

# INSPECTION REPORT

## **St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School**

Durham

LEA area: Durham

Unique Reference Number: 114256

Inspection Number: 185918

Head Teacher: Mrs B M Simpson

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Reporting inspector: Miss L Hunter

3277

Dates of inspection: 4 – 7 October 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707260

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

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## **INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL**

Type of school:	Infant and Junior
Type of control:	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils:	3 - 11
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Church Hill Crook County Durham DL15 9DN
Telephone number:	01388 762889
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Appropriate authority:	Diocese of Hexham and Newcastle
Name of chair of governors:	Fr. T Owens
Date of previous inspection:	October 1995

## INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

<b>Team members</b>	<b>Subject responsibilities</b>	<b>Aspect responsibilities</b>
L Hunter	Science Design and technology Art Special educational needs Areas of learning for children under five	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management The efficiency of the school
A Anderson		Attitudes, behaviour and personal development Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Accommodation
A Scott	Mathematics Information technology History Geography Equal opportunities	The curriculum Staffing
M Lewis	English Music  Physical education	Assessment Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Learning resources

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## MAIN FINDINGS

### What the school does well

- By the age of 11, pupils perform well in national tests.
- Pupils with special educational needs are supported well – they make good progress.
- The quality of teaching is often good, - particularly in the nursery.
- Pupils have good attitudes to learning - relationships are good.
- Levels of attendance are very good - there is very little absence and pupils enjoy coming to school.
- The quality of provision in the nursery is high – children make good progress.
- The school provides a very good range of extra-curricular activities.
- The school has developed a good range of assessment systems and procedures.
- Good provision is made for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development.
- There are good procedures for monitoring pupils' progress, personal development, behaviour and attendance.
- The school positively promotes pupils' welfare and well-being. It is a very caring community.
- The school has very good links with parents, the local community and the parish – these all contribute strongly to pupils' personal and social development.
- The school makes very good use of the local community to support pupils' learning – there is a wide range of visits and visitors that support the curriculum.
- The school is well managed – the head teacher has effectively managed a recent difficult period of staff instability.
- The governing body is particularly strong and is actively involved in monitoring and supporting the school's developments.
- The day-to-day running and administration of the school is very efficient.
- The school provides good value for money.

### Where the school has weaknesses

- I. Some teachers have limited knowledge and expertise in information technology. The school has insufficient resources. Pupils do not make sufficient progress and standards in information technology are low by the age of seven and very low by the age of 11.
- II. The art curriculum is unclear – it lacks structure.
- III. Pupils' design and evaluation skills are not systematically developed within the design and technology curriculum.
- IV. The school's register for pupils with special educational needs is vague – many of the targets set for these pupils in their individual education plans are too broad to be useful.
- V. Teachers do not make consistent use of the information gleaned by assessments to support the planning of their lessons.
- VI. Teachers plan too broadly in some subjects and do not plan with sufficient attention to the range of abilities in their classes.
- VII. Higher attaining pupils are not always stretched as well as they could be, especially in mathematics.
- VIII. The curriculum in the reception class does not relate sufficiently to the areas of learning identified for children who are under five – the school plans against the National Curriculum for four year olds – this makes it difficult to gauge their progress when measured against the desirable learning outcomes.

**The weaknesses are outweighed by what the school does well. They will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents and guardians of children at the school.**

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

Staff at the school have undertaken extensive in-service training to meet the targets set in the last inspection. Teachers have visited other local schools to see different teaching practices and have broadened the range of styles used in their own classrooms. The format and structure of the school management plan has been revised and the monitoring of progress against the school's own priorities is more systematic and effective. The governors and head teacher have introduced more effective systems to track the impact of the school's spending decisions on the standards and quality of education in the school. A number of policies have been introduced, to include sex education and health and safety, and others have been updated. All the health and safety issues

identified have been rectified. Attendance rates have improved significantly. The school has developed a good range of systems for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. It is using these well to record pupils' progress but teachers are still not making consistent use of the information produced by these assessments to support the planning of their daily lessons.

The school has set appropriate and achievable targets to improve test results for seven year olds and maintain standards for 11 year olds. The school has made satisfactory progress since the last inspection and has a good capacity to improve further.

• **Standards in subjects**

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1998 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

In 1998, the school's performance in national tests was above average in English and science, when compared to all schools and to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals. Results in mathematics were well above average when compared both nationally and to similar schools.

By the age of five, children's attainment matches the levels expected for their age in all areas of learning. By the age of seven, pupils' attainment in English, mathematics and science matches expected levels, but their attainment in information technology is below expectations. By the age of 11, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is above the levels expected for their age. Their attainment in science matches expected levels but standards in information technology are very low.

• **Quality of teaching**

Teaching in	Under 5	5 – 7 years	7 – 11 years
English	Good	Good	Good
Mathematics	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Science		Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Information technology		Unsatisfactory	Unsatisfactory
Other subjects	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory

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

Sixty lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory in 58 per cent of these lessons, good in 37 per cent and very good in the remaining 5 per cent of lessons. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good across the rest of the school. English is taught well throughout the school. Most teachers lack sufficient expertise and confidence to teach information technology effectively and this affects standards in this subject.

**Other aspects of the school**

<b>Aspect</b>	<b>Comment</b>
Behaviour	Good. Most pupils work and play well together – a small group of boys in Year 4 occasionally misbehave and disrupt others during lessons.
Attendance	Very good – well above the national average. Attendance rates have improved significantly since the last inspection.
Ethos*	Positive. Relationships between adults and pupils are good. Pupils have good attitudes and are keen to learn. The school is committed to improving the results in tests for seven year olds and maintaining the already high standards achieved by 11 year olds. The school is aware of the need to improve standards in information technology.
Leadership and management	The school is well managed. The governing body is particularly strong and plays an important role in the school’s management and development. All statutory requirements are met.
Curriculum	The curriculum is broad and reasonably balanced. English and mathematics pay appropriate attention to the new literacy and numeracy recommendations. The art curriculum is unclear and some aspects of design and technology are weaker than other subjects. The information technology curriculum is planned appropriately but is not taught effectively. The curriculum for children in the nursery is well planned – in the reception class it is planned against the National Curriculum and does not relate sufficiently to the areas of learning for children under five or to the baseline against which children are currently being assessed. The school has a good range of assessment systems but the information gathered through these is not used consistently to plan the next stage of pupils’ learning.
Children with special educational needs	Children are supported well by specialist teaching and additional support during lessons – they make good progress. Despite this, the targets laid down for these pupils are often too broad and the school’s register for pupils with special educational needs is vague.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Provision for pupils’ spiritual, moral and social development is good. Provision for cultural development is satisfactory – pupils learn a lot about their own culture but have limited opportunities to develop their awareness of other cultures.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	The school has adequate teaching and support staff. Accommodation is satisfactory – some classrooms are small – spacious grounds are used effectively to support the curriculum. There are sufficient resources to teach the curriculum in all subjects except information technology.
Value for money	Good. The school runs very efficiently on a day-to-day basis and spends its money wisely.

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

**The parents’ views of the school**

**What most parents like about the school**

- IX. They are encouraged to play an active part in the life of the school.
- X. The school enables children to achieve a good standard of work.
- XI. The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons.
- XII. The school’s values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.
- XIII. The school achieves high standards of good behaviour.
- XIV. Their children like school.

**What some parents are not happy about**

- XV. They do not find it easy to approach the school.
- XVI. The school does not handle their complaints well.



Inspectors' judgements agree with parents' positive comments about the school. There is no evidence to confirm the views expressed by a small number of parents that the school is unapproachable or that complaints are not handled effectively.

## KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To improve the quality of education in the school, the governors, head teacher and staff should:

1. Improve pupils' progress and raise attainment in information technology by the ages of seven and of 11, by:
  - increasing the pace of developments in tackling the recognised shortfalls in this subject.
  - improving teachers' knowledge, expertise and confidence in information technology.
  - planning to specifically teach pupils the full range of information technology skills set out in the National Curriculum.
  - improving the range and quality of the hardware and software available to support the full information technology curriculum.
  - making greater use of information technology to support pupils' work in other subjects, especially research and data handling in mathematics and science.(paragraph references 17, 18, 22, 37, 43, 66, 73, 107, 113, 132-138)

1. Improve the rate of pupils' progress in lessons (particularly higher attaining pupils) by:
  - being more precise when identifying what teachers expect pupils to learn in their lessons.
  - identifying opportunities to assess and evaluate whether pupils have learnt what was intended in each lesson or sequence of lessons.
  - making use of the results of these assessments to help teachers to plan work that builds on what pupils already know.(paragraph references 16, 20, 21, 31, 34, 37, 45, 46, 50, 51, 96, 105, 111)

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

- Develop a clear picture of the curriculum to be taught in art. (paragraphs 43, 116, 117, 118, 119)
- Pay greater attention to systematically developing pupils' design and evaluation skills. (paragraphs 16, 43)
- Improve the level of detail in the special educational needs register and the quality of the targets set for pupils in their individual education plans. (paragraphs 45, 58)
- Plan a curriculum in the reception class that takes greater account of the areas of learning for children while they are still under the age of five. (paragraphs 42, 86)

## · INTRODUCTION

### · Characteristics of the school

1 St. Cuthbert's RC Primary School is an average sized school for three to 11 year olds situated on the outskirts of the town of Crook in County Durham. The school serves a wide geographical area drawing most of its pupils from the twin parishes of Crook and Wolsingham. A large part of the local area has recently been awarded regeneration funding as a result of deteriorating economic and social fabric.

2 The school's numbers have been relatively stable over recent years. There are currently 193 pupils in the school – 90 boys and 103 girls. Less than one-fifth of the pupils are eligible for free school meals and this is lower than the national average. Thirty-four pupils have been registered with special educational needs, including four pupils with statements of special educational needs (one of whom is in the nursery). There are very few pupils from minority ethnic backgrounds and none for whom English is an additional language.

3 The school has its own nursery. Thirty-five children currently attend the nursery for morning or afternoon sessions on a daily basis. The nursery is funded for an extra member of staff to allow one place to be allocated each year to a child with an identified special educational need. When children start in the nursery, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cover the full range of ability. Almost all of the children in the reception class have attended this nursery. Children are introduced to the reception class on a staggered basis during the first few weeks of September. Consequently, at the time of the inspection, some children were only starting their second full week in the school. When children start in the reception class, their attainment matches the levels expected of typical four-year olds in all areas of learning.

4 The school's mission statement is:

“In this school we hope that the love of Jesus Christ will be evident to all who come within our walls. We hope that it will guide not only the religious parts of the day, but will become a firm foundation for the whole life of the school. We hope that the children of this school as they grow physically and mentally, will also grow socially and spiritually so gaining a real respect for themselves, for each other, and indeed, for the whole of this exciting world – God's world – in which we all live.”

