

INSPECTION REPORT

DAME DOROTHY PRIMARY SCHOOL

Dock Street, Sunderland

LEA area: Sunderland

Unique reference number: 108776

Headteacher: Diane Gale

Reporting inspector: Jean Morley
25470

Dates of inspection: 11th-14th February 2002

Inspection number: 186297

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and junior

School category: Community

Age range of pupils: 3-11 years

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Dock Street
Sunderland

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Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs. S. Mudd

Date of previous inspection: December 1995

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members			Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
25740	Jean Morley	Registered inspector	English; Design and technology.	What sort of school is it? How high are standards: results and achievements? How well are pupils taught? How well is the school led and managed? What could the school do to improve further?
9388	Tony Mundy	Lay inspector		How high are standards: pupils' attitudes, values and personal development? How well does the school care for its pupils? How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
27477	Jo Mitchell	Team inspector	Mathematics; Information technology; Art; Geography; History.	How good are curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
26292	Helen Mundy	Team inspector	Science; Music; Physical education; Religious education; Provision in the Foundation stage; Equal opportunities; Special educational needs; English as an additional language.	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

With 168 pupils, Dame Dorothy is a smaller than average primary school. It caters for pupils aged from three to eleven. Numbers have dropped recently due to housing regeneration in the area close to the school. At 29 per cent, the proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals is above the national average. So too is the proportion for whom English is an additional language, although no pupil is at an early stage of learning it. The special educational needs percentage is close to the national average. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. Staff turnover has been significant. From a full time staff of eight, eight teachers have left the school and six have joined during the past two years. All but one are new to the school since the last inspection. Four are currently on short-term contracts. The headteacher is newly appointed and took up the post, her first headship, four weeks prior to this inspection. The school is without a deputy headteacher, and has been so since September 2001, despite attempts to make an appointment. The governors are hoping to appoint successfully ready for the summer term. Hence, very little is left that represents the school's performance in the past, even the recent past. In many respects this is a school about to make a 'fresh start' with its *new* headteacher and staff.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

The school provides a satisfactory quality of education overall although, there are several areas that need improvement. The standards pupils achieve at age 11 are below national expectations in key areas of the curriculum, largely, although not wholly, because the more able pupils are not achieving as well as they should. This has been the situation for several years. While, from a below average start, these overall standards represent sound progress through the school, standards could and should be higher. The standards achieved by pupils aged seven are sound overall although, here also, too few achieve the higher level. There are areas in the school where teaching is weak and other areas where it is strong. Overall however, it is satisfactory. Given these features, the school currently offers sound value for money.

While any judgement on the leadership and management of the headteacher must, just four weeks into her tenure, be tentative, the action already planned by her is encouraging and there is every reason to believe that it will spark an improvement in the quality of education on offer. The strength of team spirit in the school now bodes well for the future: together, all staff are ready to address the legacy of the aspects needing improvement.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- The headteacher has made a good start to leading and managing this school. She has a clear vision for its future development, combined with realistic and practical ideas for working towards it.
- There is some good quality teaching in the school, particularly for pupils aged five-seven and nine-ten.
- There is evidence of a strong team spirit amongst all adults in the school. They are committed to working with the headteacher to raise standards.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- Standards for pupils aged eleven – particularly in English, mathematics and science.
- The ethos of the school and the way that pupils are helped to become mature and responsible.
- The quality of some teaching.
- The use that the school makes of its assessment data.
- The curriculum for children in the nursery and reception classes.
- The co-ordination of special educational needs (SEN).

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school was last inspected in December 1995. Since that time there has been no overall improvement in the results that pupils have achieved in national tests. Standards in information and communication technology (ICT) have improved and now meet expectations. Standards in religious education are unsatisfactory for pupils aged eleven: in 1995 they were judged to be sound. The quality of teaching was satisfactory in 1995: the same is still true. Behaviour was judged good and, while it still has many good features, there are some specific areas needing attention. Provision for pupils' personal development was strong but some rebuilding is now necessary, not surprising with such staff turbulence. While the school has successfully dealt with most of the elements of its three key issues from 1995, some still remain. These relate to assessing pupils' progress and to providing appropriate challenge to the most able pupils. Overall this represents unsatisfactory progress. However, as most of the staff from the intervening years are no longer at the school, and as many of those who *are* have the skill to work together to deal with the most pressing issues facing it, then, under the leadership of the new headteacher, the potential for improvement appears good.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by pupils at the end of Year 6 based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1999	2000	2001	2001
English	D	D	C	A
mathematics	C	D	D	C
science	C	C	D	C

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

The table above shows that, over the last three years, the school's Year 6 test results have been average or below average when compared with all schools nationally. A similar school comparison is more favourable, showing that results have all been average or above. Over time it has been a fairly consistent feature that, while a broadly average proportion of pupils attain the level expected, Level 4, a much lower than average proportion achieve the higher level, Level 5.

Test results for pupils aged seven have been less favourable: predominantly well below national standards, and below the performance of similar schools. Again, however, it has often been the case that the proportion of pupils who achieved the level expected of them, Level 2, was close to the national average. The low overall results reflect a dearth in the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level, Level 3. Standards at age five also fall well short of those expected.

With changes in teachers, the picture on standards has changed too. Current standards in Year 2 are satisfactory, while those in Year 6 are below average. However, there is one constant feature: the more able pupils in the school should be doing better.

Given the below average attainment of the pupils on entry, the school sets challenging targets. Nevertheless, as there has been little change in the school's test results from 1997 to 2001, its trend is below the national one.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Most pupils are willing to learn and, when their teachers make lessons interesting, are attentive.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	In classrooms, pupils behave well for most of the time. This is not always the case when they are asked to work independently of their teacher because many of them lack the self-discipline and maturity that this requires. In the playground, at lunch and in assembly, behaviour is good.
Personal development and relationships	Relationships between pupils are good. Between teachers and pupils they vary from those who are really delightful to those who are passive and demonstrate little genuine warmth.
Attendance	Attendance is close to the national average and the school works hard to keep it that way.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils in:	Nursery and Reception	Years 1 – 2	Years 3 – 6
Quality of teaching	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory

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

The quality of teaching in English and mathematics is satisfactory. Numeracy skills are taught adequately and developed soundly in mathematics lessons and in other subjects. Literacy skills are taught adequately, and often well, in literacy lessons. However, pupils have too little opportunity to practise and consolidate these skills in other areas of the curriculum. The quality of teaching varies from class to class. It is weakest in the reception class and in Years 4 and 6 where it is sound overall but sometimes unsatisfactory, and strongest in Years 1, 2 and 5 where it is good overall.

Classes are small and, on the whole, teachers make adequate provision for pupils with SEN and for those for whom English is an additional language. More able pupils are less well catered for.

Pupils make sound progress through the school as a whole but this is erratic, reflecting the quality of the teaching they receive. Their progress would also be enhanced if they were taught the self-discipline to work as hard when their teacher is working with other pupils as they do when being taught directly by her. This, however, is a much more significant issue for those who teach pupils in Years 3 to 6 than it is for the teachers of younger pupils.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum is satisfactory for most pupils. For the younger nursery children and for the reception class it is unsatisfactory because the staff has not, as yet, been provided with the training they need to implement the new Foundation Stage curriculum successfully.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	While this is satisfactory overall, there are occasions when all pupils in the class are expected to do work of the same level of difficulty.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	Provision is good and these pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Too little attention is paid to pupils' personal development, particularly the spiritual and social aspects. This has a negative impact on their levels of maturity and on the extent to which they develop as responsible young citizens. Provision for moral and cultural development is satisfactory.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides an adequate level of care overall. However, the child protection policy is out of date.

The headteacher is working hard to meet and work with parents. She is acutely aware of the value to children of a close working relationship between school and home and is doing all she can to promote it. There is good information for parents including ready access to detailed information of the work being covered in each classroom.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	In her brief time in post, the headteacher has successfully brought the staff together as a team. She is aware that there is much to be done and has a realistic view of how this might be achieved.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	As is the case with the teaching staff, many of the governors are newly appointed. They are keen to work hard for the school, and several bring particular expertise to their post. At the moment they are not fully aware of the areas in which the school has weaknesses.
The school's evaluation of its performance	The headteacher has a realistic view of the schools' current performance.
The strategic use of resources	Funding has been used to keep class sizes small, and limited to single age ranges. In most cases this has been money well spent, and prudent spending is an ongoing consideration. The school is adequately resourced.

Most staff have the expertise to teach well. Resources are adequate overall. For nursery and reception age children they are good. For pupils with SEN, however, they are scattered around the school and need returning to a central access point. The accommodation is spacious, bright and well maintained. For nursery and reception children it is very good, particularly the outdoor area.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<p>90+ per cent of parents feel:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their child likes school and makes good progress; • teaching is good; • their child is expected to do their best; • the school is well led and managed; • the school helps their child to become mature and responsible. 	<p>10 – 20 per cent of parents would like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improved behaviour; • an adjustment in the amount of homework; • more information about how their child is getting on; • a closer working partnership with school; • more out of school activities.

