

INSPECTION REPORT

DEAF HILL PRIMARY SCHOOL

Trimdon Station

LEA area: Durham

Unique reference number: 114144

Head teacher: Mrs E A Hunt

Reporting inspector: Miss W L R Hunter
3277

Dates of inspection: 24 – 28 January 2000

Inspection number: 187420

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
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Deaf Hill Trimdon Station County Durham
Postcode:	TS29 6BP
Telephone number:	01429 880358
Appropriate authority:	The governing body
Name of chair of governors:	Councillor G Martin
Date of previous inspection:	March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Miss W L R Hunter	Registered inspector	Science	What sort of school is it?
		Information technology	The school's results and achievements
		Design and technology	How well are pupils and students taught?
		Under fives	How well is the school led and managed?
Mr A Anderson	Lay inspector		Attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs M Lewis	Team inspector	English	
		Music	
		Physical education	
		Religious education	
		English as an additional language	
Mrs A Lowson	Team inspector	Mathematics	How good are the curricular and other opportunities?
		Art	
		Geography	
		History	
		Special educational needs	
		Equal opportunities	

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The Office for Standards in Education
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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

The school serves a tight-knit rural community of two separate villages with two separate district councils and parishes. The school has a nursery that operated in the afternoons only before Christmas but now has two sessions each day. Twenty five children now attend the nursery for half a day each, including one child who has no spoken English. There are 163 full-time pupils in the school (75 boys and 88 girls) none of who come from minority ethnic backgrounds. Twenty eight per cent of the pupils are eligible for free school meals; this is above the national average. Thirty three pupils have been registered with special educational needs (this is below the national average) and one pupil has a statement of special educational need. The school's numbers have fluctuated over past years and there is some mobility with families transferring in and out of the area. As a result, there are mixed age classes in Years 4, 5 and 6, and two small reception classes. When children start in the reception classes, their attainment is below the levels expected for their age, especially their language and literacy skills.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

As a result of the significant improvements made in recent years, the school is now becoming effective. Pupils are learning at a steady rate and this is starting to improve standards by the end of Key Stage 1 although it has not yet fed through to have the same impact on standards by the end of Key Stage 2. The basic skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well. Teaching in other subjects is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers and other staff encourage pupils to develop self-esteem and pride in their work and, as a result, pupils' attitudes and behaviour are good. Governors, parents and staff are all committed to raising standards and support the head teacher who has been the driving force behind the school's development. The school provides sound value for money.

What the school does well

- The school is led very well by the head teacher.
- Numeracy has been implemented particularly well. This has raised standards in mathematics to match those of similar schools by the end of Key Stage 2.
- The quality of teaching in literacy and numeracy is good. This is improving pupils' basic skills.
- The school cares well for its pupils. This is beginning to have an impact on the attitudes and achievement of boys.
- Provision for personal development (particularly moral and social) is good. As a result, pupils' attitudes, behaviour and attendance are also good.
- The school has very effective links with parents and has a high standing in the local community.

What could be improved

- Standards in English are below average by the end of Key Stage 2 because pupils' writing is below average.
- Standards in science are below average by the end of both key stages.
- Standards in information technology are below average by the end of Key Stage 1 and are well below by the end of Key Stage 2.
- Teachers make insufficient use of their assessments to plan their work (other than in literacy and numeracy) to ensure that pupils' skills are developed systematically as they grow older.
- Governors rely too heavily on the head teacher; they are not sufficiently involved in shaping the direction of the school and in monitoring its work.
- The school does not have a clear enough picture of how it is planning the curriculum for children under five.
- Some health and safety issues need attention.

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 March 1996 when it was found to have serious weaknesses in a number of key areas. The school has improved significantly since that time. Standards have been raised in mathematics, reading, design and technology and physical education. The school has successfully implemented the national literacy and numeracy initiatives and, despite low performance in last year's national tests for seven and 11 year olds, standards in English and mathematics have improved significantly. Standards in information technology have not been raised to a satisfactory level but the school has improved the planning of this subject and is beginning to acquire the equipment and training to deliver it. There have been radical changes in staff. The quality of teaching has improved and is now at least satisfactory, and sometimes good, in all classes. The curriculum has been re-planned in all subjects and now meets statutory requirements.

STANDARDS

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

Performance in:	compared with			
	all schools			similar schools
	1997	1998	1999	1999
English	E	B	E	E*
mathematics	D	B	E	E
science	C	A	E	E

<i>Key</i>	
well above average	A
above average	B
average	C
below average	D
well below average	E

When compared to similar schools, the school's 1999 Key Stage 2 results were well below average in mathematics and science, and were in the lowest 5 per cent of schools in English. This was a significant drop in results from the previous year but matched the targets set for this particular year group, who had suffered previously from poor teaching and disrupted education. Up to this point, the school's results had been improving in all subjects at a rate that matched the national trend of improvement. The school's emphasis on literacy and numeracy is helping to raise standards, and the school has set challenging but achievable targets for future years.

The school is still suffering from the impact of previous poor provision. This has affected pupils' basic skills and is still influencing their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. The improved quality of teaching and learning is now having an effect and this is most obvious in Key Stage 1.

By the age of five, children achieve in line with expected levels in mathematics, personal and social, creative and physical development. Their knowledge and understanding of the world is satisfactory but their achievement in language and literacy is below the levels expected for their age. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve the levels expected for seven year olds in English, mathematics and religious education, but not in science or information technology. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve the levels expected for 11 year olds in mathematics and religious education, but not in English, science or information technology. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are satisfactory but their writing skills are still weak in some areas.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes to the school	Good. Pupils are proud of their school and keen to learn.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Very good outside classrooms. Good during most lessons. A small but significant minority (usually boys) show challenging behaviour in some lessons but are managed well by their teachers.
Personal development and relationships	Good. Pupils develop a sense of their own worth. Older pupils look after younger pupils and take responsibility.
Attendance	Good. Levels of attendance have improved since the last inspection.

Pupils' good attitudes and behaviour result from the school's positive approach to laying down clear guidelines and celebrating pupils' achievements. There are isolated instances of boys losing concentration and becoming difficult during lessons but these are handled well by their teachers. Pupils have good relationships with each other and with staff. They respond well to the trust and respect that they are shown and, in turn, show this to each other and to visitors to the school. Pupils enjoy coming to school and their attendance is above the national average.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5-7 years	aged 7-11 years
Lessons seen overall	Satisfactory, sometimes good	Satisfactory, often good	Satisfactory, often good

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

Forty eight lessons were seen. All teaching was satisfactory or better, with 51 per cent of lessons where teaching was good and a further 4 per cent where teaching was very good. Teaching was particularly good in the Year 1, Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 classes. English and mathematics are taught well throughout the school. Teachers make good use of the national literacy and numeracy strategies to guide their teaching, and this is effective in focusing pupils' learning and in raising standards in both subjects. In other subjects, teaching is satisfactory but teachers make insufficient use of their assessments to guide their planning with the result that they sometimes plan too broadly. As a result, pupils make relatively steady progress but do not sustain the same rate of learning as they do in English and mathematics.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum meets statutory requirements. It is broad and balanced but the planning does not always identify when pupils' skills will be taught in some subjects. Links between planning in the nursery and reception classes could be improved. There is a wide and interesting range of extra-curricular activities.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The school makes sound provision for pupils with special educational needs. External support agencies and adult helpers are used well to supplement teachers' efforts.
Provision for pupils with English as an additional language	The school is currently working with external support to assess the needs of the non-English speaking pupil.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Good. Provision for pupils' spiritual development is satisfactory. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. The development of children's personal and social skills is a strong feature of the curriculum for children under five.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The school provides effective support and cares well for its pupils. Welfare procedures are effective although some health and safety issues need attention.