5 The aims that the school publishes for parents are: “to encourage each child to develop his or her own potential in all areas of experience in a caring, friendly and secure environment and to encourage children to develop Christian attitudes to each other and to society.”

6 The key issues identified in the previous inspection in 1995 were to:

- Improve the quality of teaching to sustain the highest levels in the school.
- Monitor, evaluate and used the developments outlined in the management plan to inform future planning.
- Put systems into place to measure the effect of spending decisions on standards and the quality of education.
- Produce sex education and health and safety policies.
- Use the results of assessments to inform teachers' short-term planning.
- Address a number of health and safety issues.

7 The school's main educational and financial priorities identified in the current school development plan are to:

- Introduce the numeracy strategy.
- Increase use of Information Communication Technology (ICT) and develop teachers' ICT skills.

- Develop opportunities to use drama throughout the curriculum.
- Complete the nursery refurbishment.
- Review assessment procedures and introduce personal targets.

**Key indicators**

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

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	18	11	29

National Curriculum Test/Task		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	13	15	14
	Girls	8	9	7
	Total	21	24	21
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	78% (78%)	89% (79%)	78% (82%)
	National	80% (80%)	81% (80%)	85% (84%)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	10	15	16
	Girls	8	9	9
	Total	18	24	25
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	67% (69%)	89% (90%)	93% (93%)
	National	81% (80%)	85% (84%)	86% (85%)

**9 Attainment at Key Stage 2<sup>2</sup>**

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

Year	Boys	Girls	Total
1998	13	10	23

National Curriculum Test		English	Mathematics	Science
<b>Results</b>				
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	8	9	9
	Girls	20	9	10
	Total	18	18	19
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	78% (59%)	78% (51%)	83% (76%)
	National	65% (63%)	59% (62%)	69% (69%)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	9	9	8
	Girls	10	8	7
	Total	19	17	15
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	83% (59%)	74% (59%)	65% (75%)
	National	65% (63%)	65% (64%)	72% (69%)

1 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

2 Percentages in parentheses refer to the year before the latest reporting year

2            **10    Attendance**

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year:	Authorised	School	%
	Absence	National comparative data	4.2
	Unauthorised	School	5.7
	Absence	National comparative data	0.5

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2            **11    Exclusions**

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

2            **12    Quality of teaching**

Percentage of teaching observed which is:		%
	Very good or better	5
	Satisfactory or better	100
	Less than satisfactory	0

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

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

2        **Attainment and progress**

13        The school's performance in national tests has been relatively steady over recent years, although there has been an improvement in mathematics in the tests for 11 year olds. The school's 1999 test results are similar to the previous year, but there is no data available yet to allow a national comparison to be made.

14        When children start in the nursery, their attainment covers a wide range but is broadly typical for children of this age. Children make good progress in the nursery. There is a strong emphasis on developing their personal and social skills, but they make equally good progress in all other areas of learning. As a result, children quickly settle into school routines and learn to work and play with each other and a number of adults. They develop their recognition and knowledge of letters, numbers, shapes and colours, and begin to explore the world around them by questioning and practical investigation. Children develop their physical and creative skills through a range of activities, such as painting, making models, singing and outdoor play. By the time they move into the reception class, children's attainment is broadly average in language and literacy, mathematical and personal and social development.

15        Children make steady progress in the reception class in all areas of learning. They begin to share books together, to turn the pages and talk about the pictures with adults, and to recognise simple familiar words. Children develop their speaking and listening skills well by regularly talking to the rest of the class about their work and ideas. They build steadily on their number work from the nursery by working with sequences of numbers up to 10 and by beginning to add and subtract numbers with greater accuracy and confidence. Children continue to learn about schools rules and routines and begin to understand why they are important. They begin to take increasing responsibility for their own actions and learn to think about others in their class. As a result, by the age of five, children's attainment matches the levels expected of five-year olds in all areas of learning.

2

16        Pupils make relatively steady progress across Key Stages 1 and 2 in most subjects. This progress is better in the lessons where teachers clearly identify the learning objectives for groups of pupils of different levels of ability. For example, in English and mathematics where teachers are using the nationally recommended planning systems for literacy and numeracy. In these lessons, pupils tend to make good progress. However, teachers' practice of setting a global learning objective for the whole class in many subjects causes them to limit the challenge for higher attaining pupils in some lessons. As a result, higher attaining pupils are not being consistently challenged to make better progress and could do better. The school has particular strengths in attainment in English and mathematics by the end of Year 6 but also has a significant weakness in information technology. Throughout the school, pupils develop sound "making" skills as they work to build models using a range of media and materials, but they do not develop their "design" skills sufficiently well or learn to evaluate their products critically enough.

17 In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress in most subjects, including English, mathematics and science. As a result, pupils' attainment in these subjects matches the levels expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. However pupils do not make sufficient progress in information technology, and standards in this subject are low. Pupils gain some basic word processing skills but do not have the confidence or skill to produce accurate work or to save and print their own work. They can use simple paint programs to produce colourful pictures and can control the movement of a floor robot in simple ways. However, pupils do not handle data effectively or even understand how a computer can help them present information in different ways.

18 In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress in English and mathematics and this shows in their attainment and performance in national tests by the age of 11. Pupils' attainment in both these subjects is above the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. Pupils become confident, fluent and expressive readers. They write for a variety of real-life audiences and make good use of punctuation, grammar and structure to present their work. Pupils develop a good understanding of number. They develop different ways to carry out calculations and are able to double-check their results effectively. In Key Stage 2, pupils make steady progress in science and their attainment matches expected levels by the age of 11. However, pupils make poor progress in information technology. Consequently, standards in information technology are well below the levels expected for pupils' ages by the end of Year 6. Pupils have limited word processing skills. In fact, some pupils do not know how to turn the computer on and select a suitable program to start their work. They cannot combine information from several packages, for instance inserting a graph into a report containing text, and have very limited experience of retrieving information from databases or compact discs. Pupils do not have a clear understanding of how to use information technology to control equipment or to explore patterns of activity through computer simulations.

19 In the national tests for seven year olds in 1998, the school's results were below national averages in reading and mathematics, and were close to the national average in writing. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's results in these tests were well below average in reading and mathematics and average in writing. In the tests for 11 year olds in 1998, the school's results were above national averages in English and science and well above the national average in mathematics. When compared to schools with a similar proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals, the school's results in these tests were well above average in English and mathematics and above average in science.

20 The test results for seven year olds in 1998 reflect the priority that has been placed on literacy and the emphasis that the school places on supporting lower attaining pupils, including those with special educational needs. The school does this successfully with the result that a similar proportion of pupils achieved the minimum level expected for their age in reading, and more reached this standard in writing, than happened nationally. However, the higher attaining pupils are not catered for so well with the result that fewer pupils managed to reach higher levels in these tests. The mathematics results follow a similar pattern although fewer pupils actually reached the minimum level expected for seven year olds. The school has identified this as a priority for improvement and is focusing specific effort on mathematics through the recently introduced numeracy hour.

21 The school's successful support for lower attaining pupils continues through Key Stage 2. For instance, a visiting specialist teacher targets individual pupils with specific support in literacy, other pupils are given additional literacy work through a nationally funded project, and 'booster' classes are set up to target pupils' mathematical development. This emphasis on raising pupils' attainment shows itself through the high number of pupils achieving the minimum level expected for 11 year olds in the English, mathematics and science tests. On top of this, pupils are prepared well for the tests in Year 6 and this helps more able pupils to reach the higher levels in all tests and consequently boosts the school's overall performance. Despite this, higher attaining pupils are not consistently stretched during lessons throughout the key stage and could do even better.

22 Across the school, pupils' literacy skills are used appropriately to support work in other subjects.



For instance, they are encouraged to use a variety of recording techniques in science and pupils involved in the school's magazine club produce a newspaper. Teachers consistently refer to key technical vocabulary during their lessons, for example when reinforcing the concept of "numerator" and "denominator" in a lesson on fractions. Pupils make adequate use of their numeracy skills, but mental arithmetic is not a strong feature in the school, and numeracy and data handling activities are not planned specifically outside mathematics lessons. Information technology makes a very limited contribution to data handling in mathematics and science, and pupils do not yet have sufficient skills to use information technology effectively to support their work in any subject.

## 2 Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

23 Pupils' attitudes, behaviour, relationships and personal development are good. The majority of pupils behave well and pay attention during lessons, but there is a small significant minority who occasionally misbehave and disrupt their classmates' learning, particularly in Year 4.

24 Children under the age of five have sound personal and social skills. They work and play happily together, and interact well with a range of adults in the nursery and reception class. Children grow in confidence as they begin to take responsibility for everyday tasks, such as registering themselves at the start of each session and tidying away at the end of lessons. Children learn to listen to each other as they talk about their work in sessions where the teachers recap what they have been doing each day.

25 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They listen carefully to their teachers, ask and answer questions, and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. They are capable of maintaining sustained periods of concentration when asked to do so. Pupils of all ages collaborate well, happily share resources, take turns and listen to each other. They work particularly well together when they are given practical work to complete in pairs or groups, for instance in a Year 1 science lesson where pupils were asked to sort materials into groups of their own choice. Pupils show appropriate respect during morning and afternoon prayers and in assembly.

26 Pupils' behaviour is good. Teachers, parents and the pupils themselves have high expectations of what constitutes acceptable behaviour and this is reflected in the way that the majority of pupils conduct themselves. They enter the school in a quiet and orderly manner and quickly settle down in their classrooms. However, there is a small but significant group of boys, mainly in Year 4, who sometimes behave inappropriately and consequently cause disruption to their lessons, although the extent of this disruption is minimised by good class control and management. Pupils' behaviour around the school, at breaks and at lunch-time is consistently good and often very good. They play well together in mixed age and gender groups and there are no obvious signs of bullying or isolation of individual pupils. There were no exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection.

27 Relationships in the school are good. Most pupils relate well to their teachers, to other adults whom they come into contact with, and also to one another. For example, older girls often join the younger children at play during break times, and pupils with special educational needs clearly enjoy their work with the specialist teacher who visits the school twice a week. The majority of pupils consistently show respect for their teachers, and children of all ages are polite and courteous. Pupils treat books and resources well and show high levels of respect for their environment. For instance, they take great care to make sure that any litter is tidied away and not left lying in the school's grounds.

28 Pupils' personal development is good. This starts in the nursery and continues throughout the school. Where given the chance, children generally respond well to opportunities to take responsibility for their own work. For instance, they select their own reading books and settle down to silent reading with a minimum of supervision. When formal opportunities are provided for taking on responsibility, for example, returning registers to the office and helping members of the Friends' Association run the school bank, pupils respond very well. The school supports local and national charities and pupils make appropriate visits into the community and experience residential trips – all of which contribute to their growing personal and social

understanding.

## 2 **Attendance**

29 There has been a significant improvement in the rates of pupils' attendance since the last inspection. Current levels of attendance are very good and are well above the national average. There is almost no unauthorised absence – pupils enjoy coming to school and parents are supportive in maintaining high attendance levels. Children come to school on time and lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly. This all has a positive impact on the quality of pupils' learning and the efficient running of the school.