Inspectors agree with some of the views of parents. However, the school needs to do significantly more to help pupils become mature and responsible and to enable them all to make good progress. The quality of teaching is variable, but satisfactory overall. There is an adequate number of out-of-school activities. Some aspects of pupils' behaviour could be improved. Parents could be kept better informed about how their child is getting on, in the end of year report, for example. However, inspectors are impressed with the efforts of the newly appointed headteacher in this respect and encourage parents to take up her offer of an informal talk if they have any comments or concerns.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and pupils' achievements

1. For the past several years the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 2 have fluctuated between being close to, or below, national averages. In broad terms, the proportion of pupils that achieved the level expected, Level 4, has been consistently close to the national average. The weaker element has always been the proportion of pupils achieving the higher level, Level 5. Over the same period the standards achieved at the end of Key Stage 1 have fluctuated between being close to, and well below national averages, but predominantly the latter. Again, it has often been the case that a pleasing proportion of pupils has achieved the level expected, Level 2, but that the more able pupils have failed to reach Level 3. In the five years since 1997, for example, no pupil has achieved Level 3 in writing. The school is aware that addressing the unsatisfactory achievement of the most able pupils in all year groups is a **key issue**.
2. Attainment on entry to the school is below average. By the end of the Foundation Stage it remains that way in all areas except in children's personal, social and emotional development, where it meets expectations. Too few children achieve the learning goals in each of the other five areas of the Foundation Stage curriculum. This is the combined result of some staff turbulence; and lack of knowledge about, and understanding of, the curriculum appropriate for children aged three to five.
3. In terms of national test results, there has been no overall improvement in standards at either key stage over the five-year period 1997 to 2001 inclusive. However, this has been an unsettled time for the school. There is every reason to believe that, with a new headteacher, the imminent appointment of a new deputy headteacher and the opportunity to review staffing deployment, that there will follow a period of significantly greater stability. The current Year 2 is already showing an improvement in standards, the result of consistently good teaching through the key stage. Standards at the end of Key Stage 2 are below average at the moment but there is already the potential amongst current school staff to make improvements here.
4. The school sets targets for pupils at the end of Year 6 that come close to national expectations for the proportion of pupils achieving Level 4 in English and mathematics. It seldom falls far short of these but, too infrequently, enables the more able pupils to achieve well.
5. Pupils with SEN receive adequate support in small classes and, along with pupils of average ability, make sound progress. The achievement of pupils with English as an additional language is good, as is their overall progress. These pupils contributed fully in all lessons seen during the inspection. For example, in a Year 2 dance lesson, they followed instructions by carefully listening to the teacher, and copying both her movements and those of other pupils.
6. In comparison with similar schools, the performance of this school is more favourable. In 2001, for example, attainment in Key Stage 2 was well above that of similar schools in English and close to that of similar schools in mathematics and science. In Key Stage 1 it was well below that of similar schools in reading, below in writing and above in mathematics.
7. Inspection findings show a change in attainment since that indicated by national test results in 2001. Standards in English, mathematics and science meet national standards at

the end of Key Stage 1. This is a significant improvement and is attributable to the good quality teaching in this key stage. Standards in the same three subjects are below average at the end of Key Stage 2. In most other subjects pupils aged seven and eleven achieve standards that are similar to those expected of pupils of this age. The exception is religious education where attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 is unsatisfactory.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

8. Behaviour and attitudes were good or better in 54 per cent of the lessons seen and less than satisfactory in 11 per cent. Pupils' behaviour in and out of classrooms, and their attitudes to work are both satisfactory overall. Of the parents who returned the pre-inspection questionnaire, 96 per cent confirmed that their children like school. Inspection evidence, including many conversations with pupils, endorses the parents' view.

9. Children in the nursery learn positive attitudes by observing the very good relationships between their parents, carers and teachers. They enjoy meeting other children and are confident and secure in nursery routines. The children are polite and well behaved and relate well to adults, but do not always listen to them attentively.

10. Other pupils come to school enthusiastically. In most lessons they listen attentively when receiving the direct attention of their teachers, but are easily distracted when working unsupervised. In some classes, responses to questions are subdued because teachers have not developed pupils' listening and speaking skills. However, in Years 1, 2 and 5, where teaching is often good, pupils answer enthusiastically and enjoy demonstrating their knowledge. Their application to learning contributes to their good progress by allowing lessons to continue without frequent pauses or distractions. In most classes, pupils work well in pairs during mathematics lessons, where they readily exchange ideas and often make good use of time. Excellent attitudes were seen in a good Year 1 physical education lesson, where all pupils developed their ball skills by listening carefully to instructions, co-operating in pairs and groups, and meticulously following the rules of the games. Attitudes in extra-curricular activities are good and the school's sports clubs are well supported.

11. During the inspection, in the small number of lessons where attitudes were unsatisfactory, pupils were restless and had poor listening skills. For example, in a satisfactory Year 3 mathematics lesson, pupils failed to concentrate during a whole-class mental maths session and were often unable to respond because they had not listened to the teacher's question. They were slow to begin the subsequent group activities, and gossiped without restraint throughout.

12. Behaviour is satisfactory overall, although classroom behaviour is often immature. As rules for behaviour are not displayed in classrooms, teachers do not have points of reference to supplement behaviour management skills that are sometimes inadequate. Many lessons are disrupted when pupils change activities or are required to work independently while the teacher is involved with a specific group. At these times, pupils gossip, move about the classroom and sometimes unnecessarily interrupt the teacher. For example, in an unsatisfactory religious education lesson in Year 6, pupils noisily disputed ownership of apparently identical white boards and marking pens within easy reach on their tables. Similarly, although pupils in Years 3, 4 and 5 are often restrained and considerate during lessons, their behaviour is sometimes foolish. Behaviour in Years 1 and 2 is generally more consistent, and is often very good. The table below shows the differing

quality of pupils' attitude and behaviour across the three key stages and in all lessons seen, and can leave the school in no doubt as to the area where action is most needed. **This is a key issue for the school to address.** Behaviour is good in the open areas of the school building and in the playgrounds, and is often very good at lunchtimes in the dining hall.

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Foundation Stage	*	**	****	*			
Key Stage 1	***	*****	****				
Key Stage 2		*	***	***** *****	****	*	

* = 1 lesson

13. The behaviour and attitudes that pupils display are, to some degree, a reflection of the provision that the school makes for pupils personal development, including their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development. This is dealt with in paragraphs 34 to 36. Their spiritual and social development is unsatisfactory, although they have some understanding of religions and religious practices. Pupils' knowledge of Christianity is poor in Years 5 and 6, and their participation in assemblies is apathetic. When teaching is good, they are lively and interested in practical music lessons. Socially, although pupils can work well in pairs or groups, group behaviour sometimes deteriorates rapidly. They often resort to silly behaviour and, from Year 3 onwards there is a steady decline in the level of maturity they show. They are immature in their understanding of the concept of self-discipline. They are not able to show acceptable levels of responsibility because they have not been given sufficient opportunity to do so beyond routine or mundane tasks.

14. Pupils' moral and cultural development is satisfactory. Although pupils' ability to discriminate between right and wrong is not always evident from their behaviour in lessons, they do understand that actions have consequences. Pupils take some pride in their school, appreciating the displays of a cultural nature and talking animatedly about their contribution to them. Their recreation of Sol Le Witt's style in his painting 'Bands of Equal Colour and Width' is a good example. Many pupils are interested in sport, and particularly in football and swimming.

15. Attendance is satisfactory, and has improved significantly since the previous inspection. Regular attendance has a positive effect upon pupils' attainment and progress in all year groups. Most pupils arrive in good time for morning school, but a small number of families do not fulfil the legal requirement of ensuring their children's regular and punctual attendance. Late arrival in class causes stress to these pupils, who miss important instructions at the start of the school day.

16. Class registers are completed neatly, and now conform to legal requirements. Registration periods are efficient, and lessons begin promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS OR STUDENTS TAUGHT?

17. The quality of teaching in the school at the moment is satisfactory overall but with significant variation between year groups. The best teaching is consistently good and can be found in Years 1, 2 and (on most occasions) in Year 5. All staff producing work of this quality have permanent contracts in school. The weakest teaching hovers between being

satisfactory and unsatisfactory and is found in the Reception Year and in Years 4 and 6. The overall breakdown of teaching quality appears in the table below. However, as this conceals significant differences, the second of the two tables shows teaching quality in each of the three key stages separately.

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
1 lesson	3 lessons	13 lessons	23 lessons	5 lessons	1 lesson	
2%	7%	28%	50%	11%	2%	

	Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
Foundation Stage			*	*****	**		
Key Stage 1	*	**	*****	****			
Key Stage 2		*	****	***** *****	***	*	

* = 1 lesson

18. There are **three key weaknesses** and these require the most urgent attention. It will be clear, given the detail in the table above, that these weaknesses apply in varying degrees throughout the school, in fact, to a very minimal extent in some lessons. Nevertheless, they still require whole school recognition, commitment and action. As an element of dealing with these weaknesses it is important that teachers are helped to a greater understanding of what constitutes teaching of good or better quality. Not only will this help them in their own day-to-day practice, but it will also assist them in becoming more effective co-ordinators, as they shepherd improving standards in the subjects for which they have a specific responsibility.

19. **The first weakness** relates to the challenge offered to, and the expectation of, the most able pupils in the school. As was noted in the standards section of this report, very few pupils have been achieving Level 3 in national tests at Key Stage 1, or Level 5 at Key Stage 2. Furthermore, inspectors noticed that the difference in attainment between the most and the least able pupils was smaller in this school than in many schools. While, during the inspection, the work set did challenge the most able pupils, their workbooks showed that, for the rest of the year, this was not always the case. Challenging the most able has not been the focus of the school's work and this imbalance needs redressing. The school has, however, made satisfactory provision for average and below average attainers.

20. **The second** relates to expectations of pupils' behaviour and work-rate in lessons. The younger pupils in the school behave much better than do their older peers. The table below shows pupils' *attitudes to work and quality of behaviour* in the lessons seen. This has much to do with the underdeveloped ethos of the school, the lack of a real work ethic and the slow rate at which pupils are helped to mature. When, in lessons, Key Stage 2 pupils are under the direct eye of their teacher – in a whole class session, for example – then they generally behave well, listen attentively and try hard to contribute. When they then separate into groups to begin independent work, they lack both the self-discipline and the maturity to enable them to behave well. As they change from one activity to another they often do so noisily and waste time. When asked to work by themselves they are slow to settle and there is constant chatter, too often of the kind that is unnecessary for the task set or unrelated to it. On too many occasions the amount of work produced is minimal. This was the case, for example, in most literacy and numeracy sessions in Key Stage 2. Again, this requires a

whole-school rethink and a concerted effort. Expectations of behaviour and work-rate need to be significantly raised, particularly in Key Stage 2. This should be a key consideration when staff are looking anew at the school ethos and pupils' personal development.

	Good or better	Satisfactory	Less than satisfactory
Foundation Stage	88%	12%	
Key Stage 1	93%	7%	
Key Stage 2	17%	61%	22%

21. **The third** weakness relates to marking, a weak element in the work of most teachers. It seldom sets targets and never gives pupils a time scale in which to work towards them. Where targets are set, checks as to whether or not they have been reached are not made: little encouragement to pupils to try to achieve what is asked of them.