The school has formed a very strong and effective partnership with parents and is highly thought of by members of the local community. These links contribute significantly to pupils' learning both at home and in school. The school has very good procedures in place for monitoring and promoting pupils' behaviour and attendance. These are effective and have improved pupils' behaviour and rates of attendance since the last inspection. Literacy and numeracy are planned well through the school's curriculum and this supports teachers' good teaching and an improvement in standards in these subjects. The curriculum is not planned well enough in some subjects to identify how and when pupils will be taught the skills they need, and does not take full account of the school's current arrangement of mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. This is particularly true in science and information technology where it is contributing to the lower standards in these subjects. The curriculum for children under five meets requirements but the planning in the nursery and reception classes does not dovetail sufficiently to give a clear picture of the school's Early Years provision.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the head teacher and other key staff	The head teacher provides very good leadership and manages the school very well. She is supported well by other key members of staff. Subject co-ordinators are starting to realise the roles and responsibilities they need to fulfil.
How well the governors fulfil their responsibilities	Adequately. Governors are very supportive but they are not sufficiently involved in leading or monitoring the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	Very good by the head teacher but not sufficiently rigorously by governors.
The strategic use of resources	Good. Positive management has led to the development of a stable and effective team of staff. Other adults and resources are used well. Accommodation is used efficiently and the quality of displays is excellent.

The head teacher has been the driving force behind the school's improvement over recent years. She is supported well by governors and the senior management team, but subject co-ordinators are only just beginning to develop their role. Governors are very supportive and visit the school regularly, but they rely too heavily on the head teacher to set the educational and financial direction of the school, and to monitor its performance. The secretary plays an important role in supporting the financial work of the school. The school has adequate staffing, accommodation and learning resources and provides sound value for money.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Their children like school. • Their children are making good progress in school. • Their children get the right amount of work to do at home. • The teaching is good. • They are kept well informed about how their children are getting on at school. • They feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or problems. • Their children are expected to work hard and achieve their best. • The school works closely with them. • The school is well led and managed. • The school is helping their children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pupils' behaviour. • The range of activities outside lessons.

There was a very high response to the parents' questionnaire. Inspectors agree with parents' positive comments and views of the school and disagree with their criticisms. Pupils' behaviour is good although a small number of boys occasionally misbehave during lessons. The school offers a broad range of interesting extra-curricular activities to pupils, including sports, music, technology and homework clubs.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1 Standards in the school are not high enough but are improving, particularly in English and mathematics. Standards in science and information technology are still too low and need to improve.

2 In the national assessments for seven years olds in 1999 the school's results were well below the national averages in reading and writing and were below average in mathematics. The school managed to get a reasonable number of pupils through to the expected levels in these tests, and some even went on to the higher levels, but the remaining pupils did not do well – this skews the results and brings the school's overall performance down. Over the past three years the school's results have improved at a greater rate than the national trend in reading and mathematics, although there has been a slight downward trend in writing. The school has recognised this and is focusing on developing pupils' writing skills through the literacy hour and additional writing activities.

3 The school's performance in national tests for 11 year olds has varied significantly over recent years. The results have depended heavily on the group of pupils sitting the tests and the quality of their previous education in the school. For example, in 1998 the 11 year olds who sat the tests had experienced a reasonably stable education with little previous absence of teachers. As a result, their performance was good and the school's results compared well with the national picture. However the group of 11 year olds who sat the tests in 1999 had suffered severe disruption in their education and some poor teaching in the past. This had a marked impact on their performance in the tests and caused a significant dip in the school's results last year. As a result, the school's performance in 1999 was well below the national averages in English, mathematics and science. These results were even worse when compared to similar schools and put the school in the bottom 5 per cent of schools based on their performance in English. These results matched the targets set for this particular year group and although this was a true reflection of the attainment of the group of pupils who sat the tests, this low performance does not match the standards and quality of work currently taking place in the school. The school has set challenging but achievable targets for future years.

4 Despite the poor performance in national tests last year, the school is improving. There has been a general upward trend in test performance since the last inspection and standards are rising. Older pupils are still suffering from the impact of previous poor provision and this has affected their basic skills and still influences their attainment by the end of Key Stage 2. The introduction of the literacy and numeracy hours has had a positive effect on the standards but this tends to be more obvious for the younger pupils in the school – it is starting to feed through as they progress through the school. By the time pupils leave the school standards are still too low but pupils are now being taught effectively and are starting to build on their previous learning and achieve more demanding levels of work.

5 The school has recognised that boys tend to achieve lower results than girls. This pattern shows clearly when the children are assessed in the nursery and reception classes and continues throughout the school. The school is making positive efforts to raise boys' standards but the changing balance of boys and girls in each year group is another factor that skews the school's test results from year to year.

6 Children come into the nursery with a mix of skills. They make steady progress but by the time they transfer into the reception classes, their attainment is still below the levels expected for their age, especially their language and literacy skills. Children continue to make steady progress in reception with the result that they achieve satisfactory levels of work. Their mathematical skills improve well because teachers have focused on numeracy for the past two years and are doing this effectively. A similar focus

has started on literacy and this is beginning to improve children's language and literacy skills although they are still weaker than expected by the age of five. Children develop good personal and social skills during their time in the nursery and reception classes. They learn to take responsibility and to work together, and this underpins the good relationships and behaviour in these classes.

7 By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils achieve the levels expected for seven year olds in English, mathematics and religious education, but not in science or information technology. There were some gaps in the science curriculum that was taught to pupils in Year 2 last year and this affected their performance. Pupils had not been taught some topics and did not know enough about physical processes (such as sound, light and dark, forces and movement, and using electricity) by the time they were assessed. The school has recognised this problem and is planning to change the order in which topics are taught to make sure that the same situation does not happen again. In information technology, pupils acquire basic word processing skills but they do not learn to handle information effectively or to use floor robots.

8 By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils achieve the levels expected for 11 year olds in mathematics and religious education, but not in English, science or information technology. Pupils' speaking, listening and reading skills are satisfactory but their writing skills are still weak in some areas. Pupils struggle with the technical aspects of writing, such as the correct use of grammar and punctuation. The school has already identified this through its own analysis of pupils' performance and has introduced a regular writing lesson to bridge this gap and improve standards. In science, pupils have sound knowledge of scientific facts but they struggle to explain how to carry out investigations and to record and interpret their results in different ways. They do not make effective use of information technology to support their work in science. Pupils' information technology skills suffer in other ways. For instance, they do not have a clear understanding of how to use databases and CD-ROMs to store and retrieve information, have a very limited understanding of spreadsheets, and only experience one example of a computer being used to control a physical event. Pupils do not have the skills necessary to combine text and graphics effectively or to use information technology to support the presentation of their work in other subjects. Again, the school is fully aware of this situation and has put a strategic long term development plan in place to underpin the improvement in standards in this subject.

9 By the age of seven, standards are satisfactory in design and technology, history, geography, art, music and physical education. Standards are also satisfactory in all these subjects by the age of 11.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

10 Pupils' attitudes to their work, their behaviour and the relationships within the school are good. Pupils' personal development is also good. The school has maintained strengths in these areas since the last inspection and this, linked to the better teaching that is now taking place, is supporting the improvement in pupils' academic standards.