## 2 **QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED**

### 2 **Teaching**

30 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teachers use a broad range of teaching styles and are implementing the literacy and numeracy hours effectively.

31 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and often good. Teaching is consistently good in the nursery and this links to the good progress made by the youngest children in the school. Some good teaching was seen in most classes. However, most teachers do not make sufficient use of the results of their assessments and their planning does not always reflect the quality of the practice taking place in their classrooms. This does not have a significant impact in lessons where they actually provide a range of activities matched to pupils' different needs but it does mean that higher attaining pupils are not catered for as consistently as they could be in other lessons. English is taught well across the school and teachers have a good knowledge of literacy, but they lack sufficient knowledge and understanding to teach information technology effectively. This is a major factor contributing to the low standards in this subject.

32 Children under the age of five are taught particularly well in the nursery. This class is very well organised with a good range of activities and resources available to stimulate children's development. For example, the teacher has built a "cave" in the corner of the classroom from large blackout curtains and children use this to experience the effects of light and dark and to act out roles of explorers. Lessons are planned carefully with good attention to the areas of learning for children of this age and to what each child has demonstrated they can already do. In this way, the teaching builds well on children's previous experiences and promotes good progress. The teacher and other adults working in the nursery work well as a team. They have good relationships with the children and actively support children's personal and social development. They make particularly good use of questions to motivate children and to encourage children to talk about their ideas and develop confidence when speaking aloud. For instance, during a mathematical activity the teacher challenged children to explain what was wrong with a sequence of numbers hung onto a washing line when she had hung the number 4 upside down. In a discussion about the types of rocks and stones found in their "cave", children were expected to use appropriate words to describe how they found them and what they looked like.

33 Teaching is satisfactory in the reception class. Lessons are organised and managed soundly and resources are used effectively. For example, in one lesson a classroom assistant used dolls to simulate how to bath a baby and made good use of a range of toiletries to talk to children about the importance of keeping clean to be healthy. Lessons with a literacy and mathematical focus tend to be more successful than practical based lessons, which are often planned for the afternoon. This is because the planning that underpins the teaching in this class is too broad in many areas and is not being supported by the assessments that are taking place. As a result, the practical and explorative play activities that take place are not being planned with a sufficiently clear learning focus, and are not being linked back into the areas of learning identified for children under the age of five. For instance, in the same lesson where a group of children were bathing a doll, others spent too long brushing a doll's hair without fully appreciating the purpose of what they were doing. The

teacher has high expectation of children's behaviour and uses questions well to encourage them to talk about their work and explain their ideas – this effectively supports the development of children's personal and social development as well as their speaking and listening skills.

34 Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good in Key Stage 1. Teachers are confident and secure in their knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach, except in some aspects of information technology. They plan their English lessons well by paying careful attention to the activities they intend to offer to groups of pupils of different abilities – teaching is better in this subject. However, their planning for most other lessons is too broad and general. It does not make reference to the targets set for pupils with special educational needs or identify precisely what different groups of pupils are expected to learn. This is because teachers assess pupils against the broad targets they set for their lessons then do not refine this information to help them plan the next stage in their work. Nevertheless, teachers use informal assessments and questions well, and provide high levels of personal attention for pupils with special educational needs. For example, during a science lesson in Year 1, the teacher carefully questioned pupils to help them to describe how they had grouped different materials and to explain the choices they had made. In a Year 2 science lesson, the teacher questioned pupils effectively to encourage them to explain what they thought would happen to the bulbs they were planting.

35 In Key Stage 1, teachers give clear instructions, pace their lessons well and make good use of resources. For example, in a Year 1 physical education lesson the teacher made good use of additional floor mats to keep all pupils actively involved in physical activity while waiting for their classmates to finish working on the small apparatus. Similarly, teachers make good use of additional adults who provide help during their lessons. A particular example of this was when the head teacher worked with a group of Year 1 pupils to show them how to program a floor robot. In this lesson, pupils made good progress in developing their limited information technology skills.

36 Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good in Key Stage 2. Teaching is stronger in Years 5 and 6 where pupils make particularly good progress in preparation for sitting the national tests in English, mathematics and science. In these classes, teachers have high expectations and use skilful questioning techniques to probe whether pupils have remembered previous work. For example, in a Year 5 mathematics lesson the teacher asked a broad range of questions to ascertain pupils' understanding of fractions. In Year 6, pupils are given extensive experience of past test papers to develop their confidence and understanding of the testing process. This all contributes to pupils' good performance in national tests over recent years.

37 As with Key Stage 1, teachers' planning in Key Stage 2 does not always pay sufficient attention to the full range of abilities in their classes or to the information gleaned from previous assessments of what pupils know, understand and can do. Planning is better in English and mathematics, where teachers use the planning structures suggested by the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Teaching is better in these subjects, especially English, and this is where pupils make best progress in Key Stage 2. Teachers in Key Stage 2 have secure knowledge and understanding of nearly all the subjects they teach and this shows through their use of key vocabulary during lessons. For example, in a Year 3 science lesson, the teacher consistently referred to the names of different kinds of teeth that were noted on the blackboard. Similarly, in a Year 5 history lesson the teacher was careful to develop pupils' understanding of the difference between "primary" and "secondary" sources of historical evidence. The exception to this is information technology where most teachers lack sufficient knowledge and skill to teach it effectively. A number of staff are currently attending personally organised training courses but they still lack a broad enough understanding of the subject to be able to promote pupils' learning effectively. Teachers recognise and acknowledge their shortfalls in this subject and, on occasions, swap classes to allow more confident colleagues to work with the computers.

38 Teachers organise and manage their lessons soundly and maintain an appropriate pace in most cases. However, a group of boys in Year 4 often misbehave and this slows the pace of lessons in this class while the teacher re-asserts discipline and control. In Years 5 and 6, teachers' good class organisation and management promotes pupils' personal development by encouraging them to undertake independent research and investigation, especially in science. Teachers use resources well to support their lessons. For example, in Year 6 the teacher showed pupils a genuine turtle shell as part of their work on animals' adaptations to their

natural habitats.

39 Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs are withdrawn from lessons for two very short focused sessions each week and are taught by a visiting specialist teacher. These sessions are very tightly planned and are focused specifically at the literacy targets set for each individual pupil. Despite the short time involved, this teaching is effective and ensures that these pupils make good progress during these lessons.

40 Throughout the school, teachers use homework appropriately to support their lessons.

## 2 **The curriculum and assessment**

41 The school's curriculum makes a sound contribution to the quality of education and standards of attainment. It is broad and reasonably balanced although the art curriculum is unclear and some aspects of design and technology are weaker than other subjects. English and mathematics pay appropriate attention to the new literacy and numeracy recommendations and sufficient time is allocated to all subjects. The curriculum successfully promotes pupils' personal development and prepares them well for their next school. All aspects of personal and health education, including sex and drug issues, are dealt with appropriately. The curriculum meets the requirements of the National Curriculum.

42 The curriculum for children in the nursery is well planned. However, in the reception class the curriculum does not relate sufficiently to the areas of learning identified for children who are under five. The school introduces the subjects of the National Curriculum to children who are still four which makes it difficult to gauge their progress when measured against the desirable learning outcomes expected by the age of five. This approach to planning also impacts on the focus of some practical and explorative play activities for children.

43 The school places an appropriate emphasis on the acquisition of literacy and numeracy skills and has slimmed down other aspects of the curriculum to accommodate this – this has had a particular effect on art. The literacy hour has been successfully introduced and the mathematics curriculum has been adapted to follow the recommendations in the National Numeracy Strategy. The curriculum for information technology is well planned and carefully structured to meet National Curriculum requirements, but unfortunately it is not taught effectively. The school has also adopted other new national schemes of work in science, design and technology, geography and history, as well as commercial schemes in most other subjects. In art, however, the planned curriculum is too complex and cumbersome, and the school has not yet refined it to identify precisely what will be taught in this subject. There is a degree of overlap between art and design and technology with the result that teachers often concentrate on practical “making” activities and do not plan sufficient opportunities for pupils to develop their design skills.

44 There is a temporary problem with the provision of swimming in physical education for pupils in Key Stage 2. Whilst the school and local education authority are working to seek a solution to the practical difficulties of access to a swimming pool, there is no guarantee that this matter will be resolved in the near future.

45 The curriculum for pupils with special educational needs is good. The school provides a similar curriculum to other pupils but teachers often adjust this accordingly and offer extra support in class. Pupils' individual education plans are well maintained and focus on their needs and progress in English and personal development. The quality of these plans varies considerably – some are thorough and well targeted while others are too broad and vague to assist real improvement. The school is less aware of the needs of higher attaining pupils and is not consistently offering work of sufficient challenge to ensure that these pupils make the progress they should.

46 The overall planning of the curriculum is sound. Teachers make effective half-termly plans to ensure that work is presented to pupils in an appropriate sequence that builds on what has been taught before

– this is a positive improvement since the previous inspection. Subsequent planning divides this work into weekly sections, which are less effective. For example, the formal planning does not always show clear learning objectives or details of work for pupils of different abilities. Some teachers supplement their weekly plans with informal strategies to ensure the quality of lessons, but there is a lack of consistency throughout the school. There is no whole school approach to cross-curricular issues. Teachers are left to apply these as they see fit, but this also leads to inconsistency. For example, whilst elements of history encompass aspects of English, art or geography, there is very little use of data handling or information technology to support mathematics and science. The setting of homework has become more organised since the last inspection and both pupils and parents are much clearer of the weekly schedule.

47 The school offers a very good range of extra-curricular activities. Pupils benefit from sports such as netball and football, as well as country dancing, cookery, choir, recorders, art and a mathematics and science club. Pupils also meet after school to produce the school magazine, and this develops their word processing skills in addition to their speaking and listening skills when interviewing journalists and visitors. The school places a great deal of emphasis on its range of educational visits, the vast majority of which are directly related to the curriculum. For example, these visits include theatres, museums, leisure centres, music festivals, nature reserves, a lighthouse, a farm, sports fixtures and specific sites in the locality. The annual residential visit by pupils in Year 6 for environmental studies is particularly effective.

48 The school has made improvements and changes in its assessment systems since the last inspection. As a result, there is now a good range of effective procedures for assessing pupils' work and recording their attainment and progress, especially in English, mathematics and science. Procedures for assessing children's attainment on entry to the nursery are well established and the school has started to use this baseline assessment to track children's progress from nursery through into Year 1.

49 The results of the national end of key stage tests are used well to identify trends and areas for improvement for the following year. For instance, the improvement in speaking and listening, with the use of drama across the curriculum, is a target for both key stages in the current year. The school also uses optional tests in Years 3, 4 and 5, but there has been no meaningful use made of the results of these tests. The head teacher has recently begun to track pupils' progress from entering the reception class to the end of Key Stage 1, and has plans to develop this across the school once sufficient data is available. The school is also beginning to develop personal targets for individual pupils although parents are not yet involved in this process.

