effectively monitored. This enables the school to have a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses in science. This is good management practice. There is a sound policy statement and a newly modified scheme of work which provides secure guidance to teachers in each year group in Key Stage 1. The scheme is also organised to accommodate the mixed age groups in Key Stage 2 so that science topics are planned in two-year cycles to ensure consistent planning throughout the key stage. The science resources are of good quality and are well organised.

ART

66. Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in art and achieve standards of attainment above those expected of pupils of a similar age. A significant number of pupils in both key stages produce high quality work, well above that expected of pupils of the same age. There has been an improvement in standards since the previous inspection.
67. The pupils in Year 1 demonstrate a good eye for colour, when following on from an activity involving blending and contrasting colours. They reproduced the same patterns in an interesting wool wrapping activity. The pupils in Year 2 work with real enthusiasm as they create their own large-scale imaginary islands with specific features using scrunched-up newspaper and modelling material. The good work in this lesson was much influenced by their geography work when pupils explored the island of Coll off the coast of Scotland. This work in turn was influenced by their literacy work on the Katie Morag stories set on the fictitious island of Struay. The teacher skilfully used other subjects to enable the pupils to have a greater understanding of the interpretation of their work. As a result, the quality of their work in model making and printing was considerably enhanced. The same group of pupils were also provided with the opportunity to explore a range of textile activities, screen-printing, block printing and batik work appropriate to the creation of their technicoloured dreamcoats for Joseph.
68. During a Years 3 and 4 lesson, the pupils created paper sculpture flowers and apply them to Mothers' Day cards. They came up with some imaginative techniques for creating flowers and used all adhesives, scissors and materials in a safe and sensible manner. The pupils in were also observed creating some interesting Greek masks using card and paper, whilst another group of pupils worked with an artist in residence on a school Millennium Project, as the created their own individual tiles with there own personal motif linked to local history, culture and industry. All the pupils in school will have the opportunity to produce one of these tiles. When fired and glazed, these tiles will be used to clad the entrance to the school, thus producing a striking entrance to the school both inside and outside. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 consider the work of L.S.Lowry, and use this experience as a stimulus for their own work on street scenes.
69. Observation of the good and very good work on display around the school indicates that pupils are provided with the opportunity to engage in all aspects of the art curriculum, drawing and painting, collage work, ceramics, textile work, appliqué work and large scale murals, wall hangings and computer generated art.
70. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to re-visit each of these art forms in order to experiment with, and refine their skills. The pupils in Key Stage 1 produce imaginative artwork based on the paintings of Van Gogh, Picasso and Monet, whilst pupils in Key Stage 2 produce some high quality work based on the work of Lowry, William Morris and Kandinski. Pupils produce imaginative sculptures based on the work of Henry Moore, and high quality fabric landscapes influenced by the work of Fiona Howard. There are good links between art and other areas of the curriculum, in particular history. The pupils in Year 3 and 4 produce some imaginative art-work linked to their studies on the Ancient Greeks as they produce paper sculpture pictures of Medusa, relief pictures of Greek triremes using straws, Greek actors' masks, and stencilled and block printed dolphin frescos based on art work discovered at the ancient city of Minos.

71. The good progress made by pupils is much influenced by their genuine enthusiasm for the subject and the good behaviour they display in classrooms. Pupils work with commitment, and are able to work both independently and in a collaborative manner. They approach tidying up at the end of a lesson with the same enthusiasm as they do the practical activity itself.
72. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. Lessons are well planned, resourced and organised. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, provide them with good support during lessons, and allow them to share and celebrate their work at the end of lessons. Very good relationships exist between teachers and pupils.
73. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and well-informed co-ordinator, who, in her short time in post, has taken appropriate steps to help raise standards of attainment in the subject. There is a policy for the subject and an effective scheme of work. The subject does much to contribute towards the welcoming atmosphere of the school and its overall ethos.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