11 Pupils' attitudes towards learning are good. The vast majority of pupils are confident, motivated, enthusiastic and keen to learn. They listen carefully to their teachers and visitors, ask and answer questions, and willingly offer their own ideas and suggestions. For example, in an assembly older pupils listened to each others' ideas about why certain people had been identified as icons of the 20th century. They then listened carefully as the visiting vicar explained why characters such as Martin Luther King, Ghandi and Mother Theresa made important contributions to society. Similarly, in a mathematics lesson in Year 3 pupils listened to and supported each other very well during a mental arithmetic game of "Who Wants to be a Millionaire".

12 The majority of parents are happy with the high standards of good behaviour in the school but a small number of parents expressed some concerns. Parents are right to have positive views of the school, but they are also right to draw attention the behaviour of a small minority of pupils. Pupils' behaviour is generally good but a small number of older boys occasionally misbehave during lessons. Most pupils

settle quickly to their work and concentrate well. There are a few times when a small number of the older boys become difficult during lessons but this is handled well by their teachers and is not allowed to affect the learning for other pupils. Pupils enjoy their lessons and a considerable number of them take part in the good range of extra-curricular activities on offer.

13 The vast majority of pupils behave well and act in a mature and responsible way at all times, for instance when going into the hall for assemblies and lunch. Behaviour at breaks and lunchtimes is very good and allows pupils to play together without any problems. Bullying is not a problem. There were three fixed term exclusions in the school year prior to the inspection involving three boys. These were a result of the school's staged behaviour management procedures and have been very effective in supporting the clear expectations of acceptable behaviour. There have been no exclusions during this academic year to date.

14 Relationships in the school are good. Pupils relate well to their teachers, to other adults they come into contact with, and also to one another. They are polite, courteous and welcoming to visitors. Pupils work well together, sharing resources, taking turns and listening to each other. For example in a history lesson in the Year 5/6 class where pupils worked well together to look at photographs and historical documents and discover what life was like in the local area during Victorian times. Pupils show good respect for their environment. They look after the school and are proud of the high quality displays of their work.

15 Pupils' personal development is good. This area is given a strong focus in the nursery and this gives children a good start. They learn to work and play together but also work with a range of adults and become confident to work on their own. As a result, children develop a good range of social skills, which help them to develop into well rounded individuals as they grow older. Pupils respond well when asked to take responsibility for their own work. For example, in the reception classes children take it in turns to take the class teddy-bear mascot home each evening. They record what "Ted" does in a diary and also get their parents to make a comment that can be read to the rest of the class the next day. Elsewhere in the school, pupils carry out their own research and work independently in many lessons. Older pupils are given tasks that carry responsibility, such as class helpers and prefects, and they respond well to this.

16 Levels of attendance have significantly improved since the previous inspection. Attendance levels are now good and slightly above the national average - there is almost no unauthorised absence. Pupils enjoy coming to school. They come to school on time and lessons, assemblies, breaks and other activities start and finish promptly.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

17 The quality of teaching in the school has improved significantly since the last inspection. There have been radical changes in staff, and teachers have had a systematic programme of training in literacy and numeracy. These factors have positively influenced the quality of the teaching taking place and this in turn is contributing well to pupils' learning and the improvements in standards. However, pupils' learning in Key Stage 2 (particularly Years 5 and 6) is still being limited and affected by the previous disruptions to their education and the poor provision they received in some classes, which affected their basic skills of literacy and numeracy.

18 All the teaching seen was satisfactory or better, with good teaching in just over half of the lessons and occasional examples of very good teaching. Teaching was particularly good in the Year 1, Year 4/5 and Year 5/6 classes. In these classes, teachers are confident and enthusiastic about their work. They focus the learning of individual pupils well and use resources and questions particularly well during their lessons. For example, in a Year 1 science lesson on materials, the teacher made effective use of resources, books and posters to explain how oil is used to make plastic. In an English lesson in the Year 4/5 class, the teacher used very well chosen questions to check that pupils understood the concept of planning and

developing their story writing. In a mathematics lesson in the Year 5/6 class, the teacher kept all pupils tightly focused on their work by insisting on the use of correct terminology and vocabulary during a quick-fire mental arithmetic session working with numbers to 100.

19 Teaching in the nursery and reception classes is satisfactory and sometimes good. As a result, children make steady progress in their learning. The school benefits from having small group sizes in these classes which means that individual children get a high amount of adult attention. This is particularly effective in promoting children's personal and social skills, and is starting to have a similar impact on their language skills. For example, during a lesson in the nursery the nursery nurse worked with individual children painting pictures of a vase of irises and a parent worked with another child printing then counting large and small aeroplane shapes. The teacher read and talked about the story of "Three Billy Goats Gruff" with the other children. During this lesson, each adult carefully questioned the children to engage them in conversation and encouraged them to use appropriate language. In a reception class music lesson the small group size meant that children had the chance to handle a wide range of instruments and suggested some interesting words, such as "tinkling", to describe their sounds. The teaching for children under five promotes their basic skills effectively but it occasionally lacks sufficient purpose and focus in the activities where adults are not specifically involved. For instance, children in the nursery were encouraged to experience a model of "The Millennium Dome" and thoroughly enjoyed playing in this, but this activity was not planned tightly enough to extend children's knowledge and understanding as much as it could. Similarly, in a reception class mathematics lesson children working in groups without a direct input from the teacher had a tendency to drift away from their work and did not make as much progress as they could during the lesson.

20 Teaching is satisfactory and often good in Key Stages 1 and 2. English and mathematics are taught well throughout the school. Teachers make good use of the national literacy and numeracy strategies to guide their teaching, and this is effective in focusing pupils' learning and in raising standards in both subjects. Teachers successfully plan activities that are matched to the different pupils in their classes. This focus in teachers' planning means that pupils are developing their basic skills and learning at a fast rate because their tasks are tailored specifically to their needs. Teachers make their objectives clearly known to the pupils by displaying them in the classrooms, and this helps to keep pupils interested and motivated but also helps pupils to understand how they are learning and what progress they are making. For example, in a Year 1 English lesson pupils were disappointed when they finished reading the story of "The Three Little Pigs" but the teacher carefully explained the need to move on to look at rhyming words in the story. She made pupils realise that they could still use the focus of the story to start to make sentences, such as "I saw a pig in a wig doing a jig". Similarly, in a Year 2 mathematics lesson the teacher regularly brought pupils back to the point of the lesson which was to recognise odd and even numbers and to know the place value that each digit represented in a hundred, tens and units number. In this way, pupils began to see the progress they were making from their previous work. For instance, the higher attaining pupils realised that their understanding of place value allowed them to put numbers in order from highest to lowest, while pupils with special educational needs managed to identify missing numbers from a number square up to 50.

21 In other subjects, teaching is satisfactory but it is not as sharply focused as English and mathematics. As a result, pupils make relatively steady progress but do not sustain the same rate of learning as they do in English and mathematics. Teachers make insufficient use of their assessments to guide their planning with the result that they sometimes plan too broadly. For example, they often set one objective for the entire class without teasing out what different groups of pupils can do and planning to meet their different needs. This is most obvious in science and is one of the reasons why standards in science are too low by the end of Year 6.

22 Teachers provide support for pupils with special educational needs mainly through activities within class that have been adapted and modified to meet the different abilities of the pupils. This is particularly effective within the literacy and numeracy hours, where pupils make good progress in their

learning. There are effective communications between teachers and support staff, and this enables support assistants to help pupils work towards the targets identified in their individual education plans.

23 Teachers do not have sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach information technology effectively to the older pupils. They have not had sufficient experience with suitable equipment and, although confident to use computers to support their own work, they lack expertise in teaching pupils the skills they need. This is a major factor influencing pupils' learning and the subsequent low standards in this subject. The school has recognised this and has planned a systematic and comprehensive programme of training for teachers to run alongside the introduction of new equipment into the school.