50 Teachers mark pupils work regularly and marking is usually helpful and purposeful, which leads to improvement. They evaluate lessons on a weekly basis but these evaluations are very general and often provide a short comment for the whole class. They provide a brief summary of how the teacher felt the lesson had progressed but these evaluations are not useful as a form of assessment and are not used effectively by teachers to plan future lessons. Similarly, the information gained from previous assessments and the precise recordings of what pupils know and can do are not used sufficiently by teachers to provide clear objectives for what pupils or groups of pupils need to learn in their next lesson or series of lessons. Teachers are not precise enough in their planning. They do not identify specific learning objectives for all pupils and, as a result, are unable to assess and record their progress in sufficient detail.

51 Despite the improvements made since the last inspection, the school's use of assessments remains an issue. However, this has already been recognised in the school development where assessment is identified and acknowledged as a current priority area.

## 2 **Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development**

52 The school makes good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development. Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory.

53 The school makes good provision for the spiritual development of pupils. The central elements of

spirituality within the Roman Catholic faith run throughout the provision for all pupils. There is a strong Christian ethos. Pupils are aware of the importance and sense of belonging to a family, in their own homes, school, church and in the wider community. The school plays an active part in the life of the parish and the local community. Pupils have time in school, during assemblies and class prayers, to reflect on their own lives and those of others. In their music making they practise and perform The Lord's Prayer with reverence. They show empathy with the lives of others, for instance working children in Victorian times and for the people and their families involved in a fatal train collision that occurred during the week of the inspection. Whenever possible teachers point out, and draw pupils' attention to, the wonders of life within creation. For example, in the nursery during exploration of the natural life found in a cave and in Year 6 as pupils watched and discussed stick insects in a tank. Pupils are involved in religious education exhibitions and competitions in the wider community and some have been chosen to appear in a Nativity production on national television.

54 Provision for pupils' moral development is good. It is given a high priority by all teaching staff and other adults in the school. They are all positive role models and set good examples to pupils. The school successfully encourages pupils' development of the values of honesty, fairness and respect for others, and pupils are fully involved in setting their own class rules each year. The school effectively teaches the differences between right and wrong, and pupils have a clear understanding of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour. They understand and respect the school's systems which result in rewards and sanctions. They know what to do should a conflict arise amongst their friends. The recently introduced home/school agreement is shared between pupils, parents and the school, and promotes a shared understanding of expectations for all. Through their work for charities pupils develop a good understanding of the results of conflict in the world and have raised funds to assist those in countries where children are less fortunate than themselves, such as Kosova.

55 Provision for pupils' social development is good. There is a strong sense of the school as a community and pupils are proud of their school, their achievements and what it stands for. Pupils are given ample opportunities to discuss their work and interests sensibly with adults and visitors to the school, for instance, when a local newspaper editor visited the Year 5 class. Pupils are given opportunities to co-operate and collaborate during lessons and extra-curricular activities. For example, during practical activities, school sporting events and in the commitment towards a massed choir of 4000 voices for the Hallelujah Christmas Concert. Through the school's work in the community and parish, pupils have opportunities for social interaction with people of varying ages and of different denominations. This encourages pupils to interact and relate positively to others in different Christian churches, for instance the Methodist church and to the elderly in local care homes.

56 Provision for pupils' cultural development is satisfactory. In some subjects, notably music, geography and history, pupils' work raises their awareness of life in other countries and at other times. The oldest pupils run a Traidcraft stall and develop an understanding of the difficulties of modern day life and commerce in the less well developed countries of the world. Some groups of pupils are involved in local festivals and have the opportunity to work with professional musicians. Visits take place by all pupils to theatres and museums, and a range of visitors to school such as theatre, music and puppet groups and an author make a positive contribution to pupils' appreciation of their own cultural traditions. However, the planning of work does not take sufficient account of the opportunities that could be provided for pupils' cultural development and consequently provision is unsystematic. The school has adopted the local education authority's policy for multi-cultural education but pupils do not learn about other faiths and are therefore not fully prepared for life in a multi-cultural society.

## 2 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

57 The school effectively supports pupils and continually strives to promote their welfare. The head teacher provides strong pastoral leadership and the teaching staff are very caring, approachable and supportive. Pupils are supervised well at break times by their teachers. Lunch-time supervision is carried out well by trained and experienced supervisors and the standard is very good. There are appropriate measures for dealing with minor injuries and first aid. Induction procedures into the nursery are very good with a

strong emphasis on making it easy for children to start their education.

58 The school makes very good use of appropriate support agencies, non-teaching assistants and parent helpers. The school's non-teaching staff are totally dedicated to the children they support. They are well deployed and provide very good support to teachers and pupils. Support for children with special educational needs is also good and has a positive impact on their academic achievement and progress. However, the school's register for pupils with special educational needs is vague and many of the targets set for these pupils in their individual education plans are too broad.

59 The school has effective behaviour and anti-bullying policies that are supplemented by school and class rules. Behaviour is carefully monitored – there is a good understanding of what constitutes acceptable behaviour, and rewards and sanctions are applied consistently. Good attendance is actively promoted and carefully monitored. Registrations are carried out efficiently, absences and lateness are correctly recorded and conscientiously followed up, and appropriate action is taken to ensure that the school's high levels of attendance are maintained.

60 The school's systems and procedures for monitoring pupils' academic attainment and progress have improved since the last inspection. There is now a good range of systems, starting in the nursery, that allow detailed records to be kept for individual pupils. The head teacher and class teachers have a very good understanding of the personal and individual needs of the pupils in their care. They consistently evaluate pupils' progress to make sure that appropriate action is taken to promote continued personal development. A sex education policy has been published since the last inspection and health, sex and drugs education is well planned and taught in an appropriate manner.

61 Child protection procedures are well established and there is a good awareness throughout the school. A health and safety policy has been published and the health and safety issues identified in the previous inspection have all been dealt with successfully. As a result, the procedures for promoting health and safety are very good. These are well known and understood by all staff and governors who consistently demonstrate safe working practice in lessons and around the school. All the required health and safety inspections and checks, including risk assessments, are regularly carried out and properly recorded.

## 2 **Partnership with parents and the community**

62 Relationships between the school and parents are very good. The school enjoys the support of parents who are encouraged to visit and be involved in their children's education. Many parents help in classrooms and accompany pupils on trips. Governors, who are also parents, take an active interest and regularly help in the school. There is a strong and very active friends association that organises events and raises funds for the school. The vast majority of parents feel welcome in the school and find the staff approachable.

63 Parents are kept well informed about the life and work of the school. There are regular newsletters and supplementary letters about specific events. There is an informative school brochure, governors' annual report and a useful document detailing procedures in the nursery. The annual progress reports written by teachers are personalised and informative – they indicate the progress being made by the child, tell parents what their children understand and can do, and set targets for improvement. There are appropriate opportunities for parents to meet with teachers and to discuss their children's work and progress. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are kept well informed and fully involved in both their children's work and regular review meetings. A number of parents expressed the opinion that the school did not give them a clear understanding of what is taught. This is true, but the school has recently developed a new document for parents to give them appropriate information about the work their children will be carrying out, and this is due to be circulated soon.

64 The school's work is considerably enriched by its links with parents and the community, and these links contribute very well to pupils' personal development. There is a very good range of social and educational visits, including a residential trip, and a good range of visitors to the school. The school also makes very good use of the local area as a learning resource, for example, in geography, history, science and environmental studies. There are very good links with the church and the school is an integral part of the local Roman Catholic community. The school is very much a part of the community that it serves. For instance, pupils raise money for local charities, teams compete in a variety of local sporting competitions, and there are good links with other local schools.

## 2 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

### 2 Leadership and management

65 The school is well managed and this contributes well to the high attainment in tests by the age of 11. The head teacher has effectively steered the school through a recent period of staff absence and instability without too much impact on the quality of pupils' learning. She is supported well by a strong, effective and well-informed governing body.

66 The school has improved in many areas since the last inspection. A comprehensive and effective action plan was produced following the inspection and the school's progress against the specified targets has been monitored regularly by the head teacher and governors. As a result, the head teacher, staff and governors share a clear and accurate view of what the school does well and where it needs to improve. For example, everyone acknowledges a weakness in information technology while celebrating the school's strengths in terms of pupils' attitudes and the performance in national tests at the end of Year 6. There is a definite commitment to maintaining the high test standards and this shows through the school's positive intervention and support for pupils with special educational needs and lower attaining pupils in order to allow them to reach appropriate levels in the tests. There is also a clear intention to improve the quality of information technology provision in the school. However, despite this, (and recent developments in purchasing additional computers, setting up a computer facility in the library and enrolling some staff on training courses) the pace of development is too slow to have an impact on the standards in this subject.

67 The school has a positive ethos and this is underpinned by its Christian nature. The school has a clear mission statement. The school's main aims linked to promoting and developing pupils' attitudes and values are clearly met since pupils' behaviour, attitudes, relationships and personal development are strengths of the school.

68 The school development plan is a comprehensive and effective working document. It clearly identifies the priority areas to be tackled and provides sufficient detail about the costs, resource and staff implications, and means of deciding whether the targets have been met. This is an improvement since the last inspection where the school's development planning process was criticised. The head teacher and governors regularly monitor the school's progress against the targets set in the school development plan and modify their actions accordingly. For example, an analysis of teachers' assessments indicated that pupils' speaking and listening skills were not developing at the rate they should – consequently, the school has arranged a contract with the local education authority to provide specialist support for drama in the near future. The head teacher monitors the quality of teaching and is beginning to involve curriculum co-ordinators in this capacity.

69 The governing body is particularly effective. Governors have a clear strategic role. They take a genuine interest in the work and development of the school and they all take their responsibilities seriously. They are regular visitors to the school and monitor its work through first hand experience as well as by questioning and challenging the head teacher at governing body meetings. All statutory requirements are being met although swimming has currently been suspended for pupils in Key Stage 2. This is planned as a temporary measure until a suitable swimming pool becomes available.



## 2 **Staffing, accommodation and learning resources**

70 The school has an appropriate number of qualified and experienced teachers and classroom assistants to meet the demands of the curriculum. There is a good blend of experienced staff and more recently qualified staff who are trained to teach children under five, the subjects of the National Curriculum and pupils with special educational needs. They relate well to each other and offer mutual support. In the recent past, however, the staffing situation has suffered from a series of disruptions caused by promotions, secondment and illnesses, and this had the greatest impact in Years 5 and 6 where both teachers were absent for extended periods.

71 Teachers have a sound range of subject knowledge, but most lack expertise in information technology. The school is only just starting to tackle this problem through whole school and individual training. Despite this, the school takes care to link professional staff development to the priorities in the school development plan, with the recent emphasis on numeracy. The school has an efficient induction process. Arrangements for the appraisal of teachers have previously been efficient but this system has now been suspended. As a result, only a few teachers have official job descriptions that itemise their current areas of responsibility.