22. Where teaching is good or better it is because teachers show their enthusiasm for the lesson and pupils reciprocate. Relationships are warm. Teachers explain clearly to pupils what it is they are to learn and they use an end-of-lesson session to judge for themselves how well this has been achieved. This valuable information is then used to adjust what is taught in future lessons. Practice of this kind was evident in most lessons in Years 1 and 2.

23. Where teachers' work is barely satisfactory or less than satisfactory it is not the whole class teaching that is at fault. They are generally clear about what they want pupils to learn and they explain new concepts well. The deterioration begins when pupils are required to work without supervision. At this point the weaker teachers do not manage pupils well. While, to some extent, this is a reflection of their own competence, it is important to retain a balanced perspective and to recognise that much whole-school work is necessary to underpin higher expectations.

24. Numeracy skills are taught and developed satisfactorily, although the cumulative effect of this will take a while to work through the school and manifest itself in better standards at the end of Key Stage 2. Literacy skills, on the other hand, are not developed well enough. This issue is explored in full in the English section of the report but, briefly, at the moment there are too few opportunities for pupils to write. There is work to be done on using the whole curriculum as a vehicle for this to happen.

25. There are relatively few support staff working in the school. Those that are employed work well and make a positive contribution to the pace at which pupils learn, particularly those pupils with SEN. For most of the time, however, class teachers teach all the pupils in their class. The budget has been deliberately used to retain single age classes that are relatively small: 17; 17; 25; 21; 17; 26 and 25 for the reception class to Year 6 respectively. This is a satisfactory response.

26. Teaching is satisfactory overall for pupils with English as an additional language. Teachers ensure their participation in all lessons, and they receive good support during literacy sessions. The local education authority provides additional support for 13 pupils for a-day-and-a-half each week, and provides interpreters when pupils with English as an additional language also have SEN. In addition the school funds a further four hours of non-teaching support time.

27. The quality of teaching for pupils with SEN is satisfactory overall, but sometimes unsatisfactory in the reception class, where work for them is not well matched to their ability to do it. As most classes have small numbers of pupils on roll, withdrawal of pupils with SEN is unnecessary. In some lessons, pupils are supported by voluntary helpers. Some class

teachers do not modify those targets on pupils' individual education plans that have proved to be too difficult. For example, in the Year 4 class, the teacher assessed a pupil's progress at the end of the autumn term, found it to be unsatisfactory, and re-wrote the same, unamended target.

28. Teaching in the Foundation Stage is satisfactory overall, but is better in the nursery than in the reception class. The teaching of personal, social and emotional development is good overall. Teachers' behaviour management is good and nursery staff have satisfactory knowledge of the development of young children. Application and interpretation of the Early Learning Goals is unsatisfactory. Staff have not recently been trained, and are unaware of current good practice. **Dealing with this shortfall is a key issue.** Nevertheless, staff are keen to learn. They enjoy teaching, and are receptive to fresh ideas. While overall planning is satisfactory, it is not always interpreted well in reception class teaching. Foundation Stage staff have high expectations of children's behaviour, but their expectations of work are unsatisfactory, particularly in literacy and numeracy. The provision of homework is unsatisfactory. Currently, nursery children do not take home books or learning games. The books available for reception class homework are unsatisfactory.

29. Not surprisingly, there is a close match between the quality of teaching and the extent to which pupils learn. Learning is most effective in Key Stage 1. It varies significantly in Key Stage 2 but, generally, is less effective. The work ethic in Years 3-6 is not good enough. While pupils make satisfactory progress overall, there is much to do. The headteacher is keen to work closely with her staff to move the school forward. Such a team effort, based on unity of purpose, should reap rewards.

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

30. The school offers a curriculum for all pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2, including those with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language, that is broad and balanced and meets the statutory requirements. The curriculum for children in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory. While children in the nursery work within a curriculum that provides them with a wide range of experiences that match the needs of very young children, when they move into the reception class the structure of their day is too formal. The school has policies covering all areas of the curriculum but most are undated, and all require review so that they can be up dated if necessary. Since the last inspection, the curriculum for ICT has improved because of an improvement in equipment, staff training and expertise.

31. Although the literacy strategy has been introduced into the school it is not having sufficient impact on raising standards in English. There is a particular weakness in using literacy skills across the curriculum, especially through longer pieces of writing. The National Numeracy Strategy has been satisfactorily introduced and the structure of lessons is beginning to have a positive impact on standards in Key Stage 1. No improvement has yet been seen in Key Stage 2. However, across both key stages, the short mental arithmetic session is underdeveloped.

32. The school makes satisfactory provision for extra-curricular activities. As an addition to the primary National Curriculum, Year 5 pupils benefit from a weekly French lesson. This is enjoyed by pupils and provides them with valuable experience of another language. The swimming club is open to pupils in Years 4 to 6, including those who, when they join, cannot swim. The success of the club is demonstrated by their participation in local galas, where they have excelled. The gymnastics and

aerobics club is popular and the schools links with Sunderland Football Club means that it has access to the facilities at the 'Stadium of Light' as well as coaching in school. There are activities for pupils in Key Stage 1 as well as Key Stage 2. A good range of outside visits enhances the curriculum, from walks round the local one-way traffic system to residential visits for the older pupils in Key Stage 2.

33. Sound links with the secondary school are established and include music. Pupils from the secondary school come to play at assemblies. Links with the local church are strong and the school plans to use the church for Easter celebrations. Those with the National Glass Centre also provide valuable opportunities for visits to support the curriculum.

34. Due to the period of turbulence experienced by the school, the very good ethos that existed at the time of the last inspection and supported pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development has been lost. **The school is aware of this key issue**, particularly with reference to the spiritual and social aspects of pupils' personal development, for which provision is currently unsatisfactory.

- It recognises, as a priority, the need to re-establish an environment that provides for pupils' spiritual development, especially in terms of appreciation and respect for human life and things of beauty.
- Although pupils are given some responsibility in classrooms in terms of routine jobs, there is a lack of consistent practice for increasing pupils' responsibility as they move through the school. Therefore, the provision for their social development is insufficient.

35. The school provides satisfactorily for pupils' moral and cultural development. Pupils know the difference between right and wrong and understand what standard of behaviour is required within school. The curriculum offers good opportunities for the development of pupils' understanding of their own culture but there are fewer opportunities for appreciation of other cultures. However, incidental opportunities are used well, for example when a Year 6 pupil brought in a mask that had been worn as part of Chinese New Year celebrations.

36. The school has no comprehensive scheme for personal, social and health education and **this is a key issue**. At present this section of the curriculum is not timetabled, therefore it is left up to individual members of staff to deliver this important area without the support of a programme of work that meets the needs of this school community.

37. Pupils with SEN have full access to the curriculum, and they make satisfactory progress. Their needs and targets are clearly identified in individual education plans, but work provided for them is often the same as is provided for all other pupils, including higher attainers. Although targets are not generally written in workbooks, many pupils remember them. Some pupils with SEN receive regular literacy support. This tuition is particularly beneficial. No pupil currently has a statement for SEN, but two statements are awaited.

38. A satisfactory policy for the teaching of sex education has been approved and this is taught through the science curriculum. The school takes part in schemes, run by outside agencies including the police, which tackle the issue of drug awareness. This includes an outside visit based on dramatic presentations and shared by pupils from other schools.

39. Children attending morning nursery receive satisfactory education. Children attending afternoon nursery share their classroom with reception children for 40 per cent of each session. Nursery children are disadvantaged because reception children tend to dominate activities, and the nursery nurse is unable to monitor progress. Reception children are disadvantaged because, during the combined afternoon sessions, activities provided for them are the same as for the nursery children, who are much younger.

40. The reception class curriculum is unsatisfactory during the morning session and the first part of the afternoon session because it is too formal for young children. It is unsatisfactory in the second part of the afternoon session because the Early Learning Goals of nursery activities are not adapted or extended for reception class children. The nursery curriculum is satisfactory for older children attending in the morning but less so for younger children attending in the afternoon.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

41. The safe and caring environment maintained since the previous inspection has a positive effect on the standards pupils achieve. Satisfactory procedures are established for both child protection and ensuring pupils' welfare. The headteacher is the responsible officer. The policy for child protection requires some updating.

42. The school has adopted the local authority's health and safety policy, including procedures for ensuring the safety of pupils on site and during out of school visits. Good health and safety practice is supplemented by risk assessments for the site and for specific activities. Several members of staff are qualified in first aid, and all staff are sensitive to the needs of pupils. Frequent fire alarm practices ensure that the single-storey building can be quickly evacuated. The school site and buildings present no apparent risks to health and safety.

43. Teachers and other adults know the pupils well, and are skilled in assessing their needs. Good supervision ensures pupils' safety in the playgrounds at break times and lunchtimes. Midday assistants are conscientious and attentive, and they take a close interest in pupils' activities. Pupils receive good individual care and support from class teachers, and from the headteacher, who is accessible and reassuring. Learning support assistants develop good relationships with pupils, and are skilled in curriculum and personal support. Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are good. Cumulative written records provide good information for teachers in each year group as pupils move through the school.

44. A good induction system helps children to settle quickly into the Foundation Stage. Pupils joining other year groups have few difficulties in adapting to the school's routines. Good procedures in Year 6 prepare pupils for transfer to secondary education.

45. The policy for behaviour is satisfactory, but does not include brief rules suitable for display in classrooms, to be learned by pupils and applied consistently by all staff. However, pupils are frequently reminded verbally to listen to their teachers and to be kind and considerate to each other. The school has a satisfactory, brief, anti-bullying policy. The policy is not displayed, but parents and pupils have few concerns about bullying. They know that reported incidents are promptly addressed by discussion and reconciliation. Staff and governors have not yet agreed a policy on the use of force by staff, or on procedures for noting incidents of restraint of pupils.

46. The school's informal merit system acknowledges pupils' good behaviour, good work and effort. The headteacher encourages teachers to award a variety of stickers for achievement and effort. Sustained good work and personal qualities are rewarded with merit certificates, presented at weekly achievement assemblies, and laudatory telephone calls to parents.