24 Teachers are aware of the fact that boys are under-achieving throughout the school. They try hard to resolve this by making sure that boys are questioned carefully during lessons and by praising their achievements. This is usually successful, for example in an English lesson in the Year 5/6 class where the teacher specifically targeted some boys because they did not volunteer answers during the closing part of the lesson. However, in other cases this approach does not work so well. For instance, in a Year 2 science lesson the boys became inattentive and boisterous as they struggled to explain what they found out during their investigations.

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

25 The school's curriculum has improved greatly since the last inspection. It now meets statutory requirements and provides a suitably broad range of learning experiences for pupils. The school introduced the national numeracy strategy on a pilot basis a year earlier than many other schools. This has been effective and has been the main driving force behind the improvement in mathematics standards over recent years. Literacy was introduced a year later and this is starting to show a similar impact on English standards.

26 The curriculum for children under five covers all the required areas of learning and provides a sufficiently broad range of experiences. However, the planning in the nursery and reception classes follows two entirely different approaches. It does not dovetail sufficiently to give a clear picture of the provision for children during this foundation stage of their learning. As a result, the teaching is not always as focused as it could be to build on what children know and understand when they start in the school. Consequently, although children still learn at a steady rate, their achievements are not as high as they could be by the age of five if the teaching and planning was more carefully focused.

27 The school is using the new nationally recommended guidance to plan the curriculum in most subjects. This provides a sound framework for teachers and makes sure that the content of the curriculum is broad and balanced. It also provides a clear picture of the skills that pupils need to develop, but the school has yet to identify how and where these will be developed in some subjects. As a result, although the content of the curriculum is covered soundly in teachers' planning, the school cannot yet guarantee that pupils in the mixed age classes in Key Stage 2 are developing their skills systematically. This is particularly true in science and information technology, and contributes to the lower standards in these subjects. In science, the curriculum is planned for the current arrangement of classes in Key Stage 2 and does not take sufficient account of the skills that pupils in different year groups should learn. In information technology, the curriculum is carefully planned to identify the skills required in each year group but there is no indication of how or when these skills will be taught. A similar situation occurs with the use of the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. Although the school plans the overall curriculum for religious education well, the programme of work is not taught sequentially in some mixed age classes to ensure that pupils receive the entire programme as planned. This does not affect overall standards in religious education but it means that pupils' learning could be better.

28 The curriculum is enhanced by specialist teaching provided by peripatetic music teachers, and by

sports coaching provided by the Easington and District skills team. In addition, there is a good range of extra-curricular activities including football, netball, rugby, choir, recorders, a design and technology club and a homework club for Year 6 pupils. Pupils make good use of this extra-curricular provision, and most activities are well supported by a mixture of both boys and girls.

29 The school promotes equal opportunities well and pays particular attention to gender issues. Staff are aware that boys are disproportionately represented in lower ability groups and within special educational needs, and work hard to support boys in raising their aspirations and standards of work. The school makes sure that boys are represented in the weekly “Achievement Assembly”, and when choosing resources, they look for books and activities that will appeal specifically to boys, for example in the choice of the new Harry Potter books in the library. The school has no previous experience of pupils with English as an additional language. A child has recently joined the nursery and the school is currently working with appropriate external support agencies to assess the needs and consider the curriculum required.

30 The school’s arrangements and provision for pupils with special educational needs have improved well. In the last inspection procedures for the support of pupils with special educational needs were unmanageable, systems and procedures were not clear and for some pupils, provision was not matched either to their individual education plans or to the curriculum. This is no longer the case. Targets on individual education plans are now specific and focus on aspects of literacy, numeracy and pupils’ levels of concentration. Pupils who have statements of special educational needs have arrangements for their statutory annual reviews fully met. In literacy and numeracy lessons, support assistants work with pupils in class where this is possible, but all activities are carefully planned by the class teacher to provide worthwhile and achievable learning opportunities for pupils with special educational needs. Assistants, who liaise closely with outside agencies, support pupils who require speech therapy or physiotherapy. All pupils with special educational needs receive the full National Curriculum offered by the school, and they are included in social activities organised by the school, which support their social, moral and personal development.

31 The school makes effective provision for pupils’ personal and social education. Pupils are expected to develop a personal code of values, in which looking after others, and developing a feeling of community within the school is actively encouraged. Signs and posters around the school encourage pupils to say “please” and “thank you”, and to show respect and be considerate of others. Residential visits by older pupils give them opportunities to develop their personal and social education in a setting away from home and school. Pupils’ knowledge and understanding of health education and facts about drugs are developed through a modular programme delivered by local police officers. This programme looks at aspects of being part of a community, anti-vandal behaviour and substance abuse. Pupils also undertake educational visits to look at the world of work in the emergency services, and develop positive attitudes towards keeping safe at school, home and in the community. Health education and sex education are taught appropriately within the science curriculum. Similarly, aspects of basic hygiene, physical fitness and the importance of a correct diet are taught within the physical education curriculum.

32 The school makes satisfactory provision for pupils’ spiritual development. Provision for moral, social and cultural development is good. Spiritual development is promoted primarily through collective worship, but also in the way pupils are encouraged to reflect on aspects of their work within the curriculum. The school ensures that a spiritual dimension to learning is part of the planning in many subjects. Collective worship is planned carefully and pupils are encouraged to reflect on their experiences and contribute to worship by reading out a prayer or a poem that they have written. Pupils are given sufficient opportunities to reflect, raise questions and appreciate other faiths and cultures.

33 The school effectively teaches the differences between right and wrong. As a result, pupils develop good attitudes and relationships and a sense of self-discipline. The school’s atmosphere reflects a happy and caring family. This supports pupils’ personal development well and encourages the promotion

of correct attitudes and values. The school's aims include a statement written by the pupils themselves that expects them to be role models and "ambassadors" for the school. Older pupils aspire to achieve this and set an example to their younger schoolmates. For instance, pupils in Year 5 and 6 become classroom helpers, monitors and prefects. These pupils are elected by their peers, and are expected to be role models for other pupils. Pupils have many opportunities to develop positive attitudes and take responsibility for themselves and others. This is a further improvement since the last inspection when few systems were seen to develop and extend pupils' independence and sense of responsibility.

34 Social responsibility is developed well, both within the life of the school and within the local and wider community. Pupils are encouraged to respect the views and opinions of others, and have been very active in their support for many local and national charities. The school has a high standing in the local community. Positive links with parents and the community make an impact on the first-hand learning experiences of pupils. For instance, local shops, churches, farms and businesses welcome pupils from the school on visits while local artists, historians and authors are invited into the school to work with pupils. Links with other schools provide pupils with the opportunity to develop sporting activities within the local and wider community and help to ease the transfer to secondary education at the end of Year 6.

35 Pupils are taught to appreciate their own rich cultural heritage through subjects such as history and geography. For example, pupils study the old mining industry by looking at documents and photographs, and begin to appreciate local history through stories retold by members of their own families and people in the local community. The cultural and ethnic diversity of Britain and the wider world is explored effectively through the geography curriculum, as pupils study communities in Africa and the Caribbean, and other major world religions in religious education lessons. A very effective display of work in the main school entrance celebrates the richness and diversity of other cultures and religions through the theme of light, for instance the celebration of Divali is explored as pupils listen to the story of Rama and Sita, make divas and experiment with rangoli patterns. The last inspection stated that pupils had little awareness of the many cultures in Britain and the world, but this is no longer the case. The school has formed effective links with the local community and these help to promote pupils' social and cultural development.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

36 This is a caring school that provides effective support for its pupils. A strong emphasis is placed on raising pupils' self-esteem and this is starting to have an effect on raising the achievement of boys. The systems for monitoring attendance, behaviour and pupils' personal development contribute well to the improving standards in the school, but the systems for assessment and monitoring of pupils' learning are not used as effectively to influence their achievements.