72 Accommodation is adequate. Most classrooms provide sufficient room for pupils to work in and allow the curriculum to be taught effectively. However, some classrooms are small, although they accommodate the current class sizes. In these classrooms it is difficult for teachers and pupils to move freely around the furniture. Disabled access into and throughout the building is poor with many steps and narrow corridors. There is an adequate size multi-purpose hall, well equipped as a gymnasium, and a good size library. However, the library, which includes the computer suite, does not provide enough room for whole class lessons and this affects the quality and effectiveness of some information technology lessons. There is a shortage of rooms and cupboards available for the storage of resources. Good safe working practice prevents this from being a health and safety hazard. The school building is in a good state of repair. The school is situated in attractive and spacious grounds with sufficient areas to accommodate children aged under five and a range of sports.

73 The school has sufficient resources to support teaching in the majority of subjects. English resources have been successfully audited and recently augmented for the teaching of the literacy hour, and the school library is well organised and classified appropriately for pupils' use. Resources in the recently refurbished nursery are very good and are used effectively. The secure outdoor area is well provided with a good range of outdoor equipment for children under the age of five – these are well organised to promote children's physical and personal and social development. However, resources for information technology are unsatisfactory. There is a limited range of hardware and software to support the information technology curriculum, and many of the school's current computers are outdated and reaching the end of their working life. Resources are barely adequate in design and technology particularly in terms of tools for working with wood and other materials. The school makes good use of the local library service, local museums and the local area to provide resources to support the curriculum.

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

74 The school runs efficiently and effectively on a day-to-day basis. This is due mainly to the high quality of administration provided by the part-time secretary, the efficiency of the caretaker and cleaning staff, and the rigorous financial planning and monitoring undertaken by governors.

75 Financial management is good. Educational developments are carefully and clearly costed in the school development plan. The school has recently invested a significant amount of money in the refurbishment of the nursery, and this has obviously improved the quality of provision in this area. Financial control is good. The last auditor's report made very few minor recommendations, all of which have been dealt with satisfactorily. Governors have approved the use of money from the school's savings to support the

current level of staffing through a period where smaller year groups work through Years 5 and 6, in the knowledge that the school's intake figures are relatively stable and secure for future years.

76 The school makes good use of the staff and resources available. For example, a classroom assistant provides effective support for Key Stage 1 classes during the literacy hour but is also employed to provide specific targeted support for literacy in Years 3 and 4 at other times. External sources of support, such as the local education authority's curriculum support service and special educational needs service, are also used well. For instance, the school plans to use local education authority support to develop drama and information technology in the near future, in line with the priorities set out in the school development plan.

77 When children start in the reception class, their attainment is broadly average. By the time pupils leave the school at age 11, their attainment in English and mathematics is above the levels expected for their age, and they do well in all subjects in the national tests. Pupils develop good attitudes and relationships. Funds for pupils with special educational needs are used appropriately to target support where it is needed. The school spends slightly less than the national average on each pupil and therefore provides good value for money.

## 2 PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

### 2 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

78 When children start in the nursery, they come from a wide variety of backgrounds and cover the full range of ability. The quality of provision in the nursery is high – this is a strength of the school and children make good progress. As a result, when they start in the reception class, children’s attainment matches the levels expected of typical four-year olds in all areas of learning. By the age of five, the majority of children are reaching the levels expected for their age in language and literacy, mathematical, personal and social development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative and physical development also matches expected levels.

79 Children enter the nursery with a wide range of skills in language and literacy. Most speak confidently to each other and to adults during their practical activities. However, some have less coherent speech and are difficult to follow. For instance, when working in small groups to make salt dough with the nursery nurse, nearly all children followed the sequence of what they were doing well and understood what the dough was to be used for. Children begin to ask questions and make sensible comments using phrases and sentences. They have many opportunities to learn new vocabulary in their imaginative role-play activities, such as exploring a cave with the teacher. Children listen well and learn to follow instructions quickly in their physical development lessons. They learn to respond quickly and with understanding to ideas such as being a jellybean, runner, broad and jumping bean. They learn to recognise some letters of the alphabet. Children enjoy stories and begin to hold books correctly and turn the pages as they look at the pictures.

80 The children under five in the reception class enjoy stories and looking at and discussing big books with the teacher. They share books together and individually. They turn the pages and talk about the pictures with adults and begin to recognise familiar words. Children develop their speaking and listening skills well. For instance, they are confident to talk to the rest of the class about their likes and dislikes. The majority of children recognise their names and some are beginning to write their own names. Children learn to control pencils and trace over letters and some are beginning to write words underneath the teacher’s writing.

81 In the nursery children learn to count up to 10 and begin to recognise when the sequence of numbers is incorrect. They start to add and subtract single numbers up to 10, but still need some support to be accurate. In the reception class, children begin to write their numbers with reasonable precision, although some lower attaining children still tend to reverse some numbers, notably 2 and 4. They know terms like “first”, “second” and “third”, and begin to appreciate concepts of size, such as “more than” and “less than”. Children sort objects into simple sets, for example colour coding plant pots with different numbers of plants in them. They learn to recognise and sort some two dimensional shapes, like circles, squares and triangles.

82 Children acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of the world. In the nursery, they become familiar with the days and months of the year, and learn to associate certain weather with specific seasons. For example, they can describe sunny or cloudy conditions. They also appreciate the impact of light and dark. For instance, in a simulated cave, children became aware of its potential dangers, the need for safety and of what they might find there – in this case, a variety of rocks for examination and comparison. They can talk about their feelings when experiencing a dark place. In the reception class, children develop a simple sense of chronology. They understand how babies grow into adults and begin to appreciate their place in their families. In the nursery, children develop their sense of life and growth by planting seeds and watching what happens. They learn to identify the main parts of a flower and look at different types of leaves, branches and berries associated with Autumn. Children also learn about light and dark by trying to “catch” rainbows using mirrors and water, and by playing with shadow puppets. Nursery children visit the local veterinary surgeon and learn about the importance of looking after animals. In the reception class, children learn to stay fit and healthy by taking regular exercise, eating sensibly and keeping clean. Children use computers in both classes and gain basic understanding of how to use the keyboard and create simple text and pictures, for example when dressing a teddy bear using “My World”.

83 Children’s creative development is promoted through regular art based activities. For instance,

children in the nursery make patterns with paint using their fingers and by printing with fruit. They recognise that brown, green and orange are the colours associated with Autumn and begin to experiment to mix their own colours. In the reception class, children continue to experiment with colour and begin to structure their work, for instance painting portraits with recognisable features. Children begin to work in three dimensions by building models using construction kits and consumable materials. For example, reception children have made flowers using straws for the stem and cardboard flower-heads. Children in both the nursery and reception classes sing simple nursery rhymes and songs. They learn to hold a basic tune and to join in with hand actions.

84 Children's physical development is promoted through an appropriate balance of outdoor play and structured physical activities. Nursery children have access to a good quality outdoor play area that offers a range of climbing equipment and moveable vehicles. Reception children take part in more structured physical education lessons where they learn to move in different ways, hold simple balances and work with small apparatus. Children develop their fine motor skills by using scissors and paste brushes while making their models, and by controlling their paint brushes and pencils when creating pictures and writing.

85 The school places a strong emphasis on promoting children's personal and social development, and this is an area where it is particularly successful. From their first days in the nursery, children are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions and to develop a degree of independence. For example, they are expected to register themselves at the start of each session. In the reception class, children are given minor roles of responsibility and are expected to tidy away at the end of lesson. Children learn to work and play together well. They form good relationships with each other and with the adults in their classes.

86 The quality of teaching is good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. The nursery curriculum is planned well and takes full account of the areas of learning identified for children under the age of five. The curriculum in the reception class does not relate sufficiently to these areas of learning. The school introduces the subjects of the National Curriculum to children who are still four which makes it difficult to gauge their progress when measured against the desirable learning outcomes expected by the age of five. This approach to planning also impacts on the focus of some practical and explorative play activities for children.

87 The school has recently invested a significant amount of money in the refurbishment and resourcing of the nursery. This has been effective and has provided a high quality learning environment for the youngest children in the school. This money has been well spent.

## 2 ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

### 2 English

88 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in English matches the levels expected for seven year olds. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1998, the school's results were below the national average in reading and close to the national average in writing. Fewer pupils reached the higher levels in either test than happened nationally. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the levels expected for 11 year olds. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1998, the school's results were above the national average – the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels was well above average. In comparison with similar schools nationally, pupils' results were well above the average. Over recent years, standards in writing have consistently risen while reading standards have been generally stable. The results of the recent 1999 tests appear to be similar although no national comparisons are available yet.

89 Pupils make steady progress in speaking and refining their listening skills through Key Stage 1. Pupils learn to listen carefully to their teachers and other adults. They carry out instructions well and gain confidence in discussions, for instance when sharing big books together as a class. By the end of Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills match the levels expected for seven year olds. They discuss the story of "The Sick Young Dragon" enthusiastically. They are keen to answer the teacher's questions and volunteer

their own experiences of being ill willingly and confidently.

90 Pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in speaking and listening through Key Stage 2. For example, pupils in Year 5 responded very well to a presentation given by a representative from the local newspaper. They listened very well, asked relevant questions and gave clear and well thought out answers. By the end of Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills match the levels expected for 11 year olds. Most pupils converse with adults and visitors sensibly, volunteering help and information. They listen with concentration and question others' ideas and presentations well, for instance in a drama activity when presenting their character in the role of a child in Victorian times. The school has identified the use of drama as a priority in the school development plan and a programme of staff training is due to take place in the near future.

91 Pupils make steady progress in reading through Key Stage 1 and, by the end of Year 2, their attainment matches the levels expected for seven year olds. Pupils learn to recognise letters, sounds and groups of sounds. They develop an appropriate sight vocabulary, learn letter names and alphabetical order. In the literacy hour, they learn to read aloud with expression and to read with confidence. They know that sometimes in a text the size of the print increases the expression and loudness of the reading. In their guided reading groups with the teachers, they predict events and use picture clues to develop their understanding of the story. By the end of Year 2, pupils enjoy reading and choose a variety of books. They are confident readers. They discuss their work with adults and are beginning to show preferences in their reading. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in their reading in relation to their own individual programmes of work and against their prior learning. The majority of pupils read regularly to their parents at home and borrow books frequently from the school library. This has a good impact on their reading development.