47. Procedures for monitoring and promoting attendance are good, and contribute to improving levels of attendance in each year group. To maintain current trends, the procedures require greater rigour in contacting families over unexplained absence, although a small number of families are antagonistic to the reasonable enquiries of either the school or the educational welfare officer.

48. Procedures for assessment are unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage overall: in particular, assessment is unsatisfactory for children attending afternoon nursery because the nursery nurse has insufficient time to assess their needs. The previous class teacher mislaid the limited, cumulative records for reception children. The recently appointed reception class teacher has started an informal assessment procedure.

49. In Key Stages 1 and 2, the arrangements to assess and monitor pupils' academic progress in English and mathematics are satisfactory. However, although the school analyses pupils' national test results, this is not carried out in sufficient depth to supply information that can then be used effectively to influence future planning. End-of-unit class records are kept but these are little more than tick lists of what has been taught. They are not effective as a tool to be used to help future planning and teaching to raise standards. The school has therefore made no progress in either its methods of assessment or the use of assessment data since the last inspection. The headteacher is aware that there is much to do and that **this is a key issue**.

50. Assessment procedures are satisfactory for pupils with English as an additional language. A teacher from the learning support service of the local education authority, who works part-time in the school, assesses pupils regularly, and plans their lessons in collaboration with class teachers and the non-teaching assistant.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

51. Parents make a satisfactory contribution to their children's learning, and they have favourable views of the school. At the pre-inspection meeting, parents' views were positive, and were confirmed by most responses to the pre-inspection questionnaire. However, between 10 and 20 per cent of parents responding to the questionnaire indicated concern about behaviour, homework and communication. The inspectors looked closely at these areas, and concluded that provision in each was satisfactory.

52. The school has satisfactory links with parents. The staff accompanies the children to the playgrounds each day after school, and the inspection confirms good relationships with parents, and good two-way communication. Some parents and friends provide regular, valuable help in lessons to groups of pupils and to individuals. Parent governors and the headteacher propose to reactivate the parents and friends association which has, in previous years, organised regular events and contributed significantly to the school's budget.

53. The quality of information for parents is satisfactory. Teachers' plans for each term are prominently displayed, and regular newsletters are informative about school events and important dates. At three consultation evenings each year, parents are clearly informed of their children's progress. Annual written reports to parents are of satisfactory quality, showing in some detail what children know and can do in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science, but rarely setting targets or suggesting how attainment may be improved. The current report format provides inadequate space for teachers to write fully about foundation subjects. The school prospectus and the most recent governors' annual report conform to legal requirements.

54. Parents are well informed of the school's routines and expectations when their children enter the Foundation Stage, or join other year groups. Parents of pupils with SEN are satisfactorily informed of progress. Pending the appointment of a co-ordinator for SEN, class teachers maintain satisfactory records of pupils' attainment and progress.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

55. Judgements on the leadership and management of the headteacher and key staff are necessarily tentative and brief. There is no deputy headteacher at the moment. The headteacher has been in post for just four weeks. However, she has already made good progress in establishing a team spirit amongst all who work in the school. She is aware of some of the school's weaknesses, for example, the dearth of pupils attaining higher levels in national tests, and has embarked on other data analysis. These are promising features of leadership. She has expressed a determination to work closely with parents and has ensured already that they know they have easy access to speak with her. She has been eager to use the process of inspection to add to her knowledge and keen to engage in professional dialogue with inspectors. In these discussions she has been able to suggest practical action that stands a good chance of successfully addressing some of the key issues facing the school. These are positive features of management.

56. With a very 'new' staff, wholly new leadership and a predominance of newly appointed governors, the school is aware of the need to restate its aims and values and to build from there. Inspection evidence suggests that all involved are ready to do so. There is a commitment to succeed and sufficient expertise to make swift improvement possible. The headteacher, rightly, is keen to include in these discussions all adults linked with the school. At the moment the school lacks an identity of its own and determining what this is to be - and, more importantly, how to bring it about - needs to be the focus of early discussion.

57. It is unrealistic, of course, to expect the headteacher to have dealt with any of the legacy of key issues at this early stage in her tenure. Perhaps the most pressing is Foundation Stage provision, because there is inadequate focus on the Foundation Stage as an area of equal status with Key Stages 1 and 2. The reception class is misguidedly associated with Key Stage 1, rather than with the nursery. The school does not have a Foundation Stage co-ordinator, and many of the deficiencies reported in the Foundation Stage section are attributable to an absence of management overview. The headteacher is aware of the urgent need for an experienced co-ordinator.

58. The school makes good strategic use of its resources, including specific grants and other funding. Short-term financial planning is satisfactory, but the school improvement plan is inadequately detailed, and longer-term developments are not fully costed. Best value principles are applied to the purchases of goods and services.

59. Initial budgeting is the responsibility of the headteacher. The governors' finance committee has a satisfactory overview of the process. Other governors are adequately informed about the budgeting process and the effects of spending decisions, and are provided with budget updates.

60. The school's current year under spend of 6.4 per cent is slightly above the recommendation of the audit commission. It was deliberate, however: spending has been prudently restrained during a period of many changes to staff and governing body.

61. Administrative routines are good, and the school office functions smoothly. The administrator is a welcoming 'first voice' to those who telephone the school and an equally welcoming 'first face' to those who visit. She ensures that financial information is available to the headteacher and to governors. A good system is established for checking and collating purchases, and paying creditors. An audit in 2001 by the local education authority required a number of improvements to financial procedures. The headteacher confirms that these have been implemented. The audit indicates the proper expenditure of all funds allocated to the school, including those for pupils with SEN. The core curriculum is adequately funded, and the school makes good use of new technology.

62. The school's subject leaders are allocated non-class based time to monitor teaching and learning. However, they are largely untrained in these functions, and their use of time is not efficient. Their reports from watching their colleagues at work lack rigour as tools for improving the quality of teaching. The training to which reference was made in paragraph 18 will be a key feature in ensuring that, in future, the work of subject leaders has a positive effect on the quality of subject teaching and on the standards pupils achieve throughout the school. At the moment it has little or no effect.

63. The new headteacher is aware that the school is seriously disadvantaged by the absence of a co-ordinator for SEN. No structured support is available for class teachers. This needs remedying, particularly as so much of the direct teaching is done by the class teachers themselves. While, as has been stated earlier, SEN provision is currently satisfactory, there are several areas that a co-ordinator will need to work on. Earlier identification of children will nip some difficulties in the bud. The inadequate use of assessment data, referred to in paragraph 48, applies to all pupils but, for pupils with SEN, it may be necessary to consider more regular assessments than are currently the case. There is no current recognition that the most able pupils in school may have special educational needs.

64. The number of teachers in Years 1 - 6 is matched to the demands of the curriculum. Most teachers are versatile and have adequate knowledge of primary school subjects. Vacancies exist for a deputy headteacher, and for a teacher with responsibility for managing SEN. The administrative and cleaning staff and lunchtime assistants all contribute significantly to the smooth running of the school.

65. The Foundation Stage has adequate numbers of staff, but deployment is unsatisfactory and their skills are unsatisfactory overall. The nursery teacher is well qualified, but is employed for mornings only. The full-time nursery nurse has not been trained in the Foundation Stage. She has wide responsibilities, and is eager to learn. The reception class teacher is inexperienced in the Foundation Stage, and has limited knowledge of the Early Learning Goals. The full-time reception class assistant is enthusiastic and is well trained for Key Stages 1 and 2, but is inexperienced in the Foundation Stage.

66. Accommodation is good overall, and is very good in the Foundation Stage. Classrooms are of good size, and the library/computer suite is centrally situated and

intensively used. An additional room is available for specialist or community activities. Displays of pupils' work are generally good, and the building is attractively decorated. The playgrounds and the field are in good condition and of adequate size. A good range of fixed equipment is installed in the Foundation Stage play area. The school site and building are free of vandalism and graffiti, and are commendably clean and well maintained.

67. The school's learning resources are satisfactory overall. Few dual language books are available for pupils with English as an additional language. The combined library and ICT suite is a good resource but the library stock is not fully catalogued. Most computers are modern, and all hardware is fully functional. The number of computers available to pupils is slightly above the national average for similar schools. Computer software is inadequate for music.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

68. In order to raise standards throughout the school – but most particularly in English, mathematics and science at the end of Key Stage 2 – the headteacher, staff and governors should work together on the following issues:

- Create an ethos in school that reflects significantly heightened expectations of work and behaviour. This will involve:
(*Paragraph: 31, 33, 56.*)
 - * considering anew, and agreeing, a mission statement and aims for the school;
 - * discussing all associated systems, such as the approach to behaviour management, and ensuring that they are applied consistently by all adults in school;
 - * placing greatly enhanced emphasis on supporting pupils' personal development: their levels of maturity and their growth towards being responsible young citizens.

- Improve the quality of teaching (most particularly in the Foundation Stage and Key Stage 2) by, initially, providing high quality training. This training should have a dual purpose in enabling staff to:
(*Paragraphs: 18, 62.*)
 - * recognise what characterises teaching that is of at least good quality;
 - * produce teaching of this quality in their own classrooms on a day-to-day basis.

- It should focus particularly on the following features:
 - * setting appropriate work for pupils of all abilities, paying particular attention to the most able;
(*Paragraphs: 1, 19, 101.*)
 - * the behaviour and work rate of pupils when they are working independently of their teacher;
(*Paragraphs: 11, 12, 20, 94.*)
 - * the quality of marking that should, as a matter of course, show pupils how they can improve their work and check that these improvements are both achieved and maintained;
(*Paragraph: 21.*)
 - * developing pupils' writing skills so that they no longer constrain progress in other subjects.
(*Paragraph: 98, 104, 119.*)

- Make significantly better use of the data generated by assessments of pupils' work in order to:
(*Paragraph: 48.*)
 - * show which elements of pupils' work are strong and which are weak;
 - * predict future attainment;
 - * measure the progress that pupils make;
 - * form the basis for establishing pupil tracking and target setting systems.

- Improve the quality of provision for children in the nursery and reception classes by:
(*Paragraphs: 28, 36, 39, 40, 49, 57, 65, 79, 80.*)
 - * appointing a co-ordinator who is wholly conversant with the current Foundation Stage curriculum;
 - * ensuring that all adults working in the Foundation Stage teach an appropriate curriculum well;
 - * reorganising arrangements for the afternoon sessions to ensure adequate provision for children in the nursery class.