37 The school supports pupils effectively and continually strives to promote their welfare. The head teacher provides very strong pastoral leadership and the teaching staff are very caring, approachable and supportive. All staff (both teaching and non-teaching) have very good understanding of the school's pastoral and welfare procedures, and implement them consistently and conscientiously. Pupils are supervised well and there are appropriate measures for dealing with minor injuries and first aid.

38 The school makes very good use of support agencies, non-teaching assistants and parent helpers to support pupils' welfare. The school's non-teaching staff are totally dedicated to the children they support. They are well deployed and provide very good support to teachers and pupils. For example, the support provided for pupils with special educational needs is effective and has a positive impact on their learning. The school makes an early assessment of pupils who may require further help with their learning, and pupils' individual education plans have specific targets, with appropriate emphasis placed on literacy and numeracy skills. The school's procedures for special educational needs meet the national guidance in the Code of Practice.

39 Procedures for monitoring and promoting discipline and good behaviour are very good. The school has positive behaviour and anti-bullying policies that are supplemented by school and class rules, which include input from the pupils themselves. These work well and underpin the good behaviour and relationships in the school. Support for pupils with emotional and behavioural difficulties, both from the school staff and outside agencies, is also very good and this has a very positive impact on the high standards of behaviour achieved. Good attendance is actively promoted and carefully monitored. Absence is correctly recorded, conscientiously followed up and appropriate action taken is to ensure that high levels of attendance are maintained.

40 The head teacher and class teachers have good understanding of the personal and individual needs of the pupils in their care. In theory, the school has very good procedures for monitoring and recording pupils' academic attainment and progress. Pupils' work is regularly marked and assessed, and class teachers maintain comprehensive records on every child. These procedures have improved since the last inspection. In practice, however, teachers do not make sufficient use of the information gathered by these assessments to guide their planning in most subjects. The exception to this is in mathematics where teachers are comfortable with the assessment arrangements introduced alongside numeracy and are using these well to track and support pupils' learning in this subject. This is one of the reasons why the school's standards in mathematics have risen so quickly in recent years.

41 Appropriate child protection procedures are in place. Procedures for promoting health and safety are satisfactory although governors have not carried out formal assessments of risks in the school. Consequently, a number of health and safety issues have been brought to governors' attention following this inspection.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

42 The school has formed a very effective partnership with parents and these links contribute significantly to pupils' learning both at home and in school.

43 Relationships between the school and parents are very good. Parents think very highly of the school and this showed through their positive comments about what they feel the school is doing well. Parents feel that the head teacher and staff are very approachable and that the school works closely with them - they would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems concerning their children. The school enjoys the active support of parents and governors who regularly help in the classrooms and accompany the children on school trips. There is also an active parents and friends association that is pivotal in organising social events and raising funds for the school. Parents' involvement in their children's work at home is good and makes a strong contribution to pupils' reading and homework.

44 Communications between the school and home are good. The school sends out regular informative newsletters and there are frequent communications to parents about specific events and activities. The school publishes a comprehensive and informative prospectus and keeps parents well informed about curriculum matters. For instance, there have been information meetings for parents on topics such as literacy and numeracy. Parents are kept well informed about their children's progress. The annual progress reports written by the teachers are good. They indicate what pupils can and cannot do, explain where progress has been successfully made and identify where pupils are finding difficulties. Parents are offered appropriate opportunities to discuss their children's work and progress with their teachers, and they value this contact.

45 Parents of children with special educational needs are regularly consulted and are fully involved in the support given to these children. For instance, parents are invited into school to discuss their child's needs with the special educational needs co-ordinator and the class teacher. The school works closely with parents to support each child and their progress is regularly reviewed. This is an improvement since the last inspection.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

46 The head teacher provides very good leadership and manages the school well. She has been the driving force behind the school's significant improvement since the last inspection.

47 The head teacher's monitoring and evaluation of the school's performance has given her a very clear, accurate and realistic understanding of the school's strengths and weaknesses. Following the significant weaknesses identified during the last inspection, she took a long term systematic view of how the school needed to improve and of the staffing changes necessary to achieve this. A number of difficult management decisions have been taken resulting in major staff changes in the school. As a result, there is now an effective and stable staff team in place for the first time in several years, and this is already showing improvements in the teaching and quality of pupils' learning.

48 The head teacher has assembled an effective and supportive senior management team. These key staff share her understanding and awareness of the school's needs and are committed to continuing the developments and improvements that have started to take place. For example, the deputy head teacher is leading the development of information technology as a priority area in the school, and another senior manager is focusing on the use of assessment systems to guide curriculum continuity and planning across the different year groups. Some subject co-ordinators are relatively new to their posts and are beginning to realise the roles and responsibilities they need to fulfil. The literacy and numeracy co-ordinators are involved in a basic programme of monitoring but other co-ordinators do not yet monitor the standards or provision in their subjects effectively.

49 Governors are very supportive and are committed to continuing the school's development. A number of parent governors work in the school on a regular basis and are becoming involved in decisions and discussions that will shape the school's future. The governing body meets its statutory requirements, but relies too heavily on the head teacher to set the education and financial direction of the school, and to monitor its performance. Governors do not ask sufficiently searching questions and do not hold the school accountable for its performance. They have been loyal and supportive over recent years but have not been the main influence or driving factor in the school's improvement since the last inspection. Governors lack a critical edge and need to take more responsibility for the school in partnership with the head teacher and staff.

50 The head teacher has developed an excellent working relationship with the school secretary. This is a crucial partnership in managing and monitoring the school's finances and in ensuring best value, in the absence of sufficient governor involvement. The school makes good use of the resources available. Money is spent wisely and is targeted at areas identified as priorities through the school development plan, and the school capitalises on any available support from outside, such as the provision of a new computer system by Walker's Crisps. The school plans to further develop its range of information technology resources through the use of a national grant to support the purchase of new computers and training for staff in the coming year. There are adequate staff in the school and they are deployed carefully to provide a balance of experience and "new blood" across the year groups. The school provides sound value for money.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

51 The school should now:

(a) Raise standards in science by:

- making sure that pupils are taught enough about physical processes (such as sound, light and dark, forces and movement, and using electricity) before they are assessed in Year 2;
- planning the curriculum to identify the specific skills that pupils should be taught in each year group;
- planning tasks that encourage pupils of all ages to record their observations and results in a variety of ways;
- making use of information technology to support pupils' recording and investigations in science.

(paragraphs 1, 7, 8, 21, 27, 85 – 89)

(b) Raise standards in information technology by:

- planning how and when pupils will be taught the skills they need to learn in each aspect of the subject;
- updating the school's equipment to provide opportunities for pupils to work with appropriate software, including CD-ROMs;
- increasing teachers' knowledge and confidence in using new technology in the classroom;
- increasing the use of information technology to support pupils' work in other subjects, including data handling in mathematics and science.

(paragraphs 1, 7, 8, 23, 27, 89, 106 – 109)

The school has already identified information technology as a priority area for improvement in the school development plan and has put a strategic long term development plan in place.

(c) Use the effective practice developed through literacy and numeracy to improve the rate of pupils' learning in other subjects by:

- setting precise objectives to identify what pupils are expected to learn in their lessons
- identifying opportunities to assess whether pupils have learnt what was intended
- making use of the results of these assessments to guide the planning of future lessons to build on what pupils do (or do not) already know.

(paragraphs 19, 21, 36)

The school has already identified the need to develop the use of assessment to inform teachers' planning and has appointed a member of the senior management team to consider this issue.