92 Pupils make good progress in their reading through Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' attainment is above the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6. Pupils continue to read from a range of reading scheme books that are well matched to their reading levels. They study a wide range of texts during the literacy hour, including play scripts and texts by well established modern children's writers. They learn to compare and contrast the styles of different authors when they write books with similar themes such as the 2<sup>nd</sup> World War. In guided reading groups, pupils read with good support from teachers and classroom assistants. They develop their oral comprehension skills well and, towards the end of the key stage, answer written comprehension exercises quickly and independently. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported during these class activities and, as a result, make good progress. Pupils discuss their reading willingly and visit the school library regularly to choose their own books. By the end of Year 6, the majority of pupils read fluently and with good expression. They enjoy and talk about books by significant and well established authors, such as "A Christmas Carol" by Dickens and modern children's authors such as Roald Dahl and Anne Fine. Some pupils enjoy reading non-fiction books and use the library classification system well. The majority of pupils understand the use of contents pages, indexes and glossaries although not all are confident with skimming a text and scanning to locate specific information.

93 Pupils make steady progress in writing through Key Stage 1. As a result, their attainment matches the levels expected for seven year olds by the end of Year 2. Pupils develop their technical skills of writing well. They learn to control a pencil and form their letters accurately developing a legible style of print script by the end of the key stage. Pupils develop their compositional skills and learn to form their ideas into simple sentences. Some write well-sequenced accounts of their experiences in a diary form and accounts of visits they have made, for instance to the Souter Lighthouse and a visit to a nearby farm. They learn to punctuate their work with the use of capital letters and full stops, and develop accuracy in spelling using blends and groups of sounds. Pupils memorise their spellings in school and at home which increases their spelling knowledge of well-chosen groups of words. They retell stories they have heard and write their own imaginative stories using the stimuli from books and stories they have read together. For instance a Year 2 class wrote and sequenced a class story together with the teacher very successfully after reading "The Sick Young Dragon".

94 Pupils make good progress in writing through Key Stage 2. As a result, pupils' attainment is above

the levels expected for 11 year olds by the end of Year 6. Towards the end of the key stage, pupils learn to understand the importance of writing in different styles for different audiences – they write for a wide range of purposes. For example, they write poems, prayers and letters to parents explaining a residential visit and requesting permission to go. They write instructions such as recipes, prepare interviews and write play scripts in modern language for Romeo and Juliet. Pupils write in role as characters from Victorian times and produce well-organised autobiographies. They punctuate their written work well with the use of question marks, apostrophes, and inverted commas. They also develop more complex sentences in their work and use paragraphs to separate their ideas.

95 The quality of teaching in English is good – English is taught well throughout the school. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and provide a good balance of opportunities for speaking and listening, reading and writing. They follow the structure of the literacy hour well and make effective use of time and resources. For instance, pupils are brought together towards the end of each lesson to discuss what they have learnt and, in the best lessons, this time is used effectively to move pupils forward and inform them of what they are to learn next. Teachers choose suitable texts to study, for instance when comparing the similarities of authors' differing styles, and they question pupils carefully. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher consistently questioned pupils to be sure that they understood what they had read in extracts from "Friend and Foe" and "Carrie's War". Teachers use classroom assistants and other adult helpers well, particularly to support pupils with special educational needs. They ensure that these pupils receive good support in lessons, although this is not always detailed clearly in the planning of their lessons. The teaching of pupils in Years 3 and 4 who benefit from the Additional Literacy Strategy is thorough, and resources are well prepared.

96 Teachers' planning is generally sound but not all teachers consistently plan for the full range of abilities in their classes, particularly the higher attainers. Teachers monitor pupils' progress in speaking and listening and writing conscientiously and assess the progress of pupils during guided reading group work well. However it is not clear how these ongoing assessments are used to move pupils forward. Teachers evaluate their lessons in English each week but these evaluations are very general and are not used effectively to inform the planning of future work. Teachers give homework for spelling and reading and parents are encouraged to hear their children read regularly at home. This impacts well on pupils' reading progress and spelling accuracy.

97 Pupils have good attitudes and respond well in English lessons. The majority of pupils listen well, join in willingly during the literacy hour and learn to work independently on their tasks. However a group of boys in Year 4 find it difficult to sustain their concentration and some lose attention during their lessons. Pupils with special educational needs work diligently and are particularly keen to succeed.

98 The English curriculum is broad, balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. An appropriate school policy and guidelines support the National Literacy Strategy for teachers, and this has been introduced successfully into all classes. The school has recently introduced a new commercial scheme of work that compliments the National Literacy Strategy, and this is used well.

99 Resources for English are satisfactory. Money has been spent wisely to meet the needs of the literacy hour and the introduction of guided reading and shared text work for both key stages. Reading scheme books are readily accessible to pupils in colours matched to specific reading levels. Both fiction and non-fiction books are well organised in the library and non-fiction materials are classified by a simple system that assists pupils to find information readily. The school makes good use of the County Durham Learning Resources department to supplement both fiction and non-fiction stock. A recent visit by a well-known children's author enhanced the reading programme for pupils.

100 Work in other subjects makes a satisfactory contribution to the development of pupils' literacy skills. For example, the development of pupils' key vocabulary is a good feature of classroom work in subjects such as science and mathematics and music.

101 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in mathematics matches the levels expected for seven year olds. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1998, the school's results were below the national average – fewer pupils achieved the minimum level expected for their age and few pupils reached the higher levels. However, the school's focus on numeracy has started to improve standards.

102 By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is above the levels expected for 11 year olds. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1998, the school's results were well above the national average, with a significant proportion reaching the higher levels. The school's performance in the end of Key Stage 2 tests has shown steady improvement over recent years and pupils are given good preparation for the tests in Year 6. The 1999 test results appear to be similar although no national comparisons are available yet.

103 Pupils make steady progress in mathematics through Key Stage 1. They acquire basic computational skills and learn to add and subtract numbers up to 20. They begin to make small calculations using real money, although some pupils still rely on the support of the teacher. They multiply and divide numbers by 10 and understand the concept of tens and units. Pupils understand the principle of fractions and can work out simple fractions, such as one half of 16. They tell the time simply, only using the quarter hours. Pupils learn to estimate and measure length using centimetres, and measure capacity using non-standard units, such as cups. They understand how to balance objects of different weight and size. Pupils recognise a variety of two and three dimensional shapes, like triangles, pentagons and pyramids and can give simple reasons for the differences between them. They understand, and can draw, lines of symmetry in two dimensional shapes. Pupils begin to use simple graphs to record data, for example their favourite pancake filling.

104 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2, especially in Year 6 where they are given opportunities to practice their skills on previous test papers. Pupils develop strategies of calculation and begin to develop their own methods, showing their workings clearly on paper. They start to draw their own conclusions from calculations and are able to double-check their results effectively. They add and subtract numbers to two decimal places efficiently, can round their results up or down to an appropriate number, and can add positive and negative numbers in context. By the end of Year 6, pupils are competent in all areas of computation and have a sound knowledge of their times tables. They have a good appreciation of percentages, such as 40 per cent of £250, and can calculate fractions of large, complex numbers. They can also refine fractions into more suitable amounts reducing, for example,  $15/20$  to  $3/4$ . Pupils identify a good range of two and three dimensional figures, including trapeziums and rhombuses and describe their vital properties. They can construct these shapes, using appropriate angles and accurately measure lines to the nearest millimetre. They can also construct regular and irregular shapes on graph paper and mark key co-ordinates. Pupils calculate area and volume by multiplication and record findings using appropriate measures. They understand how to express probability, using a scale of one to ten. They can interpret information on graphs effectively and have a sound grasp of the notions of medians and mean averages.

105 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are well organised and have secure knowledge of mathematics. They prepare their lessons well and pay good attention to the guidelines of the National Numeracy Strategy. In the most effective lessons, teachers set clear learning objectives and group pupils appropriately according to their ability and previous attainment – they support these groups sensitively, with sufficient direction and suitable praise. For example, in a Year 5 lesson, the teacher identified and used an appropriate range of activities to introduce the concept of fractions with numerators greater than 1. In a Year 6 lesson on fractions, the teacher modified the planned groupings on the basis of what pupils could actually do during a recap question and answer session at the start of the lesson. This focus on matching work to pupils' previous attainment is not so strong or consistent elsewhere in the school. In addition, teachers do not make sufficient use of the results of their assessments to inform their planning for lessons. As a result, teachers do not always plan sufficiently challenging work to stretch the higher attaining pupils. This is reflected in the results achieved by pupils in the tests at the end of Year 2 where few pupils achieve the higher levels.

106 Pupils have satisfactory attitudes. They are interested and are content to perform the tasks set for

them yet they show little overt enthusiasm. They listen sensibly to explanations of new topics and are generally attentive during lessons. When working on problems, they show reasonable concentration but their pace of work is only moderate and they tend to seek help too readily, rather than seek solutions for themselves. Pupils' behaviour is mostly good and they are responsible enough to work well in groups or by themselves, without the need for constant supervision. However, pupils do not readily show initiative by promoting their own suggestions or ideas.

107 The mathematics curriculum is broad, balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. The school has been successful in introducing the National Numeracy Strategy, but the use of numeracy in other subjects is still limited, and this is especially true in information technology. For instance, there is a dearth of spreadsheets or graph displays generated by computers. Mental arithmetic is not a particularly strong feature in the school, and this contributes to pupils' reticence to suggest solutions to problems. The school's new assessment and recording system for mathematics is simple but effective and provides a clear overview of what individual pupils have achieved. However, teachers currently make insufficient use of the information gleaned through these assessments to match work more carefully to pupils' different needs.

## 2 Science

108 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in science matches the levels expected for seven year olds. In the national assessments for seven year olds in 1998, the school's results were above average although the experimental and investigative aspects of science were much weaker than the factual elements. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment matches the levels expected for 11 year olds. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1998, the school's results were above the national average, and the proportion of pupils reaching the higher levels in the tests was also above average. The school's results in the recent 1999 tests appear to be similar although no national comparisons are available yet.

109 Pupils make steady progress in science through Key Stage 1. They learn to recognise different materials and to sort and classify them on the basis of their features. For example, pupils in Year 1 organise different materials into groups depending on whether they are "scrunchy", "squidgy" or "soft" while Year 2 pupils recognise materials that are waterproof, translucent and combustible. Pupils carry out experiments to see what happens when different materials are heated, for instance they learn that chocolate melts then hardens again once it cools, and that water boils and turns into steam. Pupils learn about the conditions needed for plant growth and practically observe and record the different stages by planting bulbs and seeds. They learn the names of the main parts of plants and flowers and also begin to label the major parts of the human body, such as the knees and chest. By the end of Year 2, pupils have sound factual knowledge of a range of scientific topics and understand the need to keep their experiments fair.