74. It was only possible to see two design and technology lessons in Key Stage 2. Evidence is also drawn from the scrutiny of displays and the pupils' previous work across the school. Standards have improved significantly since the last inspection and pupils throughout the school make good progress and reach the standards expected for their age. The school has appointed a teacher who has particular expertise in this subject and has time-tabled him to work in a newly established design and technology classroom. Other staff also teach design and technology in their own class or use the specialist room. This has resulted in a marked improvement in the quality of teaching and learning and it is contributing well to the work that pupils do in other subjects as design and technology topics are usually linked to the work done across the curriculum.
75. In the Year 3 and 4 lesson, the teacher linked the history work on Ancient Greeks to enable the pupils to design and make "monster models" using wood, card, paint and glue. The pupils designed models of The Medusa or Minotaur and in previous lessons they investigated different mechanisms to explore the possibility of using pneumatics to produce moving parts on their models. In the Year 5 and 6 lesson, the pupils used the mechanical principles of triangulation to produce bridge structures made from paper and string. In both lessons, the teachers provided many opportunities for the pupils to experiment, test and re-design or modify their models and structures. The pupils achieved high standards and had made good progress over a series of design and technology lessons.
76. The pupils in both key stages are developing a good understanding of the process of design. They refine their ideas, work collaboratively with others. They adapt or change the methods they use to produce improved products or models. For example, in Key Stage 2, a group of pupils investigated the possibility of producing a large scale bridge structure. The pupils were clearly impressed by the size of the structure which had to be put on the stage because of its size.
77. Design and technology is well planned and well managed. Teachers now have the resources and schemes to produce a series of related lessons that provide very good opportunities for the pupils to carry through the design process and disassemble or

re-design their products. This is a significant improvement since the last inspection. The teaching is good and often very good because it is well planned and organised. Good use is made of specialist teaching to improve staff confidence across the school. The subject is well led by the co-ordinator who has adapted the scheme of work to link, where possible, with other areas of the curriculum. This is helping teachers with their planning and leads to a wider range of relevant activities being offered to the pupils. Resources have been well chosen to support the planned curriculum and very good use is made of the newly established design and technology classroom.

GEOGRAPHY

78. It was only possible to observe one lesson in each key stage. The scrutiny of work in classes and around school and the teachers' planning indicate that pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in the subject and achieve standards of attainment in line with that expected for their ages. Standards of attainment in the subject have been maintained since the previous inspection
79. The pupils in Year 1 demonstrate an effective understanding of the area they live in. They use a map key to identify important features in the town, and are able to make simple comparisons between features on an aerial photograph and those same features as they are represented on a map. The pupils are able to follow their route from home to school, and can find and identify areas for play and leisure facilities in the town. The satisfactory progress made in this lesson was much enhanced by the teachers' provision of differentiated worksheets and activities which matched the needs and abilities of individual groups of pupils.
80. Following on from a visit to Teesmouth, the pupils in Years 5 and 6 talk in a confident manner about the effect of the River Tees on the surrounding area, the use of land resources, and the impact of local industry on the environment. They display the ability to gather a range of information, to make comparisons, and to draw conclusions based on cause and effect. The satisfactory progress is very much influenced by pupils' enthusiasm for the subject, and their ability to organise their ideas and information in a structured and organised manner.
81. During the two lessons observed, the pupils demonstrated a clear understanding of what they were doing, and how the learning outcomes were to be achieved. This was helped by the fact that teachers go through the learning objectives at the beginning of the lesson, and review them once more at the end of the lesson as they explore what they have learned. Pupils in both key stages work in a committed manner. They listen with interest to teachers' exposition and are keen to answer their questions.
82. Close examination of teachers' planning indicates that pupils are regularly provided with the opportunity to extend their geography skills, including, mapping skills, in a good range of geography projects. The pupils in Key Stage 1 develop a simple understanding of the area they live in, and are able to place it in context of the rest of the United Kingdom, and on a world map. They are able to compare the area they live in with other areas in the United Kingdom. The pupils in Key Stage 2 extend their knowledge of the key features of the area they live in before moving on to explore other areas of the United Kingdom, and develop an understanding of different areas of the world. Pupils have an understanding of world climates and the impact of man on his environment.