OTHER ISSUES WHICH SHOULD BE CONSIDERED BY THE SCHOOL

- Increasing the involvement of governors in setting the agenda for the school's development and in monitoring its performance. (paragraph 49)
- Improving standards of writing, particularly by the end of Key Stage 2. (paragraphs 1, 8, 69, 70) The school has already identified this as a priority and is tackling the issue.
- Developing a clearer picture of the curriculum planned for the under fives. (paragraphs 26, 54) The school has already identified this as an area for future development.
- Dealing with the health and safety issues reported to the governing body. (paragraph 41)

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	48
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	51

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very Poor
	4%	51%	46%			

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)	12.5	163
Number of full-time pupils eligible for free school meals		46

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Special educational needs	Nursery	YR – Y6
Number of pupils with statements of special educational needs	0	1
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	1	32

English as an additional language	Nursery	
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	1	

Pupil mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	6
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	11

Attendance

Authorised absence	%
School data	7
National comparative data	5.4

Unauthorised absence	%
School data	0
National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	12	19	31

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	4	6	8
	Girls	16	18	18
	Total	20	24	26
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	65% (69%)	77% (74%)	84% (95%)
	National	82% (80%)	83% (81%)	87% (85%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 and above	Boys	7	8	7
	Girls	18	18	18
	Total	25	26	25
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	81% (79%)	84% (74%)	81% (63%)
	National	82% (81%)	86% (85%)	87% (86%)

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2

Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 2 for the latest reporting year	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
	1999	15	8	23

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	5	7	10
	Girls	5	5	5
	Total	10	12	15
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	43% (67%)	52% (75%)	65% (83%)
	National	70% (65%)	69% (59%)	78% (69%)

Teachers' Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 4 and above	Boys	0	5	4
	Girls	1	5	4
	Total	1	10	8
Percentage of pupils at NC level 4 or above	School	4% (58%)	43% (38%)	35% (58%)
	National	68% (65%)	69% (65%)	75% (72%)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	0
Pakistani	0
Bangladeshi	0
Chinese	1
White	162
Any other minority ethnic group	0

This table refers to pupils of compulsory school age only.

Exclusions in the last school year

	Fixed period	Permanent
Black – Caribbean heritage	0	0
Black – African heritage	0	0
Black – other	0	0
Indian	0	0
Pakistani	0	0
Bangladeshi	0	0
Chinese	0	0
White	3	0
Other minority ethnic groups	0	0

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y6

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	9.1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	20.1
Average class size	23.3

Education support staff: YR – Y6

Total number of education support staff	3
Total aggregate hours worked per week	23

Qualified teachers and support staff: nursery

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	12.5

Total number of education support staff	1
Total aggregate hours worked per week	33

Number of pupils per FTE adult	6.7
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FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	1998-99
	£
Total income	302,817
Total expenditure	302,672
Expenditure per pupil	1,654
Balance brought forward from previous year	17,255
Balance carried forward to next year	17,400

Results of the survey of parents and carers

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out	188
Number of questionnaires returned	102

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school.	61	33	5	1	0
My child is making good progress in school.	59	37	3	1	0
Behaviour in the school is good.	42	47	9	2	0
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home.	47	47	3	1	2
The teaching is good.	60	38	0	0	2
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on.	56	41	3	0	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem.	69	27	3	1	0
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best.	64	36	0	0	0
The school works closely with parents.	43	55	1	0	1
The school is well led and managed.	54	42	2	0	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible.	48	51	0	0	1
The school provides an interesting range of activities outside lessons.	35	46	8	0	10

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

52 The school operates a nursery offering children half-day sessions. The numbers in the nursery have been low with the result that the nursery teacher taught part-time in reception last term. Since January, the nursery has had sufficient children to operate both morning and afternoon sessions. The numbers are still quite low and this means that children benefit from a high amount of adult contact. When children start in the nursery they have a very wide mix of skills. Most children have limited language, literacy and mathematical skills. They have reasonable personal and social skills but this is an area where the nursery works hard to make sure that children learn to work and play well together, and to settle quickly into the school. The teaching in the nursery is satisfactory, sometimes good and occasionally very good. As a result, children make steady progress. The nursery teacher and nursery nurse work well as an effective team to promote children's learning.

53 The school takes children into reception once a year in September. Last term, the nursery teacher taught one small group. Since January, the school has appointed a newly qualified teacher to teach this group and allow the nursery teacher to return to the nursery on a full-time basis. When children start in the reception classes, their attainment is below the levels expected for their age in language and literacy and matches expected levels in other areas. The teaching in reception is satisfactory and sometimes good. As a result, children learn at a steady pace. They build soundly on their previous work in the nursery and are prepared well for the National Curriculum. By the age of five, children are working at appropriate levels for their age in all areas of learning, except language and literacy where they are still below what is expected for their age.

54 The curriculum for children under five is broad and covers all the required areas of learning. However, the planning in the nursery and reception classes follows two entirely different approaches. The nursery plans in a very detailed way against eight areas of experience while the reception classes plan to the National Curriculum, even for children who are not yet ready for this. This is confusing and means that the planning does not dovetail sufficiently to give a clear picture of the provision for children during this foundation stage of their learning. As a result, the teaching is not always as focused as it could be to build on what children know and understand when they start in the school. Consequently, although children still learn at a steady rate, their achievements are not as high as they could be by the age of five if the teaching and planning was more carefully focused. The school has recognised this and started a full review of the provision for early years in preparation for the introduction of a new curriculum next September.

55 Children make steady progress in developing their language and literacy skills through the nursery and the reception classes but, by the age of five, children are still working below the levels expected for their age.

56 In the nursery, children often choose to work alone on their independent tasks. Only a few speak and interact with each other, for instance when two boys looked at the story of "Billy Goat Gruff" and acted it out with the use of stick puppets. Many are less assured in their speaking and interactions with each other. They speak little, and few have developed friendships. They communicate in single words and with head shakes and nods. Children respond more confidently in their structured activities with adults in small groups and in a large class group. For example, when talking about the things they see when they look at a vase of flowers with the nursery nurse, and when copying the class teacher's actions to show different sounds, such as "n" for "noisy aeroplane". Adults promote language well, for example in small groups and in class circle time when children learn action rhymes and songs, such as "Incey Wincey Spider" and "Hey Diddle Diddle". As a result, children begin to understand that some words make similar

sounds and rhyme with each other. Children have opportunities for “play writing” and sharing books with adults. Although there are suitable activities and resources to provide children with other role-play activities, for instance “The Millennium Dome”, these experiences are not structured or focused tightly enough to extend children’s their imagination and develop their language and literacy skills.

57 In the reception classes children continue to build steadily on their basic skills. Teachers capture children’s interest well with the use of stories and rhymes. This shows in the children’s response to whole class situations when they listen to the teacher and understand what they need to do in their language group tasks. They are beginning to learn to take turns and listen to each other. In small group activities children receive sound support from teachers and other adults, for instance when they make a giant’s shopping list and practise their pencil control. Staff support the children well by asking questions, making suggestions and making good use of vocabulary. About half of the four year olds in the current reception classes have immature speech and some speak incoherently. Incorrect pronunciation and confusion of sounds for instance between “s” and “sh” and “b” and “h” slows down their acquisition and understanding of sounds and letters. Children’s early writing skills develop slowly. Some children attempt to copy underneath the teacher’s writing but few write recognisable letter shapes and their names independently. Teachers make good use of an appropriate selection of books to promote literacy and children choose to sit in the comfortable book areas to look at and enjoy these books. Children have regular opportunities for role-play activities, for instance in the “Deaf Hill Hospital”, but there are few non-structured opportunities for children to develop their early writing skills.