110 Pupils continue to make steady progress through Key Stage 2 and they make good progress in Year 6 where they are prepared particularly well for the national tests. Pupils build systematically on their knowledge of materials. For example, pupils in Year 3 test whether different materials are magnetic while older pupils investigate which materials will conduct electricity and complete their circuits. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of life and growth processes by studying the features of different animals that adapt them to different environments. For instance, Year 3 pupils consider why a duck has webbed feet while Year 6 pupils appreciate that animals and insects in the rainforest adapt their colour, movements and basic characteristics to protect against predators. From Year 3 through to Year 5, pupils develop a sound understanding of a range of topics, including sound, light, electricity and forces. In Year 6, pupils recap on their previous learning and reinforce this knowledge well by sitting past test papers – this prepares them well and makes a strong contribution to the school's high performance in the national tests. By the end of Year 6, some pupils have good factual knowledge and recall of science, but their practical skills are average. They design and carry out their own investigations and record their observations using tables, charts, diagrams and simple graphs. However, pupils do not make sufficient use of information technology to handle data in science, to monitor, sense and control the physical environment, or to carry out research.

111 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have secure knowledge of



science and use a scheme of work effectively to support their lessons. However, there is a tendency for most teachers to plan too broadly by identifying one global learning outcome for the whole class. This has the effect of occasionally reducing the level of challenge to higher attaining pupils, especially when teachers focus their attention on providing greater support for pupils with special educational needs. Teachers are confident with science and use a good range of resources to support their teaching. For example, in Year 5, the teacher prepared a “rocket” using a plastic lemonade bottle and bicycle pump and used this very effectively in a lively lesson to demonstrate the impact of increasing air pressure into the bottle. In a Year 6 lesson, the teacher amazed the class by showing them a real turtle shell during a discussion about adaptation to certain habitats. Teachers use questions well. For instance, in a Year 1 lesson, the teacher provided a high level of challenge by asking pupils to sort materials into groups and then explain their choice of groups to the rest of the class.

112 Pupils have good attitudes to science and enjoy working practically. For example, Year 2 pupils thoroughly enjoyed looking at different bulbs, such as snowdrops, crocus and daffodils, then planting their own. Pupils work well together and share resources. For instance, Year 3 pupils worked in pairs to look at their teeth in a mirror and identify the different teeth they could see. Year 4 pupils worked well in larger groups to investigate which surfaces allowed different objects to travel further – although a small number of boys became boisterous during part of this lesson, they worked productively and collaboratively with their classmates.

113 The school has chosen to follow the recently published national scheme of work for science, and this ensures that the science curriculum is broad, balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. Science is well managed in the school. For example, the co-ordinator has carried out a detailed analysis of test results to identify the areas where further emphasis is required in this years’ revision programme in Year 6. Similarly, the school is aware that there is insufficient use of information technology in the science curriculum and that there is a lack of suitable software. The school’s new assessment and recording system for science is simple but effective and provides a clear overview of what individual pupils have achieved. The school makes good use of the grounds as an environmental resource to broaden pupils’ scientific experiences.

## 2 OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

### 2 Art

114 There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching or pupils’ progress in art. Few lessons were seen and there was a limited range of evidence available in pupils’ past work.

115 Pupils’ past work and current displays indicate an appropriate awareness of colour. For example, Year 1 pupils have printed patterns using leaves and a selection of “autumn” colours while Year 4 pupils have produced tint sheets using yellow and green to support their paintings of plants. Year 5 pupils have used colours to create abstract images of the sun, sea and fire in their water-colour paintings linked to a poem about “love”. Year 6 pupils have used vibrant colours in their wax-resist images of animals and birds. Pupils work in a range of materials, including paint, pastels, textiles and clay, but there is little evidence of them developing accurate observational drawing skills or experimenting with line, shade and tone in their pencil work. A display of work in the style of Van Gogh’s sunflowers confirms that pupils are introduced to the work of famous artists and can replicate their techniques in their own paintings. The school has a very good range of posters and books covering a broad selection of famous and obscure artists, but this was not reflected in pupils’ work or photographs of previous displays.

116 The school is aware that the art curriculum has become confused since the overall curriculum has been modified to accommodate literacy and numeracy. There is a very detailed and comprehensive scheme of work that covers all aspects of art and provides clear guidance about which skills should be taught in each year group. However, there is too much in this scheme for the school to be able to teach in the time available. Since the start of this school year, teachers have planned their art work to sit alongside design and technology activities and to fit into their topics. In some cases this is successful, for instance in Year 5 pupils have

produced portraits using charcoal, chalk and pastels linked to their history topic of Tudors. However, individual teachers have been left to select which parts of the art scheme they wish to teach with the result that there is no clear picture of precisely what is being taught in the school or how each teachers' work will build on pupils' previous knowledge and skills. The school is aware of this problem and has recently appointed a new co-ordinator for art.

## 2 Design and technology

117 No design and technology lessons were seen. However, there was sufficient evidence from pupils' previous work, teachers' planning, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils to allow judgements to be made. Pupils make steady progress in their practical making skills, but they do not develop their design skills much beyond simple unlabelled drawings. For example, Year 2 pupils use basic coloured pictures to show their ideas for puppets, such as clowns and rabbits, but they do not label their pictures or identify and explain the materials they chose to use. Year 3 pupils took a similar approach when designing a hedgehog and Year 5 pupils showed no greater sophistication in their designs for a new chocolate bar. There is no recorded evidence of pupils evaluating their finished work or considering how their models could be improved.

118 Pupils work in a broad range of materials, starting with a good selection of plastic and wooden construction kits in Years 1 and 2. They develop their making skills by using reclaimed materials, such as food cartons and plastic bottles, to make model vehicles and face masks. Pupils learn to handle simple tools, such as scissors, and begin to fix materials together using glue, tape and simple fasteners. They learn to handle food by making biscuits and develop simple sewing skills. In Key Stage 2, pupils experience a broader range of materials, including clay, electrical circuits and motors, textiles, food and cardboard. For example, Year 4 pupils have made mathematical board games and clay masks while Year 5 pupils have made Mother's Day gift boxes and paper carrier bags. However, pupils rarely work with wood or other resistant materials, although photographs in the school indicate that pupils in the previous Year 6 took part in a neighbourhood engineers' project sponsored by local industry and won a construction award for their version of the millennium dome made from plastic tubes.

119 The school has chosen to follow the recently published national scheme of work for design and technology, and this ensures that the planned curriculum is broad and balanced. Teachers are expected to include one activity in their topic each term and the skills associated with each activity have been identified in the school's recently updated policy and guidelines. However, at present, some teachers still tend to plan their design work alongside their art activities and consequently focus on the practical aspects and lose the rigour in the design process. The school has sufficient resources although there are few hand tools to support pupils' use of wood.

## 2 Geography

2 120 Few geography lessons were seen. However, there was sufficient evidence from pupils' previous work, teachers' planning, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils to allow judgements to be made. Pupils make steady progress in geography throughout the school.

121 In Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of the environment, especially in their own locality. They understand and use simple directions, for example when detailing their way around the school and also describing their route from home to school. Pupils understand simple maps and can draw layouts of buildings, such as houses, in approximate scale. They can compare the basic differences between their own town and the city of Durham. They know about everyday processes, such as mail delivery and wool production, although their views are still simplistic.

122 In Key Stage 2, pupils view their locality from a broader perspective. They relate aerial photographs to ground pictures and gain a stronger sense of layout and proportion. Pupils know the key

features of a community, such as council offices, hospitals and fire stations, and they strengthen their mapping skills by using six-figure grid references. They learn the stages in the water cycle and begin to appreciate how land is used for activities such as industry and leisure. Pupils become familiar with physical aspects of countries, such as those in Europe and, in particular, France. They have a better grasp of environmental issues, including rivers and weather through their project towards the end of the key stage during their residential visit to an outdoor centre. Pupils write up their experiences and findings clearly and informatively.

123 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sound knowledge of geography and talk with authority about United Kingdom localities in particular. Lessons are well organised and teachers use resources effectively, for example in a Year 3 lesson where pupils were excited by aerial photographs of their own area. Teachers are most effective when they link geography to other subjects, such as in a Year 2 lesson when the teacher used a Katie Morag book to illustrate the aspects of an island and to show how wool is produced. However, the pace of some lessons can be rather laboured, especially when discussions of topics take too long. In addition, teachers do not always ensure that pupils record information sufficiently fully or neatly.

124 Pupils have satisfactory attitudes. They tackle new topics with interest and take part happily enough in discussions. Their concentration, though, can be weak at times, which limits the quality of their learning. This is true when they settle to complete assignments and the pace of work is slow.

125 The school has chosen to follow the recently published national scheme of work for geography, and this ensures that the planned curriculum is broad and balanced.

## 2 **History**

126 Few history lessons were seen. However, there was sufficient evidence from pupils' previous work, teachers' planning, displays and discussions with teachers and pupils to allow judgements to be made. Pupils make steady progress in history throughout the school.

127 In Key Stage 1, pupils begin to understand the concept of chronology. They appreciate the passing of time through their own life spans and those of other people. Pupils interview older residents from the area to ascertain what life was like earlier this century and they draw simple comparisons with the present day. They learn about local saints, focusing particularly on St. Cuthbert, St. Aidan and the Venerable Bede. They can write effectively about the saints, although not in great detail and their illustrations are somewhat crude.

128 Pupils in Key Stage 2 gain a broader sense of history. They understand the lasting effects of invaders, such as the Vikings and the Romans, in terms of settlements, buildings and language. They develop a greater awareness of their own heritage, for instance through their study of the Tudor era. Pupils are knowledgeable about the court of Henry VIII, and know how his desire for a son made for an inevitable split with the Catholic Church. Pupils continue to learn of their own history, in an examination of Victorian life through the eyes of a child at that time. This perspective is very valuable and contributes to pupils' moral development as it enables them to appreciate the hardships and deprivations of life in the last century. They know about a variety of other past civilisations, such as Greece and Egypt, and know how different everyday life was regarding food, clothing and work.

129 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers present information well and stimulate discussions by asking pertinent questions. For example, in a Year 5 lesson where pupils were asked to identify and prioritise solutions to Henry VIII's problems. Teachers support their lessons with relevant resources, but these are not always detailed or lively enough to interest all the pupils. For instance, in this lesson, the teacher only had a limited supply of textbooks on the Tudor age, and these were of limited quality. As a result, teachers occasionally spend too long presenting information to pupils as a whole class, with the result that the pace of lessons can be quite slow and this lessens their impact. However, teachers do involve pupils well – this was especially effective in one lesson when one pupil was able to play the part of a Victorian farm boy

and field questions from other pupils about his imaginary role.

130 Most pupils have good attitudes and show a positive interest in history. They listen well and willingly take part in class discussions, offering sensible ideas or suggestions. They work effectively in groups, talking over issues thoughtfully when researching details, before putting pen to paper. However, their actual pace of work can be quite slow and they do not always take sufficient care with their presentation. A few pupils actually show little interest in the subject and allow themselves to be easily distracted.

131 The school has chosen to follow the recently published national scheme of work for history, and this ensures that the planned curriculum is broad and balanced. History makes an appropriate contribution to pupils' cultural development, and the school makes good use of the local community as a resource to support this subject.

132 By the end of Year 2, pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected for seven year olds. By the end of Year 6, pupils' attainment is well below the levels expected for 11 year olds.