83. The quality of teaching in both key stages is good. Lessons are well managed and organised. Teachers are secure in their subject knowledge, and present information to the pupils in a meaningful manner. Lessons are well paced and contain a range of interesting geographical activities. Teachers develop good cross-curricular links, with pupils' written work making a significant contribution to the development of their literacy skills. Teachers often use geography as a stimulus for pupils' artwork, which in turn impacts on pupils understanding of their geography work. A good example of this is the visual representation of the River Tees from its source to Teesmouth which winds its way up the connecting stairs from floor level to the first floor. Pupils are able to take part in a good range of field trips, both in the local area and further afield. These trips make a valuable contribution to the topics that pupils study.
84. The subject is led by a well-informed co-ordinator. There is a policy for the subject, and an effective scheme of work based on National Curriculum documentation. The subject fulfils all requirements of the National Curriculum for geography, and makes a valuable contribution to the pupils' cultural development.

HISTORY

85. Standards in history are high at the end of both Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 and the pupils make good progress throughout the school. The school makes a good start in laying foundations for the younger pupils to understand time. They develop a good sense of chronology and begin to understand historical perspectives, especially through timelines and studies of Barnard Castle and stories of famous people. In their studies of Florence Nightingale and The Gunpowder Plot, they are developing an awareness of how things were different in the past. Pupils make good progress in their extended writing when sequencing events concerning Remembrance Day.
86. In Key Stage 2, the pupils continue to develop good historical perspectives. They show a good understanding of the various cultural aspects of Ancient Greek life. Older pupils reflect on numerous aspects of Victorian life, through research and personal reflection they can compare and contrast social, economic and leisure conditions throughout the period. By studying aspects of their locality, they make very good progress in linking historical events using first-hand sources.
87. There have been good developments in the provision for history since the last inspection, although the latest curriculum initiatives are still at an early stage. There are high expectations for reflection and personal recognition of why societies change and the pupils relay these facts in detailed and extended writing. The new curriculum co-ordinator has begun to establish very good local links and exciting literature and artefacts to promote learning. Good progress is also being made in to begin recording the work pupils do and using these assessments to plan future lessons.
88. The quality of teaching in two Key Stage 2 classes is very good. No history lessons were observed in Key Stage 1. Discussions and tasks actively encourage pupils to contribute and to develop good research and evaluation skills. The pupils are acquiring good historical vocabulary and they use this appropriately in identifying the consequences of change in Georgian and Victorian Barnard Castle. Excellent whole-class discussions using maps and pictures enables the pupils to evaluate, reorganise and present information using appropriate language and dates. Many pupils are able to link the past and present and interpret the cause and effect of

change. However, the planning for this is still under-developed and many work sheets lack extended challenges for the most able pupils. Lesson objectives identify knowledge to be gained and the understanding and relevant skills that are needed to evaluate the reasons for the way certain periods in history have evolved. Lessons are imaginative, with a wide range of teaching resources used to support learning. Excellent cross-curricular themes are used in the study of Ancient Greece. Year 3 and 4 pupils make Greek masks in art lessons to further extend their understanding of tragedy and human emotion in plays. Very good literacy skills are evident in the pupils' writing about The Minotaur monster and Pandora's Box in Greek mythology. Pupils successfully use information technology to aid their research on Greek architecture and regularly use maps to locate and compare places of study.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