58 The nursery and reception classes provide a satisfactory range of activities to promote children’s mathematical understanding. Consequently, children make steady progress in their learning and make good progress in their numeracy skills. By the age of five, children are working at appropriate levels for their age. In the nursery children learn to count to 5 and recognise the numerals 1-3. They place numbers in the correct order on a number line and begin to represent numbers as sets of objects, for instance by drawing the correct number of spots on a snake and matching the correct number of dots on dominoes. Children begin to name and recognise triangles, circles, squares and rectangles.

59 In the reception classes, children develop their numeracy skills well. They sing number rhymes and jingles and begin to count backwards and forwards to 10. Simple subtraction is introduced as children sing “Five Little Men in a Flying Saucer”. The majority of five year olds can count confidently, show 6 fingers when asked and know that “taking one away” is the same as “one less”. Teachers use practical activities well to develop children’s mathematical understanding. For example, children throw large sponge dice, recognise the number and then jump to the correct number on a lily-pad game.

60 The nursery places a strong emphasis on promoting children’s personal and social development. As a result, by the age of five, children have satisfactory personal and social skills. Children are encouraged to take responsibility from an early age. For instance, they register themselves as being present by placing their name cards on a board, and also decide when to take their milk and biscuit break each session. Children are taught the importance of working together and sharing. Circle time activities are given a high priority and this time is used well to encourage children to listen to pay attention and listen to each other. For example, the teacher uses a “magic wand” full of “fairy dust” to help children think about what they want to say and to give them the confidence to talk in front of their classmates. At other times children are given a teddy bear to look after to encourage them to think of others and to pay attention.

61 In the reception classes, children take part in formal whole class lessons, such as literacy and numeracy, but also experience a range of less structured activities, including role-play. For example, groups of children play in the “Deaf Hill Hospital” and in “shops” and “offices”. Circle time again features strongly. For instance, in one class the teacher “passed a smile” around the class before reading a poem about a rabbit who ate a snowman’s nose. Children were encouraged to listen carefully and talk about how the poem made them feel. In other activities, teachers passed “little tickles” around the class

and asked children to take responsibility for looking after the class teddy-bear mascots overnight. Children learn that they are valued members of the school's community. They take part in assemblies and join in willingly with whole school events.

62 Children make steady progress in developing their knowledge and understanding of the world. As a result, by the age of five, they are working at appropriate levels for their age. Children learn about the world around them by looking at different materials and investigating their properties. For example, children in the nursery have looked at the differences between a pine-cone, a sponge and a wooden spoon, while reception children have investigated floating and sinking. Children begin to understand the principles of growth by planting seeds and bulbs. They visit a local farm to see how different animals live, and visit the coast to experience a different habitat. Teachers use role-play appropriately to develop children's knowledge and understanding. For instance, in the nursery, children use torches inside their model of "The Millennium Dome" to look at the effects of light and shadow. In the hospital and shop role-play areas, reception children act out their imaginative experiences of life in these environments.

63 Children experience a broad range of creative activities in the nursery and reception classes. They make steady progress and, by the age of five, are working at appropriate levels for their age. Children experiment with colour and shape, for instance by printing repeating patterns using their hand-prints. They begin to copy and draw real-life objects, such as painting a vase of irises using purple, yellow and green paint, and painting simple portraits of themselves. Children work in three-dimensions using play dough, for example making figures of aliens, and by making models from construction kits and recycled materials, such as spaceships from washing liquid bottles. They begin to work with food, for example making pizza linked to a topic of "A taste of Italy", and start to experience textiles and fabrics by simple weaving. Children experience and handle a range of musical instruments and are encouraged to "make a sound" using the percussion instruments on display in their classrooms. Children are introduced to simple drawing packages on the computer and use this to develop basic mouse control skills at the same time as producing colourful pictures, such as caterpillars and trees.

64 Children make satisfactory progress in developing their physical skills in the nursery and they make good progress in the reception classes. Both nursery and reception children have the opportunity to develop an awareness of space and work frequently in the school hall. By the age of five, children are working at appropriate levels for their age.

65 Children in the nursery use the outside area on a frequent basis. They use mobile toys and equipment such as tricycles, scooters and prams although the use of balancing and climbing equipment is not in place throughout the year. The outside play area for children under five is secure but bleak. The hard surface is sloping and makes balancing and pushing difficult and there are insufficient markings and equipment to encourage imaginative play. The school has recognised this and is planning to work with parents to develop and improve this area.

66 Reception children follow instructions well to move "fast" and "slow" to music. They learn and practise hopping, skipping and gliding and sliding movements to music. For instance, they use their imaginations well to pretend to be snowflakes performing light and fluttery movements and contrast this with the heavier, quicker and sharper movements made by penguins on the ice. Children learn to make simple sequences and move confidently in a line moving in one direction without tripping, falling or bumping into each other.

67 Almost all children handle tools and construction materials safely and with good manipulative skill. They develop fine motor skills well with the use of a variety of activities such as jigsaws, threading activities and string painting. Children are given ample opportunities to build models using a wide range of different construction kits and materials.

ENGLISH

68 By the age of seven, standards in English are satisfactory. Standards in reading, writing and speaking and listening are all satisfactory. However, in the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below national averages. The school's performance in reading was equally low when compared to similar schools, but was about average in writing. Girls performed better than boys in these tests. Despite these low results, the school is showing an improving trend in reading but this is not the case for writing. The difference between inspectors' judgements and the test results are due to the fact that the introduction of the literacy hour in Key Stage 1 has improved standards in all areas of English in the past 12 months. This is having a positive impact on pupils' learning and has raised reading skills and is starting to improve writing, although this area is still weaker.

69 By the age of 11, standards in English are not high enough. Standards in reading and speaking and listening are satisfactory, but standards in writing are below the levels expected for pupils' age. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below the national average, and the school was in the bottom 5 per cent of schools when compared to similar schools. This performance was influenced heavily by the previous poor provision that this group of pupils had experienced, and is not a true reflection of the current standards in the school. In previous years, the school's performance has shown an upward trend at a similar rate to the national trend. Again, girls consistently perform better than boys – particularly in writing.

70 The last inspection stated that standards in English were sound overall and this would suggest that standards have slipped since then. The school has clearly improved its standards over recent years but current standards are not yet high enough by the end of Year 6 to be considered satisfactory because of the weakness in writing. The school has carefully analysed test and other performance data to identify pupils' writing as an area requiring improvement, and has taken appropriate steps to rectify this. For example, in Key Stage 2, teachers provide planned opportunities each week for a wide range of extended writing. They develop pupils' writing skills and assist them to plan their writing giving good explanations and examples for structuring their work.

71 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 – this is due to good teaching. They learn at a rapid rate and start to bridge the gap from their below average language and literacy skills at the age of five. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 2. Teaching is also good in this age range but pupils are still suffering from a lack of basic skills in the past and this is slowing their learning slightly. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well and this ensures that they continue to make steady progress in their learning. For example, a group of ten pupils in Year 4 have been targeted to receive additional help in order to boost their reading and writing skills.

72 Pupils make good progress in developing their speaking and listening skills in Key Stage 1. They develop confidence in their discussions with teachers, learn to take turns when speaking, answer confidently and follow directions well for their group work. They contribute well when discussing the different letters that combine to make the same sound, such as “oi” and “oy”. Pupils retell their favourite stories in detail, such as “Cinderella” and “Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs”. In assemblies they listen carefully and willingly contribute to questions before a large group. By the end of Year 2, pupils' speaking and listening skills match the levels expected for their age. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 2, although many pupils towards the end of the key stage still find listening difficult. Boys are particularly reticent to take part in class discussions and often answer in simple one-word answers when prompted by their teachers. Pupils are more confident when talking about familiar events and offering opinions on their reading. For example, a group of Year 6 girls discussed their poetry, writing and reading in a lively manner showing a sound understanding and use of words such as “specific”. By the end of Year 6, pupils' speaking and listening skills broadly match the levels expected for their age.