133 Pupils make unsatisfactory progress through Key Stage 1. They gain some skills in word processing but do not have the confidence to produce accurate written work. For example, they can type simple words using the keyboard and appreciate that keys like the space bar and capital letters have particular uses, but can do little else. Few pupils can print out their work. They have little opportunity to handle data in the form of sorting information and presenting their findings. Pupils can use a paint program to draw simple, colourful pictures, which shows competent mouse control. They are also able to program a floor robot to move in specific and planned ways, but have little experience of using information technology as simulations of real-life activity.

134 Pupils make poor progress in Key Stage 2. They do develop their word processing skills, but not appreciably so. They can type in text and produce short pieces of work, such as poetry, and they can manipulate text to some extent, such as altering the size of the font and changing the colour. However, few understand what a word processor is actually capable of doing, and most pupils are not confident in the full operation of the computer. For example, most of them do not know how to turn the computer on and select a suitable program to start their work. They cannot import information from another program, such as combining text and graphics, and are unable to produce multi-media presentations. Pupils have very little experience of using information technology as a means of research. They can question a simple database to find out facts, but do not have the ability to do so effectively, or to create their own databases. Pupils have limited knowledge of how to use information technology to control equipment, such as light sequences, or to explore patterns of activity through computer simulations. They have an awareness of how electronic sensing devices can measure temperature, for example, but do yet know how to use computers to process this data effectively.

135 The teaching of information technology is not effective. Teachers do produce satisfactory, good and even very good individual lessons but, over time, they do not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to learn or develop their skills appropriately. In the most successful lessons, teachers have very clear learning objectives and give precise instructions to make sure that all pupils understand what is being asked of them. They appreciate the low level of pupils' existing knowledge and skill, and give ample time for the practice of the necessary skills. For example, in a lesson taught by the head teacher where Year 1 pupils were programming of a floor robot – consequently, they made rapid progress. Nevertheless, most teachers lack sufficient knowledge, expertise and confidence with information technology to teach it effectively.

136 Pupils have good attitudes. Their enthusiasm to work at a computer is tempered only by the difficulty of several pupils sharing a machine. They generally show patience and consideration in these situations but there are times when behaviour deteriorates as a direct result of the limited range and quality resources available. Pupils listen well to their teachers and are keen to put theory into practice.

137 The school has a broad and balanced planned curriculum that meets National Curriculum requirements. However, the school is not yet delivering it fully to the pupils. This is due in part to the limitations of staff skills, but also to the shortfall in sufficient software for the computers available. Most of the computers are quite old but can run simple packages. However there are insufficient machines capable of using compact discs to be able to operate more current programs. There is a particular dearth of reference software packages to help with pupils' research and also very little equipment to enable the teaching of controlling, measuring and modelling within information technology. The school is making some progress to improve the situation but this is still too slow. For example, it is only just beginning to deal with the problems of staff skills and, despite channelling some of its own funds in this direction, the range and quality of computers is still limited. The school is moving ahead well by locating its computers in one teaching room, but the organisation of this room is untidy and not conducive to whole class learning – it also present a health and safety hazard with numerous trailing leads.

138 The governors, senior management and staff all acknowledge the shortfalls in the school's information technology provision. This area is identified as a priority in the current school development plan and the school has made rapid progress in the past few months in recognising and improving its shortfalls.

## 2 Music

139 There was insufficient evidence to make judgements about the quality of teaching or pupils' progress in music. Few lessons were seen and there was a limited range of evidence available from other sources.

140 In Key Stage 1, pupils have sufficient opportunities to develop their skills in listening, appraising and performing of music. For example, in a Year 2 lesson, pupils listened to and appraised Vivaldi's concerto for Winter. They explored the pulse of the music and explained in their own words how the music sounded and what it reminded them of. Pupils recognised and named the violins and cellos and understood the meaning of the dynamics and the pitch in this piece of music. They listened to the sounds of different percussion instruments and made good progress in learning the names of some that were new to them, such as a cabasa and a vibro-slap. As a class, they were able (with good support from the teacher) to add instrumental sound effects to a song on The Seasons.

141 Pupils' previous work in Key Stage 2 indicates that they cover a good range of music in their listening and appraising. For instance, they listen to, and comment on, different types of dance music including ballet, Spanish, Chinese, Russian and Arabian dances. They learn to distinguish different moods and tempos in their listening. For example, in a Year 4 lesson, pupils listened to and compared music from different cultures, that of Greece and Africa. They made sound observations on the differences between them and were particularly interested in the blend of voices in the unaccompanied African music. As they move through Key Stage 2, pupils learn some simple notation for the treble clef, but they do not consistently compose their own music.

142 Many pupils in the school are involved in extra-curricular music and some learn the violin. A large number of pupils learn to play the descant recorder in the five separate groups that are taught each week by the co-ordinator and the head teacher. They learn standard notation and quickly develop good intonation and the ability to play together well. Some advanced recorder players are learning to play the treble recorder in preparation for developing a recorder consort.

143 Singing in the school is of a sound standard. Pupils sing well to taped and piano accompaniments. They enjoy singing and often sing unaccompanied, for instance in a "call song" at the beginning of a Country Dancing lesson in physical education and in a two-part round in assembly. The school choir is very well attended by a large number of both boys and girls from both key stages. They learn new music quickly and develop a wide repertoire of songs, hymns and prayers. For example, they learn difficult arrangements of The Lord's Prayer and sustain their interest, practising and striving for accuracy.

144 Pupils have good attitudes. They enjoy their lessons and extra-curricular activities, and take part willingly when singing in larger groups, such as assemblies. They listen well to their teachers and handle their instruments with care. Music plays an important part in the life of the school and contributes well to the pupil's spiritual and cultural development.

145 The school has a structured scheme of work that is underpinned by carefully selected elements from commercial schemes of work. The subject is managed well by a temporary co-ordinator and the head teacher provides strong support for music. Pupils regularly perform by singing and dancing in the community and in nearby prestigious music and dance festivals. An instrumental group from the local music service visits the school and performs regularly for the pupils.

## Physical education

146 Some gymnastics lessons were seen in Key Stage 1 and games skills and dance were seen in Key Stage 2. From the evidence available, pupils make steady progress in their physical development. The school's swimming programme has been interrupted for the present and there is no guarantee when this will resume. However, the majority of pupils could swim 25 metres by the time they left the school last year.

147 In gymnastics, Key Stage 1 pupils know the importance of warming up the body to raise their heartbeat before exercising. In Year 1, pupils can hold a balance in a curled up position, without support, by hugging their knees. They jump from benches and land correctly with their knees bent. In Year 2, pupils have improved their co-ordination and control. They know and explain the different parts of their body for bearing weight and demonstrate this well in their performances. They practise their movement skills to improve and strive to perform a simple sequence of transferring their weight from one body part to another without losing their balance.

148 At the beginning of Key Stage 2 pupils develop their games skills and ball work well. They work safely on their own, in pairs and in larger groups of four. They practise and refine their throwing skills and rocking movements when learning to throw a ball using a chest pass, and catch with improving accuracy and speed as a result of this practice. By the end of the key stage, pupils in Year 6 show a greater awareness of the space available to them and use this well. For example, in a brisk lesson of traditional country dancing, they demonstrated their ability to work as a set to perform a known dance and to learn a new complicated routine quickly. They linked their sequences smoothly and at the same time accompanied some of their dances with singing. Pupils appreciated the need for safe handholds when swinging their partners and sustained their energetic dances well for the length of the lesson.

149 The quality of teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and make effective use of a scheme to support their lessons. They set good examples by dressing appropriately for physical education lessons and set clear expectation of behaviour. Lessons are paced well. Teachers take regular opportunities to use pupils or groups of pupils to demonstrate complicated sequences of work in gymnastics, dance and games skills, for instance when shuttle passing in games and learning the dance, The Virginia Reel. They use praise effectively to celebrate achievement and encourage motivation.

150 Pupils have good attitudes. They clearly enjoy their physical education lessons and are well behaved. They are attentive, follow directions carefully and work hard to improve their skills.

151 The physical education curriculum is well planned – it is broad and balanced. A comprehensive scheme of work provides good support and guidance to teachers to ensure that lessons build on pupils' previous learning. The school benefits from having a physical education specialist who is a qualified gymnastics coach on the staff. She is currently on secondment to the local education authority but maintains close links with the school. There is a wide range of extra-curricular sporting activities, including netball, football, cricket and country dancing. These are popular and well attended by pupils. The school enters many inter-school competitive matches and events in which they are very successful. The school makes good use of its facilities for physical education and is further developing the large field.

## 2 PART C: INSPECTION DATA

### 2 SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

152 Four inspectors visited the school for a total of 14 inspector days. During this time, 60 lessons, one assembly and a number of extra-curricular clubs were observed. Inspectors talked to pupils about their work and listened to a representative sample of pupils read.

153 A selection of pupils' previous work was examined which provided a representative sample from pupils of all ages and prior attainment (including some Year 6 pupils who have now left the school). Displays in classrooms and public areas were examined.

154 The previous inspection report, the school's action plan and a range of documentation relating to the organisation, management and operation of the school was examined. This included school policies, minutes of meetings, the school development plan, teachers' planning, records of pupils' attainment and progress, and samples of annual reports to parents. Documents and records relating to pupils with special educational needs were also examined.

155 Interviews and discussions were held with teachers, non-teaching staff, lunch-time supervisors, the school secretary, the caretaker, a number of governors (including the chair of the governing body), a number of parents and other visitors to the school. The views of parents were sought at a meeting prior to the inspection and through the completion of a questionnaire that was sent to all parents.

### 2 DATA AND INDICATORS

#### 2 156 Pupil data

	Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent)	Number of pupils with statements of SEN	Number of pupils on school's register of SEN	Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals
YR – Y6	193	3	39	26
Nursery class	17.5	1	1	0

#### 2 157 Teachers and classes

##### 2 Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	8.3
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	23.3

##### 2 Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff:	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	36.5

##### 2 Qualified teachers (Nursery class)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent):	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher:	17.5

##### 2 Education support staff (Nursery class)

Total number of education support staff:	2
Total aggregate hours worked each week:	38.0

Average class size:	27.6
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**158 Financial data**

Financial year:	1998 - 1999
	£
Total Income	298,170
Total Expenditure	291,369
Expenditure per pupil	1,502
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,262
Balance carried forward to next year	29,063

**159 PARENTAL SURVEY**

Number of questionnaires sent out:	165
Number of questionnaires returned:	61

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither	Disagree	Strongly disagree
I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school	35	53	5	5	2
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	25	48	15	8	3
The school handles complaints from parents well	15	48	26	9	2
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	20	55	15	10	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	28	58	4	10	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	36	62	2	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	34	54	8	2	2
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	29	56	8	7	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	42	49	7	2	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	51	40	7	2	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	49	47	2	0	2