89. Standards in information technology have improved since the last inspection, and pupils are achieving standards in line with national expectations by the end of each key stage. At the end of Key Stage 1, pupils are able to use a simple image manipulation package to re-order sentences, and to give commands to move around a map on a computer screen. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils are able to search the Internet using different search engines, they could cut out a picture from an Internet web page and paste it into a document, and then re-size it. However, further development of pupils' skills is limited by the time available to individuals on the classes' computer systems.
90. The pupils' attitudes to the subjects are very good. The pupils actively enjoy using the technology, concentrate well and sustain attention. Very good behaviour is maintained all the time that the children use the computer and other technologies. The pupils willingly support each other when asked to undertake challenging tasks.
91. The teaching of information technology is satisfactory and often good. Teachers plan the activities and match them to the abilities of their pupils. They monitor the pupils' progress and frequently arrange for them to work with a parent or classroom assistant who has been suitably briefed. On some occasions, the planning lacks in detail and is not fully integrated to the curriculum. The limited number of computers makes it difficult for teachers to manage whole class lessons where the pupils are expected to share one computer.
92. The pupils make satisfactory progress. They use the computers for a range of activities, and have access to other technologies such as floor robots and cassette recorders. The combination of a lack of computers, and timetable restrictions make extended learning difficult, and this restricts further development of information technology skills.
93. The subject is effectively co-ordinated by a dynamic and enthusiastic co-ordinator. Considerable development has taken place in a short time with a significant improvement in the attitudes of previously reluctant teachers to using information technology. Overall, the staff have put in considerable efforts to develop their skills, ably assisted by the co-ordinator. The school has plans to improve its existing resource levels, to ensure that children have enough access to resources to fully develop their capabilities. There are plans to develop the monitoring of the use of information technology in classes, which should help to overcome the inconsistencies in planning and delivery.

94. The school has an arrangement with the Local Authority and equipment suppliers for maintenance and technical support, which does not prevent technical failure, but does enable repairs to be made. Because of the current level of resources, failure of one computer system means that a class of pupils has restricted access to a computer until the repair is completed. During the inspection, breakdowns prevented two classes from using their computers.
95. The school has an information technology policy, guidelines for teachers and a scheme of work. It has recently had the benefit of a grant which has enabled it to replace obsolete and unreliable equipment, and has also put a large sum of its own money to this. The computers are distributed amongst classes with most having just one machine, but there are plans to develop a specialist computer room during the next year. Other equipment is also used, including floor robots and cassette recorders, and these enhance the pupils' understanding of information and communication technology.
96. A collection of pupils' work put together as an assessment portfolio and a system of recording are being introduced. Assessment sheets have been designed and implemented for Key Stage 1, but the system is too new to have had a significant impact. A system has also been developed for Key Stage 2, but this is still at a draft stage. There was no evidence that assessment is yet contributing directly to planning and target setting in information technology. Reports to parents include aspects of the subject.
97. Information technology is making a positive contribution to the whole curriculum, but the picture is inconsistent across the school. Where the staff are confident with the use of computers, the contribution to the curriculum is good. For example, in Key Stage 1, the pupils were observed using a software package to develop estimation of distances, assisted by a parent helper. At the other extreme, in some classes, computer experiences were planned in terms of "typing practice." There was evidence of the use of information technology in English, mathematics, science and art. The pupils' work on computers is also used to produce some very effective display work. Internet searches and the use of video conferencing were observed in Year 6. One group of children was investigating the life and works of L.S.Lowry as a part of an art lesson. In Key Stage 1, an Internet search had been used to provide display material for a history display on toys. As yet, these technologies are new to the teachers and have yet to be fully exploited for the benefit of the information technology curriculum and raising standards further in the subject.

MUSIC

98. Whilst it was only possible to observe a limited number of lessons, those observations, and observations of the pupils singing in assemblies, together with teachers' planning, indicate that all pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in music and achieve the standards expected for their age.
99. The pupils in Year 1 are able to select a range of appropriate untuned percussion instruments, and use them to accompany the teachers' reading of a short descriptive passage on the changing weather. Their enthusiasm for, and commitment to, the subject was a significant factor in the satisfactory progress made by the pupils in this lesson. The pupils in Key Stage 1 display a great deal of pleasure in singing and enjoy the opportunity to accompany songs by expressive hand and body

movements. This was observed in the Key Stage 1 singing practice as over a hundred pupils engaged together in the singing of hymns and popular songs. The sheer pleasure the pupils demonstrated in their singing was contagious. This active and exciting lesson owed much to the subject co-ordinator's personal enthusiasm for the activity and her ability to create a motivating and enjoyable environment. Due respect must also be paid to her excellent managerial and organisational skills, as along with another Key Stage 1 teacher, she was able to control and retain the very large groups' interest throughout the whole of the lesson.