- Improving the provision for pupils with SEN by:
(*Paragraph: 63.*)
 - * appointing an effective co-ordinator;
 - * identifying and supporting children at a very early stage;
 - * using assessment systems to track the progress of all pupils on the register;
 - * ensuring that class teachers take active responsibility for implementation of individual education plans;
 - * ensuring that provision takes account of the higher as well as the lower attaining pupils in school.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	46
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	29

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
2	7	28	50	11	2	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll

	Nursery	YR - Y6
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE for part-time pupils)	17	151
Number of full-time pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	N/A	43

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs

	Nursery	YR- Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	0
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	2	44

English as an additional language

	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	13

Pupil mobility in the last school year

	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	5
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	8

Attendance

Authorised absence

	%
School data	4.9
National comparative data	5.6

Unauthorised absence

	%
School data	1.0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year:	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	9	12	21

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	7	9
	Girls	9	9	12
	Total	15	16	21
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	71 (74)	76 (68)	100 (79)
	National	84 (83)	86 (84)	91 (90)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 2 and above	Boys	6	8	7
	Girls	11	10	12
	Total	17	18	19
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	School	81 (68)	86 (79)	90 (68)
	National	85 (84)	89 (88)	89 (88)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	2001	11	11	22

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	9	8	11
	Girls	8	8	10
	Total	17	16	21
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	77 (65)	73 (69)	95 (88)
	National	75 (75)	71 (72)	87 (85)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC Level 4 and above	Boys	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Girls	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Total	N/A	N/A	N/A
Percentage of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	School	N/A (46)	N/A (54)	N/A (77)
	National	72 (70)	74 (72)	82 (79)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	2
Chinese	7
White	122
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes:

YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8.0
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18.5
Average class size	21.1

Education support staff:

YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	43

Qualified teachers and support staff:

Nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	0.5
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20
Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	16
Number of pupils per FTE adult	15.5

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Financial information

Financial year	2000-2001
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	£
Total income	432,065.00
Total expenditure	411,901.00
Expenditure per pupil	2,135.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	7,500.00
Balance carried forward to next year	27,664.00

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out
Number of questionnaires returned

158
67

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	64.0	32.0	5.0	0	0
My child is making good progress in school.	62.0	36.0	0	0	2.0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42.0	45.0	3.0	9.0	1.0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	34.0	44.0	15.0	2.0	5.0
The teaching is good.	59.0	33.0	5.0	0	3.0
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	46.0	42.0	12.0	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	59.0	30.0	3.0	8.0	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	55.0	42.0	0	2.0	2.0
The school works closely with parents.	34.0	54.0	6.0	4.0	1.0
The school is well led and managed.	42.0	48.0	1.0	3.0	6.0
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	43.0	48.0	6.0	1.0	1.0
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	38.0	47.0	9.0	2.0	5.0

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN IN THE FOUNDATION STAGE

78. The nursery has places for a maximum of 26 full-time children. Currently, all places are part-time, either morning or afternoon. Twenty children attend morning sessions, led by a part-time nursery teacher and a nursery nurse. Thirteen attend afternoon sessions, led by the nursery nurse. Children begin nursery in the January following their third birthday, and stay for two terms of afternoon sessions, followed by three terms of morning sessions. They then join the school's reception class full-time.

79. Most children enter the nursery with attainment below the level expected for their age. Evidence from recent baseline assessment indicates that attainment on entry to the reception class is above average in writing; and average in mathematics and personal, social and emotional development. However, inspection evidence confirms that most children in the reception class have speaking, listening and writing skills that are below average for their age. Their attainment in personal, social and emotional development is average. Currently, six children in the Foundation Stage have been identified as having SEN. Four children speak English as an additional language. Most children currently in the reception class are likely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in personal, social and emotional development, but not in other areas of learning.

80. Provision in the Foundation Stage is unsatisfactory overall, although provision is satisfactory for morning children in the nursery. The previous inspection report judged provision to be good in the nursery and satisfactory in the reception class. However, direct comparisons are impossible because of the many changes - both to the school and to the national structure for the Foundation Stage.

Personal, social and emotional development.

81. Children enter the nursery with personal and social skills below average for their age. They settle quickly into the routines established for them, and soon accept the absence of their parents and carers. Children in the reception class also settle quickly. Most children are polite and friendly, but respond passively to many activities prepared for them. However, during the inspection, morning nursery children were greatly excited when attempting to fly the kites they had made. These activities were purposeful and well organised. Comparable activities are not always offered to afternoon nursery children. Afternoon sessions are shared with the reception class, and the organisation of staff, children and planning are all unsatisfactory.

82. In the nursery, children's concentration is weak. Staff counter the weakness by adjusting activities to suit the children's needs. Although children's concentration improves in the reception class, progress is limited because many activities are not matched to their needs, and are not linked to the Early Learning Goals. Most children in the Foundation Stage are confident in their activities. Their self-esteem is developed by consistent praise from staff. Simple statements about nursery achievements are prominently displayed. All children in the Foundation Stage are very kind to each other. They learn to take turns, and they share activities amicably. Their relationships with adults are always good, and are sometimes very good. Behaviour in the Foundation Stage is always satisfactory, and is sometimes excellent in the nursery.

83. Children have some awareness of self-care. In the nursery, afternoon children know that overalls must be worn to protect their clothes during painting activities. Morning children are learning to dress independently for outdoor activities. Higher attaining children can manipulate buttons, and are beginning to manage zip fasteners. During the inspection, a child with English as an additional language was praised by the teacher for spontaneously helping other children to dress for outdoor play. All morning nursery children have some understanding of Christianity. Children of average attainment know the name of their local church, and have learned something of the christening ceremony. However, teaching of religious education is unsatisfactory in the reception class, where it is unrelated to the Early Learning Goals. In a class assembly during the inspection, children listened to the story of Cain and Abel without adequate explanation of difficult vocabulary such as 'crops' and 'sacrifice'.

Communication, language and literacy

84. The programme for communication, language and literacy is unsatisfactory in the Foundation Stage, and most children will not achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. On children's entry to the nursery, speaking and listening skills are below average for their age. The youngest nursery children have poor diction and vocabulary, and their levels of attainment have not been adequately assessed. Although older nursery children and reception class children make satisfactory progress, their speaking and listening skills are below average for their age. Nursery staff use interesting language to stimulate the children's vocabulary. For example, words such as 'frosty', 'icy' and 'freezing' describe an attractive display about winter weather. During the inspection, a higher attaining child remembered 'Sun melts ice' when describing to the class how temperature rises during the day. However, throughout the Foundation Stage, staff do not encourage children to speak in full sentences. For example, during the inspection, no child was invited to show to the class work in progress or work completed, and many opportunities were missed for children to plan collaboratively in construction activities.

85. Older nursery children listen attentively to stories, and to instructions from adults. Children in the reception class do not always listen to instructions, or to each other. Shouted responses to questions are not reprimanded by the teacher, and less assertive children have limited opportunities to speak. Children in the reception class recognise many initial sounds of words. However, sounds are often taught without reference to words. Children are not encouraged to use their phonic knowledge to write original words and sentences, although some are clearly capable of doing so. Many activities linked to reading and writing have no purpose. For example, during the inspection, a group of children with SEN were given cards with illustrations described by three-letter words. They were asked to draw the picture and copy the word. A child working with a picture of a bewigged barrister believed she had written the word 'man'. Writing areas in the Foundation Stage are unrelated to children's experiences, and do not contribute to imaginative play. In the current school year, children have completed very little mark making or written work. Children in the reception class are learning to write the letters of the alphabet, but are not taught consistently that each letter has a starting point and a finishing point. Most reception children can write their full names, but many write in a random, uncorrected mix of capitals and lower case letters.

86. Older children in the nursery understand that pictures tell stories. They recognise favourite books, and are beginning to understand that print conveys meaning. Children of all attainments recall some features of familiar stories. Although reception class children of average attainment can recognise a few words by sight, progress is limited because they are not taught to read words linked in sentences. Many of the school's reading books are unsuitable for young children because stories are simplistic, dull or outdated. Older nursery

children recognise their own names, and some other names. Specialist help with speaking, listening, reading and writing is provided for children with English as an additional language. Good teaching enables them to make good progress in each of these skills.

Mathematical development

87. Children in the Foundation Stage are unlikely to achieve the Early Learning Goals in this area of learning. Older nursery children know that three children are allowed in their shop. During the inspection, children of higher attainment recognised page numbers on a book. They count objects accurately to five. Average children in the reception class count accurately to twenty. They recognise numbers to ten, but sometimes write them reversed. Older children in the nursery learn many rhymes to help them understand the concepts of simple addition and subtraction. Number rhymes are not used effectively in the reception class. Children recite the rhymes without understanding, and without explanation from the teacher. Many opportunities are missed in the reception class to plan development of the children's mathematical skills during non-mathematical activities. For example, they do not count the number of children present during registration, or count when lining up to leave the classroom.

88. All children in the Foundation Stage have satisfactory mathematical language. They understand the meaning of 'more', and a few higher attainers understand 'less'. They understand the concept of adding two small numbers to make a larger number. The youngest nursery children can cut to order 'big' and 'small' pieces of play dough. Reception class children can place teddies in order of size: small, medium and large. They understand the meanings of 'thick' and 'thin'. Younger nursery children of average attainment can identify a square. In the reception class, children can identify a circle, triangle and rectangle. They know a little about the properties of these shapes. Children of average attainment can sort similar mathematical shapes by colour and size. However, in a group session seen, SEN children making simple patterns confused the names of two-dimensional and three-dimensional shapes. Younger children in the nursery have some understanding of position, including 'on top' and 'underneath'. All Foundation Stage children understand that money may be exchanged for goods. They have made a simple, block graph to illustrate their weather preferences. Children of average attainment can interpret the graph. Throughout the Foundation Stage, children's recording skills are weak.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

89. Older children in the nursery know which fabrics keep them warm and dry in winter. They know that a strong wind is needed to fly their kites. Children in the reception class have written briefly about winter clothing. During the inspection, children were not seen to use investigative tools, such as magnets, magnifying glasses and binoculars. They have very limited knowledge of exploration and investigation, and opportunities are missed in afternoon sessions to use good resources to develop scientific skills. Programmable toys are not available in the Foundation Stage, and children have few opportunities to discover why things happen and how things work. During the inspection, information books were not used to extend children's learning. All children in the Foundation Stage enjoy using construction sets. Reception class children are adept at making models based on simple pictures and diagrams. A limited range of fastenings is available. All nursery children use adhesive and string, but their knowledge of fastening materials is not developed in the reception class. Nursery children can start and stop a tape recorder when listening to pre-recorded stories. All Foundation Stage children, including those with SEN and English as an additional language, have good control of the computer mouse. They play computer games to support

mathematical and literacy skills, but reception class children do not regularly use the school's computer suite to develop their skills. Nursery children recall events by looking at photographs of their previous activities. Reception class children have some idea of time and place. They know the sequence of the days of the week, and that they live in Sunderland. However, some planned activities are too advanced to develop their sense of place. For example, a label indicating Sunderland on a map of the British Isles has no meaning for them.

Creative development

90. Children entering the nursery quickly learn the names of many colours, and they work with paints, crayons and felt pens. Their colouring technique develops in the reception class, but the range of activities available to them does not broaden their creative skills. For example, during the inspection, children of all attainments used coloured pencils meticulously to complete individual worksheets of a fish. The learning objectives were unrelated to the activity, and no new learning was achieved. Children's drawings in the Foundation Stage are immature, and teachers' planning does not include activities to develop their observational skills. All children in the nursery enjoy making collages with a variety of materials, including coloured paper, glitter and cotton wool, and their work is very attractively displayed. Nursery children have a good repertoire of songs. During the inspection, children with English as an additional language were seen to participate in the recitation of songs, without always knowing the words. Children in the reception class participate in whole-school assemblies and hymn practices. Imaginative play is underdeveloped in the Foundation Stage. Older nursery children enjoy playing in their weather shop. Prompted by the nursery teacher, they amicably take turns as customers and assistants. The concept of a weather shop is too difficult for younger nursery children, who have little understanding of their roles.

Physical development

91. Children's physical development is unsatisfactory overall. Nursery staff plan well for outdoor physical activities. During the inspection, they used soap bubbles in the air to encourage children to identify 'high' and 'low' bubbles, follow them without obstructing each other, and burst them with feet or hands. In this exciting lesson, children moved with good control and good co-ordination. Reception class children use the school's main playgrounds at morning break and lunchtime, and share the nursery outdoor area each afternoon. Their throwing and catching skills are satisfactory. They roll hoops on a ramp, and ride large wheeled toys. However, a session seen during the inspection was unplanned. Children were supervised, but were not encouraged to develop their activities, or attempt new activities. During the inspection, children in the nursery competently used glue spreaders, rolling pins and plastic knives. Their control of scissors was unsatisfactory, but reception class children were seen to cut paper accurately.

ENGLISH

92. In national tests over the past four years, standards in reading and writing at the end of Key Stage 1 have been broadly static, and well below national averages. When compared with similar schools they have been below average. It has been the case, however, that the proportion of pupils achieving Level 2, the national expectation, has been close to the national average, while the factor that has 'let the school down' has been the very small proportion achieving the higher level in reading and the absence of any pupil doing so in writing. Inspection findings suggest that the good teaching in this key stage is beginning to pay

dividends and that pupils' overall performance is drawing close to the national average. Standards of listening are good at the end of Key Stage 1, reading and speaking standards are satisfactory but writing standards remain below average.

93. In Key Stage 2, results over the same period have been more variable, but better. In comparison to national standards they have fluctuated between average and below average. In comparison with similar schools they have been average or above. They are currently below the standard expected nationally, with no secure evidence of pupils working at the higher than expected Level 5.

94. The literacy strategy is embedded into the practice of the school, with all staff following national guidance for the format of a daily literacy hour. Despite this, some teaching just reaches satisfactory levels. Of the six lessons observed, the quality of teaching was good in three and sound in the remainder. All lessons were planned well, with adjustments made for pupils with SEN and those for whom English is an additional language. The work set for the most able pupils was also well matched to their ability to cope with it but a close look at their work over a longer period of time indicated that this suitably challenging work is not regularly on offer. It is not surprising, therefore, that more able pupils have not been making the progress they should. The common weakness in the three lessons that were satisfactory – all in Key Stage 2, was the management of pupils when they were supposed to be working independently. On these occasions pupils did not settle well to their work. They talked amongst each other, often unnecessarily or inappropriately, and teachers did not insist on anything better. The work in pupils' books suggests that this is regularly the case and, as a result, the amount of work pupils produce, and the quality of it, often falls short of an acceptable standard. Pupils lack the self-motivation, self-discipline, and the maturity levels to settle to work as they should. Significant improvement is needed.

95. Standards in speaking are below expectations throughout the school. Pupils have limited vocabulary and do not leave Year 6 as competent, confident speakers. Their listening skills are satisfactory and, in Key Stage 1, good. When being taught directly, pupils are attentive and they concentrate well.

96. Reading standards are broadly satisfactory at the end of Key Stage 1 but below average at the end of Key Stage 2. Younger pupils take books home regularly and most read with a parent or other family member. This practice lessens significantly in Key Stage 2 and pupils say that they prefer watching television or playing on the computer to reading. Few older Key Stage 2 pupils are keen readers.

97. The oldest pupils in school find it difficult to interpret what they read when it extends beyond the literal or when vocabulary is at all complex. In a lesson on 'Jabberwocky', for example, several pupils described the poem as 'stupid' and 'boring'. When a meaning was not instantly apparent to them they lost interest. They did not know, and were unable to guess, the meaning of the word 'foe'. A group of average ability pupils had no idea how to summarize a verse despite their teacher's explanation, and were more than happy to let someone else do the work for them. By the time pupils reach Year 6, the work ethic is at its lowest ebb in school. In Key Stage 2, in fact, their interest in work and their behaviour is just satisfactory. This is not the case in Key Stage 1: behaviour and attitudes were good in one lesson and very good in the other.

98. Standards in writing are below expectations in Year 2 and well below expectations in Year 6. The head teacher is aware of the need for improvement. The following are features that contribute to below average standards.

- Insufficient consideration had been given to how other subjects of the curriculum can be used as a vehicle for practising a complete range of writing activities.
- In literacy lessons too much time is wasted in the session when pupils should be writing.
- Expectations of pupil's writing, both in terms of quality and quantity are too low. This applies equally to English and to other subjects.
- There are significantly too few opportunities to write at length.
- Marking does not play a constructive part in helping pupils to make progress.
- There is over use of worksheets: their use is not limited to when they are the best option.

99. The co-ordinator teaches in Year 2. She has realistic ideas for the development of the subject throughout the school and the expertise to help staff implement them. Resources are adequate although there is a significant amount of cataloguing still to do in the library.

MATHEMATICS

100. Pupils make satisfactory progress as they move through the school. However, by the time they leave, pupils' attainment is still below the standards achieved nationally. The results of the national tests in 2001 confirm this finding. Standards have therefore fallen during the school's period of unrest since the last inspection. Although the school has satisfactorily introduced the National Numeracy Strategy its implementation occurred at a time when the co-ordinator left. This adversely affected staff training, so that the impact of the strategy has not been as effective as might have been expected. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils' attainment is below that which is expected. Progress is good through Key Stage 1, with the result that pupils reach the expected national average of attainment by the time they are seven. However, few pupils reach the higher standard in the national tests at age seven and eleven because of a lack of an investigative style of teaching or the setting of open-ended problems. This results in pupils not developing mathematical thinking skills sufficiently to excel at higher levels. Pupils with SEN and those with English as an additional language are well supported in school and achieve standards that are in line with their abilities.

101. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is only satisfactory at best, and is sometimes weak. Lesson plans include a mental session at the start of the lesson to build up pupils' skills in mental arithmetic but this part of the lesson rarely achieves its objectives because:

- Teachers fail to use imaginative methods on a daily basis that involve all the pupils all of the time.
- These sessions do not generate enthusiasm and enjoyment and the pace is slow. Therefore, pupils do not building up mental skills that enable them to recall number facts quickly and easily.
- Importantly, pupils are not developing a fascination for numbers that make lessons fun and can become a powerful incentive to learning.
- Many opportunities are lost in this short but vitally important part of the lesson that are capable of having a significant impact on the standards pupils achieve.

102. In the main part of the more successful lessons, teachers share with the pupils what they expect them to learn and, in some cases, how this links with previous learning on the same topic. For example, in a Year 5 lesson on three-dimensional shape, the teacher continually emphasised how the pupils learning on shape had progressed since they had first learnt lower down in the school the names of shapes. By using the mathematical terms of 'faces', 'edges' and 'vertices' correctly they were now able to describe the properties of the shapes accurately and to identify a shape from a list of attributes. Individual work planned for

different groups of pupils is often not challenging enough, especially for the more able. In another lesson on the nets of shapes, none of the tasks set challenged any group of pupils. Pupils' progress is thus slowed down and can be unsatisfactory at times. The use of ICT is appropriate to support learning. In a Year 6 lesson, for example, pupils used spreadsheets to work out the maximum area of a rectangle with a fixed perimeter. They then transferred this to a suitable graph to illustrate their findings.

103. The teaching in Key Stage 1 is good, but pace and enthusiasm in the mental session is an area that needs to be developed further. In the main part of the lesson, teachers use practical experiences well so that pupils' learning is reinforced. In a lesson in Year 1, pupils moved to the hall so that they could experience the meaning of direction by moving a set number of paces forward, backward, left and right. Good progression from this stage to a more abstract level was demonstrated in a Year 2 lesson. The teacher used an imaginative grid from which pupils had to work out a route for a cat to find its way round a garden avoiding both a dog and water. This was suitably followed by pupils making up their own paths on a grid, which they then had to describe to a partner. At the end of this lesson, pupils practised the new skill by finding hidden words on a grid of letters. The over use of work books and commercially produced work sheets hinders pupils progress, especially when all pupils complete the same task

SCIENCE

104. In the 2001 national tests for eleven year olds, standards in science were below the average for all schools, but were close to standards in similar schools. At the end of Year 2, pupils attain the standards expected for their age. Although standards had improved steadily since the previous inspection, current evidence indicates that pupils in Year 6 do not reach satisfactory standards. This is due largely to limited skills in speaking, listening and writing. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 are currently making good progress. Throughout the school, pupils with SEN receive no special help, but small class sizes allow teachers adequate time to monitor all attainment groups. Pupils with English as an additional language make good progress, and their achievement is generally good.