100. Pupils in Years 3 and 4 display a clear understanding of rhythm and beat and are able to use these features as they create their own simple songs, and accompany themselves on untuned percussion instruments. Pupils display an effective understanding of musical vocabulary, and are able to use appropriate language when talking about the creation of their work. Pupils in Year 5 and 6 demonstrate sound compositional and performance skills as they work on creating an effective 'sound picture' to accompany an interpretation of a range of poems. Despite the limited time available, the pupils focus on the requirements of their work and produce pieces of work with real shape and form. Pupils were then asked to record their work using graphic notation so that it could be repeated and performed by other members of the class. All pupils are taught formal musical notation.
101. Whilst it was not observed during the period of the inspection, teachers' plans indicate that pupils are provided with the opportunity to listen to and appraise the works of a number of classic composers, and the work of popular contemporary musicians. Regular opportunities are provided for pupils to sing together both in classes and as a whole school at hymn practice and in assemblies. Pupils sing in a tuneful manner and can sing in two and three part rounds.
102. Pupils approach their musical activities in an interested and enthusiastic manner. They are able to work collaboratively when composing work, and treat all instruments in a safe and sensible manner.
103. Whilst not always seeing themselves as music specialists, the quality of teaching in both key stages is good. Teachers have high expectations of pupils, and provide them with an imaginative range of musical activities. Teachers have good organisational and managerial skills and ensure that all pupils stay on task and focus their energies.
104. All pupils are provided with the opportunity to join the recorder group, and a number of pupils are members of the local district orchestra and the high school brass band. Pupils are also provided with the opportunity to learn to play the violin, the cello and brass instruments.
105. The school has a designated music room, and a good range of musical instruments. The subject is led by an enthusiastic and well-informed co-ordinator, who leads the subject by her own good practice. There is a policy for the subject and an effective scheme of work made up of a number of commercial schemes.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

106. The pupils make good progress in physical education throughout the school. In the lessons observed, the standards achieved were good in gymnastics and dance. Since the last inspection in 1995, the school has made good progress because standards are now more consistent across the school. The majority of the pupils in Year 6 can swim to the expected standard for their age in line with the requirements set out in the National Curriculum.
107. The pupils in Key Stage 1 develop increasing control in gymnastics lessons. They improve their posture and movement responding well to signals to change direction and use space in a variety of ways. The pupils use individual movements to devise interesting, controlled sequences that end with well-formed balances. They observe each other carefully and make sensitive comments about one another's performances, which help them to improve their own performance. Good use is made of speaking and listening skills during physical education lessons. The pupils listen attentively to the teachers and express their own ideas clearly. When practising their work, they persevere with attempts to combine a sequence of movements or to travel over apparatus with increasing body control. They work in pairs or small groups taking it in turns as appropriate. Younger pupils are developing good ball control skills in minor games lessons.
108. In Key Stage 2, the pupils build on their physical skills and are developing increasing competence in gymnastics and dance. In dance lessons, the pupils work carefully in pairs, developing good body movements and increase their range of movements to reflect the higher standards expected of the age group. Good use is made of music, which the pupils learn to interpret and adapt their movements to suit the rhythm and mood of the music. The pupils have a well-developed sense of rhythm and most are able to move in time to the music. Older pupils, who attend extra-curricular acrobatics clubs, have reached the high standards required for entry into area competitions. All the pupils enjoy their physical education lessons and work responsibly to improve their performance. In some lessons, insufficient time was given for the pupils to evaluate each other's performance. The pupils in both key stages handle apparatus sensibly and safely.
109. The quality of teaching is good overall. The teachers follow the Local Authority's scheme of work which consists of the lesson plans for the whole of each key stage for every aspect of the subject. Good use is made of praise and encouragement and all teachers have very good relationships with the pupils. This is having a positive effect on the pupils' behaviour. Lessons consist of good quality warm-up sessions; the teachers provide clear explanations and demonstrations to ensure that the pupils learn new movements and skills. Boys and girls work together in groups and both play together in after-school football and sports acrobatics clubs. The pupils participate enthusiastically and successfully in competitive sports. Resources are adequate and well used. The school has a good sized school hall designated to physical education and there is occasional access to a gymnasium owned by the local secondary school. The pupils normally receive swimming lessons but at the time of the inspection staffing difficulties beyond the direct control of the school prevented these lessons from taking place. This is a cause for concern for the school and its parents and the headteacher is trying to alleviate the problem with the co-operation of the Local Authority. The majority of teachers have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding to teach the subject successfully.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