105. Most pupils in Year 6 have adequate knowledge of electrical circuits. During the inspection, pupils of average attainment, who had recently completed a topic about electricity, accurately described a parallel circuit. They knew that, in a circuit of several batteries and bulbs, the brilliance of the bulbs is reduced by removing a battery, and increased by adding a battery. Their previous learning was less secure. For example, by referring to their workbooks, they explained photosynthesis and a food chain. Without the books, their recall was very limited.

106. In Year 2, all pupils have good knowledge of fair testing. In an excellent lesson, they investigated how forward motion is accentuated as a gradient increases. They learned to change some features while keeping others constant, and predicted what would happen when an empty can rolled down a slope onto a flat surface. In this lesson, the teacher had very good subject knowledge and expertise. She demonstrated how scientific discovery builds on previous work, and emphasised the importance of accurate measurement and recording. Pupils interviewed recalled in detail their investigations of materials. They knew that some materials are pliable, and will change shape if stretched. A lower attaining pupil said that if house bricks changed shape, the house would fall down!

107. In Year 1, pupils use computers to support their learning. In a satisfactory lesson, they located a program related to plant growth, and selected information to complete a simple worksheet. In this lesson, the work was set at the level of the lowest attainers in the class. The class teacher supported this group. Other pupils were not adequately challenged, but their attitudes and behaviour were good throughout. In a good lesson in Year 3, pupils extended their knowledge of fair testing to establish that plants need light for healthy growth. They were surprised to find that cress plants grown in a cupboard were taller than plants grown on a window ledge. In this lesson, the teacher developed pupils' literacy skills by asking them to provide descriptive terms for the plants.

108. In Year 4, pupils know that some liquids contain dissolved solids. They know that suspended solids may be reclaimed, but they confuse sieves and filters when describing the process. When questioned, average pupils could not recall scientific vocabulary, such as 'camouflage', 'friction' and 'air resistance' without reference to their workbooks. Pupils of average attainment in Year 5 know that sound travels better through a taut wire than through the air. During the inspection, they used a database to locate facts about sound transmission. In this satisfactory lesson, behaviour deteriorated when they watched a demonstration on an interactive white board.

109. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory in all year groups. During the inspection, one excellent lesson was seen in Year 2, and a good lesson in Year 3. In the best lessons, teachers have high expectations of pupils' achievement and behaviour. They closely monitor learning, and adapt plans to ensure pupils' full understanding. Where teaching is satisfactory, suitable work is not provided for all pupils, and most lessons are disrupted by periods of gossip. In all year groups, teachers closely direct pupils' activities. This is partially attributable to the low-key disruption that often accompanies independent work.

110. Scrutiny of pupils' books shows infrequent written work, of indifferent quality. Much work is copied. The amount and the quality of handwriting are the only differences between the work of the highest and lowest attaining pupils. Few graphs or other methods of recording are evident. Some teachers do not adequately correct mistakes in grammar and spelling, and do not extend pupils' learning by, for example, writing supplementary questions in their books. Sometimes, teachers' own grammar and spelling are inadequate. For example, in Year 6, the teacher confuses the meanings of 'affect' and 'effect'.

111. The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic, but her subject knowledge is limited. She monitors lessons, and provides written feedback of teaching and learning. However, as she is untrained in monitoring, weaknesses persist in the subject. She is currently updating the science policy. Assessment is unsatisfactory. Teachers assess pupils' understanding after each unit of work, to build a picture of attainment and progress over time. Data is not analysed in detail, and specific targets are not set for pupils.

112. Accommodation is good. Classrooms are spacious, and hot and cold water is available in adjacent activity bays. Resources are satisfactory.

ART AND DESIGN

113. In the lessons observed pupils, including those with SEN and those with English as an additional language, enjoyed their art and took an interest in the work set. The standards pupils achieve in art at both seven and eleven years of age is in line with those expected for pupils of the same ages. This is an improvement for the older pupils but, at the last inspection, the standards of younger pupils were judged to be mainly above those expected. Art has an important place within the school and this is demonstrated by the quality of some

of the displays around the school, for example, a display in the hall by Year 5 pupils based on work by the American artist Sol Le Witt. The style of the original work 'Bands of Equal Colour and Width' was carefully reproduced to create a striking display. One of the pupils involved in the work commented 'It took ages!' reflecting the concentration and effort required.

114. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory and art is used both to support and complement work in other curriculum areas. In Year 6, a unit of three-dimensional work was inspired by one of the pupils bringing in a Chinese mask after the new year celebrations. The teacher successfully developed the theme of carnival masks through designs in sketchbooks, then two-dimensional collage, to the final decorations on papier-mache masks. Because of the interest generated, pupils worked hard to carry their design through the various stages and produced masks of which they were justly proud.

115. In a good lesson in Year 2 the teacher effectively linked work over a period of time, which had 'Nature' as a theme. In a lively but sensitive manner these young pupils were able to review and discuss features they liked about examples of work on which they had worked for several weeks. Looking at photographs of the arrangements they had made, using vegetables to represent a face, they discussed in pairs, comparing their work with Arcimboldo's 'The Gardener'. Further successful discussions, about their observational drawings and collage of sections through seeded fruits, preceded design work using these drawings as a decoration on artefacts or clothing. The review and preparation of this work, together with high expectations of work and behaviour, resulted in pupils working hard. While the teacher monitored she effectively used pupils' partly finished work to encourage and inspire others. In Year 1, the geometric designs of Mondrian were used as a suitable starting point for pupils to create their own designs using a drawing program on the computer.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

116. While too few lessons were seen to make a secure judgement on the quality of teaching and learning, the evidence secured from teachers' planning, from pupils' work on display and from talking with pupils shows that overall attainment is satisfactory. In Key Stage 1, some of the work pupils do is good.

117. The key strengths of the school's work are the thoroughness with which teachers cover each aspect of the process (planning, making and evaluating) and maintaining all of these, while incorporating really worthwhile links with other subjects. To illustrate the first of these two strengths, the Year 1 teacher had spent time, prior to the exciting day when a fruit salad was actually made, ensuring that her pupils had a thorough grasp of some key points. They knew, for example that, prior to preparing food, they should: wash their hands, wear an apron, tie back long hair, and ensure that the working surface was clean. They had learned how to peel and slice, and to take account of the likes and dislikes of the person for whom they were preparing food. They applied all this new knowledge and skill when making a fruit salad, not for themselves but for some of their classmates. To illustrate the second point, Year 5 pupils had made a xylophone in design and technology lessons. While they had learned valuable new skills, for example, accurate measurement, sawing and nailing, the work tied in well with that on sound in science. It gave them a practical means of proving that there was a link between the length of the wooden key and the pitch of the note it produced when it was struck.

GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY

118. History and geography are taught as alternate topics through out the school so that, at the time of the inspection, only a few lessons in either subject were being taught at each key stage. Pupils at both seven and eleven reach standards that are in line with national expectations in both history and geography, as was the case at the last inspection.

119. The teaching of geography and history in Key Stage 2 is satisfactory overall but the recording of work is unsatisfactory. Pupils are given too few opportunities for longer pieces of writing, so that the literacy skills they learn in their literacy lessons are not used sufficiently to benefit work in these subjects. The local area, however, is suitably used. In a good geography lesson in Year 5, suitable changes in a recommended unit of work had been made, resulting in the pupils studying the complex one-way system that operated in the immediate vicinity of the school. Following a previous walk round the area, the teacher successfully led a discussion in which pupils were able to appreciate the reasons for bus lanes, different speeds of traffic lights and the restriction on pedestrians. Since pupils experienced this traffic system on a daily basis they realised that the layout was designed to separate pedestrians from vehicles, and the priority was to keep the traffic moving. Good comparisons were then made with a village locality of similar size, where there was no need for traffic lights, one-way streets, and restrictions on either parking or people. This lesson was further enhanced by the study of old maps. Pupils were able to see that their own area had changed several times over a period of about a hundred years, whereas the road system in the village had remained much the same. Using local conditions such as these increased pupils' understanding of the effects that demands of traffic can make on a community.

120. In history lessons in Year 6, good advantage is taken of the Victorian heritage of the area as a suitable base for study. Lessons are enhanced by visits from a member of the local historical society who talks about the buildings in the area. In a lesson concluding the topic, pupils considered the information that they had found in the census documents of the period, recognising that old documents are a source of evidence for historical enquiry. A visit to the open air Beamish Museum further enhanced pupils' understanding of Victorian times. They used their ICT skills effectively to prepare a multimedia presentation of their visit. By using to the full resources available in the local area, pupils' interest and motivation is maintained and learning in history and geography contributes to their cultural development.

121. In Key Stage 1, no overall judgement on teaching for either history or geography is possible. The recording of work is minimal so that, once again, pupils are not given opportunities to develop literacy skills. However, in the two (one of each subject) observed lessons, teaching was good. In a Year 2 geography lesson, the teacher added meaning to the lesson by taking full advantage of pupils who came from different countries. The Internet was very successfully used to find out weather conditions around the world. By including the capitals of the home countries of these pupils real meaning was added to the lesson. Pupils were then able to make direct comparisons of weather conditions around the world and the conditions that they could see out of the window. The use of ICT in this context was highly appropriate, as this information could not have been found in any other way. Pupils' home countries are also effectively used when tracing the travels of Barnaby Bear (a soft toy who has number of travel adventures!). Pupils helped Barnaby to send postcards from Egypt describing what it is like there. In a Year 1 history lesson the teacher effectively used large photographs of a tin bath, carpet beater, and a mangle, and supported the pupils to ask questions that enabled them to establish the use of each artefact. However, pupils' lack of literacy skills in terms of expressing their ideas affected their learning and their attainment.

INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY (ICT)

122. Pupils in both key stages are enthusiastic and confident in using ICT, and now reach levels of attainment that are in line with national expectations. At the time of the last

inspection, standards were below national expectations. Inspectors identified a weakness in the confidence of staff due to lack of subject knowledge and ageing computers.

123. Pupils' attainment has improved since the last inspection at both key stages because:

- The school has improved its hardware and software.
- A new computer suite with a large screen enables staff to teach class sessions more effectively.
- Staff have received training and their confidence and expertise has increased as a result.
- The school has adopted a scheme of work based on the development of skills.

124. Computers in the suite and in two of the classrooms are linked to the Internet; the rest of the classrooms will be connected soon. This will result in pupils being able to access information from the Internet at any time and not just during sessions planned within the suite. Although the school still lacks sufficient software to fully cover small parts of the curriculum, it has plans to purchase this as soon as possible. It is a combination of all the above factors that has enabled the school to raise pupils' levels of attainment.

125. Teachers' confidence in teaching ICT has improved. Teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall, both in terms of teaching ICT skills and in supporting other areas of the curriculum. Work on display in Year 6 demonstrated that pupils had successfully produced eye-catching presentations following their visit to Beamish museum. Spreadsheets were effectively used to help pupils to investigate the maximum area that could be enclosed within a rectangular shape, which had a fixed perimeter. In a good lesson in Year 4, pupils used information about fruits that they had previously accessed from the Internet. This information was added to a branching database after a suitable preparation session in the classroom. Good support from the teacher, as she monitored pupils' progress, resulted in all pupils successfully completing the task with interest and enthusiasm. A less appropriate lesson occurred when pupils tried to identify instruments while listening to music from the period of Henry VIII, which they had accessed from a given Web Site.

126. Teaching in Key Stage 1 is good. In a very good Year 2 lesson, linked to geography, pupils looked up weather conditions around the world. This was particularly effective because the teacher took full advantage of pupils in the class who came from different countries. She included the capitals of these countries in the list of places that could be looked up. Pupils worked confidently in mixed ability pairs, moving backwards and forwards around a Web Site, finding out weather and temperatures in their chosen countries. The teacher emphasised that what they were finding out was what it was like in those countries NOW. Thus, there was a direct comparison with local weather conditions that they could see out of the window. They were using information that they could not obtain by any other means. Although Year 2 pupils are confident in accessing and using the Internet, progress in word-processing skills is hindered by their lack of keyboard skills, so that it takes a long time to type in text. This results in restless behaviour when working in pairs, and further slows progress.

MUSIC

127. Attainment in music is satisfactory in both key stages, and equals national expectations. The previous report judged attainment to be satisfactory in Years 1 and 2, and good in Years 3 – 6. During this inspection, a whole-school singing assembly was seen, and three music lessons in Years 1, 2 and 5. Children with SEN and English as an additional language participated fully in all music lessons. Too few lessons were seen to make a judgement on the quality of teaching.

128. In Year 1, pupils know the names of simple percussion instruments. They understand terms such as 'loud', 'soft' and 'vary the speed'. In a good lesson seen, the teacher involved all pupils in handling and playing a variety of instruments. Pupils played to instructions, and their behaviour was very good throughout. In Year 2, pupils make good progress. Their musical vocabulary increases, and they know the meanings of 'volume', 'tempo' and 'dynamics'. They know that a single instrument can make a variety of sounds. In a good lesson seen, they learned to follow a conductor and to wait patiently to play. A governor who is a voluntary helper provided good support for pupils with SEN.

129. In Year 5, pupils of all attainments confidently play percussion instruments, following simple notation. In a good lesson seen, the class, in two groups, co-operated to superimpose a complex beat over a maintained single beat. Pupils listened attentively to recorded African music, identified instruments, and spontaneously copied the rhythms. Later, they used good vocabulary to compare African and Indian music. In good links with the technology curriculum, pupils have made working xylophones.

130. Each day, the headteacher selects music for whole-school assembly, and displays the title and composer. Generally, singing is underdeveloped throughout the school, for example, when singing a hymn in an assembly, the words were projected slightly out of focus. Although the older pupils knew the hymn well enough, the singing from those in Years 4-6 was apathetic. In an assembly during the inspection, pupils listened attentively to a concert given by secondary students. The headteacher, and the secondary school music teacher, added social and spiritual dimensions by emphasising the importance of teamwork in an orchestra.

131. Teachers' short-term planning for music is satisfactory but, in the absence of a co-ordinator, longer term planning and assessment are unsatisfactory. The policy requires updating. Accommodation is good, and resources satisfactory.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

132. Standards in physical education are similar to national expectations in Year 2. In Year 6, insufficient physical education was timetabled during the current inspection for an attainment judgement to be made. However, an unsatisfactory dance lesson was seen in Year 4, and a good football skills lesson, led by professional coaches, was seen in Year 5. In the previous inspection, attainment was judged to be satisfactory at the end of Year 2, and good at the end of Year 6.

133. During the inspection, in a satisfactory Year 2 dance lesson, pupils showed good awareness of space in their interpretations of street litter buffeted by the wind. Listening carefully to recorded music, they moved on the balls of their feet, lightly and quickly, and changed direction at the sound of a gong. Their spontaneous movements were inhibited by inexperience in dance, and the teacher added some variety by suggesting 'swaying' and 'leaning' in the wind. Her interventions did not guide pupils to reach up and down, and all their

actions were within a narrow range of body movement. Very good attitudes and behaviour were stimulated by the teacher's good use of vocabulary, such as 'an elegant dancer', and praise for pupils of all attainments. In Year 1, most pupils skip easily, and jump using one or two feet. In a good games lesson seen in Year 1, they carefully followed instructions when aiming and kicking large footballs at specific targets. Attitudes and behaviour in this lesson were excellent. The teacher had high expectations of work and behaviour, and pupils responded promptly and responsibly to the challenges set for them. All pupils in Years 1 and 2 understand the importance of warming up and cooling down.

134. The unsatisfactory dance lesson in Year 4 was planned when an off-site swimming lesson was cancelled. With limited dance experience, pupils were unable to match their movements to the large space available in the school hall. They stayed close to each other, and gossiped intermittently. The recorded music was unsuitable for their level of attainment, and the lesson objectives were unclear. Progress in the lesson was unsatisfactory. The football skills lesson in Year 5 was led by professionals from a Premier League club. Their relationships with pupils of all attainments were very good. Boys and girls participated equally in exercises and games, often showing good team spirit, and competing vigorously within the rules set for them. Their ball control was usually satisfactory, and some higher attaining pupils showed consistently good skills when kicking, throwing and receiving a football. The class teacher supported the lesson by encouraging individual and team effort. Pupils with SEN and English as an additional language participate fully in all lessons, but receive no additional support.

135. The co-ordinator is enthusiastic, and she monitors lessons in all year groups. However, her subject knowledge is unsatisfactory. Her feedbacks to teachers are of limited value because she cannot securely identify strengths and weaknesses in the teaching and learning of physical education. The subject policy is out of date and does not include the teaching of information and communication technology. Resources are good overall, and the school hall, playgrounds and playing field provide good accommodation. Extra-curricular activities are well supported, and include a popular swimming club, aerobics, gymnastics and rugby.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

136. Attainment is satisfactory in Year 2, but is unsatisfactory in Year 6, where it is below the standard found nationally, and the standard required by the locally agreed syllabus. The previous inspection report judged standards in religious education to be satisfactory overall. Two lessons were seen in this inspection, in Years 4 and 6. One lesson was satisfactory, and one was poor. Other evidence included observation of collective worship, analysis of pupils' work, interviews with pupils and an interview with the co-ordinator. Pupils' progress in Years 3 – 6 is poor, and management of religious education is unsatisfactory. The co-ordinator is willing but inexperienced and has not had time to address the manifest weaknesses in the subject.

137. In Year 2, pupils of average attainment have some understanding of the meaning of religion, and they know some reasons for attending church, including weddings and christenings. They know that Christianity is symbolised by a cross, and Jesus was the Son of God. Pupils of higher attainment know the meaning of 'lectern'. Pupils of all attainments know a little about Judaism. They know that Jews attach mezuzahs to their doorframes and that the celebration of the Sabbath begins 'when the sun goes down' on Friday evening'. In Year 6, pupils' knowledge of Christianity has scarcely advanced since Year 2. They cannot spontaneously recall previous work about the stories of Jesus, and do not know whether he appears in the Old or New Testaments. They cannot with certainty attribute his birth and

death to Christmas and Easter. In a poor lesson seen in Year 6, the teacher read aloud a lengthy description of how Muslims journey to Mecca. She did not explain the complex vocabulary, or use pictures or other resources to illuminate the event, or involve pupils in any discussion of it. Pupils were asked to make notes, and write a summary in their books. The standard of written work was unsatisfactory. Pupils recalled simple facts, but had no understanding of the significance of the pilgrimage. In a satisfactory lesson in Year 4, pupils knew that Muslims fast at Ramadan, but had little concept of the meanings of discipline or self-discipline. The teacher used an attractive book to illustrate how an extended family participates in Ramadan, and celebrates the festival of Eid. Subsequently, pupils wrote in their workbooks some simple facts about Ramadan, but content was brief and much writing untidy. Pupils with SEN and English as an additional language are fully integrated in lessons.

138. Analysis of pupils' work confirms serious underachievement in Years 3 – 6. The volume of work in books is small, most is copied and much is unfinished. Teachers' marking is uncritical, and does not stimulate improvement in religious education or literacy. School assemblies are generally Christian in content, and comply with legal requirements. In all assemblies a brief period is allocated to reflection, but pupils have few opportunities in lessons to reflect upon their own work, and the work of others.

139. In the lessons seen, teachers' subject knowledge and expertise were generally satisfactory, but teaching was unexciting, and assessment of pupils' learning was unsatisfactory. Pupils' attitudes were generally satisfactory but some pupils were restive in the Year 4 lesson, despite satisfactory teaching. Religious education lessons do not promote pupils' spiritual development, and are unrelated to concepts of independence, responsibility and citizenship. The policy for religious education is outdated. Resources are satisfactory but are inadequately used in lessons.