110. The pupils at the end of both key stages achieve above average standards in religious education. The school teaches the subject according to the expectations set out in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The high standards have been maintained since the last inspection. The staff have managed to adapt to the requirements of the revised syllabus very well and this helps the pupils to use their good literacy skills to express their knowledge and understanding very well. An increasingly important factor in the improvement of the subject is the extension of the use of information technology.
111. By the age of seven, the pupils know what a church is and the local vicar has helped them to understand the range of activities that take place in churches, for example, marriages and Christenings. The pupils understand the main features of church plans and have explored, "Thoughts for the week" such as, "being hurt" or "being happy". They enjoy Hindu story of Rama and Sita. They have joined in the Christingle activities and their singing of "Joseph" was inspiring. Their awareness of the Jewish festival of Hanukkah and the Easter Story is very secure.
112. The consistent quality of good religious education teaching and the wide range of stimulating religious experiences have contributed significantly to the quality of the pupils' learning by the end of Key Stage 2. This is an extension of the excellent leadership of the school, which has clear vision of the school's purpose and future development.
113. With the support of the local vicar, older pupils in Key Stage 2 study the meaning of the Christian Stations of the Cross. They have also studied the work of Elizabeth Jennings on "Friendship". There is good quality work displayed about "Candlemass" and "The Chinese New Year". The pupils also study The Lord's Prayer and the Christmas Story according to the Gospels of Luke and Matthew. The pupils' work on other major world religions have enabled them to improve their awareness of the major influences of the Sikh religion, for example when studying Guru Granth Sahib and Guru Nanak. They know what a "Mandir" is and have read about the Hindu gods Vishna, Shiva and Brahma. The pupils have a good understanding of Judaism and this is evident in their work about a synagogue, the meaning of Rabbi and the Torah.
114. The pupils respond very positively to the teaching and their very good behaviour and attitudes helps them to make good progress in religious education lessons. The teachers have a good knowledge of the subject and this contributes positively towards some more difficult concepts, for example, the meaning of Christ's entry into Jerusalem. Good use is made of the pupils' extended writing skills with older pupils able to take notes during lessons and then plan their writing to express what they have learned. The teachers teach with enthusiasm and this provides a good example for the pupils.
115. The pupils make good progress throughout the school. The reception classes share favourite things and they have learned the stories of "The Lost Sheep" and "The Monkey King" well. In Year 1, the pupils understand that God made the world and He cares for all His creatures. They know the story of Jesus in the wilderness. Studies of other religions are matched to the lives of Buddha and the Hindu gods. The pupils can recall the stories of St. Francis and Jonah. In Year 3, the pupils are confident when describing Advent, Confirmation and the period of Lent. They can discuss in some detail what happens at a Sikh wedding. Year 4 pupils remember the

stories of John the Baptist and Bartimeus well. Other areas of their religious experiences are “The Light of the World” and the lives of Sikh children. Year 5 pupils develop the theme, “If you are the Son of God” and their display of work is of good quality.

116. The pupils’ knowledge and understanding of religious education and the religious ethos of the school are a reflection of the very good management of the subject by a highly committed co-ordinator. Very good relationships have been established with the staff, governors, the local clergy and the Local Authority. Resources for religious education are good and are very well used to support the pupils’ learning.