73 Pupils make good progress in reading in Key Stage 1. They enjoy learning about the characters in

stories they share together during the literacy hour, such as “The Three Little Pigs” and “Cinderella”. They learn to read aloud with expression as a class group and read books in smaller groups with guidance from their teachers and assistants. Pupils develop an appropriate sight vocabulary and use their knowledge of sounds and letters to build up words. They show preferences for books and poems such as fairy stories which they retell in detail. Pupils who are supported well in their reading at home make the best progress, for example some pupils enjoy reading information books, such as books about helicopters. By the end of Year 2, pupils’ reading matches the levels expected for their age. Pupils make steady progress in Key Stage 2. A significant number of pupils (mainly boys) have struggled with reading in the past and not all have become independent readers although all pupils, including those with special educational needs, are building systematically on their previous knowledge of reading. Some boys have a limited sight vocabulary and their word building skills are not secure for words with several syllables such as “haphazardly”. They do not know the meanings of words such as “hearth” and “kindling”, which restricts their fluency when reading aloud and their understanding of the books they read. However, other pupils read fluently and with enjoyment and understanding. They retell the plot of well-known children’s books, such as “The Lion, The Witch and The Wardrobe” with ease and interest, explaining their views on the story well. Pupils know how to use the classification systems in the library and use alphabetical knowledge to find information in a book. They locate information in the non-fiction library readily and some pupils can scan texts to find information. By the end of Year 6, pupils’ reading broadly matches the levels expected for their age, although boys are still under-achieving.

74 Pupils make steady progress in writing in Key Stage 1. They write underneath the teacher’s work and learn to form their letters and space their words correctly. Pupils soon begin to understand the need for writing short sentences with the use of capital letters and full stops. They sequence their work correctly and learn to use a variety of short phrases to include in their stories such as “later “ and “after that”. Pupils write for a wide range of reasons, such as about Elmer (an elephant character in a story they have read), instructions for tying and dying fabric, poems and accounts of a visit to a nearby coastal station. Pupils take a pride in their handwriting. They write in a neat print script with flicks which enable them to join some letters. In the literacy hour they develop their knowledge of sounds and blends to assist them in spelling words correctly. By the end of Year 2, pupils’ writing is starting to come closer to the levels expected for their age. Pupils are beginning to make steady progress in writing in Key Stage 2, although by the end of the key stage a significant number of pupils do not sustain their written work at length. This is another symptom of the previous disruption to teaching in the school and its impact on pupils’ basic skills. As a result, pupils’ writing is still below the levels expected for their age by the end of Year 6. They have not yet developed their knowledge of grammar and punctuation sufficiently well. Many write slowly and have difficulty in completing their written work. Pupils throughout the key stage are developing their spelling knowledge well during the literacy hour, for example they make use of dictionaries to assist and develop their spelling knowledge. This is an improvement since the last inspection. Pupils are developing and extending the use of vocabulary well in their poetry writing. They have started to plan their work to a structured framework to allow them to write independently. The presentation of pupils’ written work is unsatisfactory – the majority of pupils have not yet developed a consistent and fluent style of handwriting. No pupils reach the higher levels in writing characterised by the consistent use of sentences in parts, the use of paragraphing and the accurate punctuation of conversation in their independent writing.

75 Teaching is good. Teachers have good subject knowledge of English. For example, in Key Stage 1 teachers develop pupils’ phonic and reading skills well and provide good opportunities for speaking and listening. They make learning interesting and ensure that pupils enjoy activities, for instance when exploring words that rhyme in a spelling lesson. Teachers plan their lessons well and follow the National Literacy Strategy confidently. They make good use of time in lessons and prepare resources well for use during the literacy hour. Teachers also use time well at the end of lessons to bring pupils together to discuss what they have learnt and to move them on in their learning. For example, in a Year 1 lesson where the teacher made good use of flashcards to check whether pupils had grasped the concept of rhyming words. Teachers use their questioning skills effectively to make sure that pupils understand their

work. They make particularly good use of questions to elicit responses from boys. For example, in a lesson in the Year 4/5 class where the teacher deliberately questioned groups of boys about the stories they were writing in order to hold their interest and keep them involved in the purpose of the lesson. Similarly, in the Year 3 class where the teacher used gentle humour to keep boys interested in the fairy tales being discussed.

76 The school has successfully implemented the National Literacy strategy – this has helped to raise standards in English. There is a strong focus on the correct use of technical vocabulary across the curriculum, for instance in mathematics and science. Pupils are also encouraged to use their literacy skills to support their work in other subjects. For example, in a history lesson pupils were expected to use “inference” and “deduction” techniques to support their choice of archive materials.

77 The English curriculum covers all the areas of English although there are insufficient planned opportunities for drama. Resources for reading have improved since the last inspection and pupils now read from a wide range of texts and share well chosen texts during the literacy hour. This has had a good impact on the standards of reading in Key Stage 1 and in most Key Stage 2 classes. Teachers monitor and test pupils’ reading development well. Teachers consciously promote and extend pupils’ vocabulary across different subjects of the curriculum. For instance, lessons in mathematics, history and art make a good contribution to the subject specific vocabulary introduced to pupils. However, information technology and opportunities for pupils to use research skills in the library do not make a useful or meaningful contribution to the development of pupils’ reading and writing skills in English.

MATHEMATICS

78 Standards in mathematics have improved since the last inspection, mainly because the school has been running a numeracy hour for the past two years and this has improved the quality of teaching and the rate of pupils’ learning. The continuing impact of the numeracy hour in the school also explains the differences between inspectors’ judgements and last year’s test results.

79 By the age of seven, standards in mathematics are satisfactory. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, the school’s results were below the national average but were average when compared to similar schools. By the age of 11, standards in mathematics are also satisfactory. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the school’s results were well below the national average, and were also well below when compared to similar schools. However, the performance of this group of pupils does not reflect the current standards in the school.

80 Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 1 and steady progress in Key Stage 2. This is linked to the good quality of teaching they receive in both age ranges. Pupils with special educational needs are given appropriate support in lessons, and this ensures that their progress is at least in line with that of their classmates.

81 In Key Stage 1, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of number by putting numbers in order from highest to lowest, for instance starting from 57 to 13. They confidently identify missing numbers in a number square from 0 to 50. They know that 39 comes before 41 and that 45 comes after 44. Pupils understand the place value of hundreds, tens and units quite thoroughly. Some pupils know that in a number sequence of 50, 20, 30 and 90, 90 is the largest number. Other pupils understand that the number 77 is made up of $70+7$ and are starting to use early problem solving strategies to work out the missing number in a simple sum, such as $30 = ()+9$. Pupils learn to recognise common two and three-dimensional shapes. In Key Stage 2, pupils build steadily on their previous knowledge. They start to use calculators to confirm the accuracy of their answers, after working through the problems first. Pupils learn to use different ways to solve unfamiliar problems. For example, pupils in Year 3 learn to “partition” 8 into 5 and 3 in order to calculate more efficiently using their 3 and 5 times tables. Similarly, Year 6 pupils learn to insert brackets correctly into complex sums. Pupils learn the relationship between

fractions, decimals and percentages. For example, pupils in Year 6 know that 25 per cent of 8 equals 2 and that 40 per cent of £1 is 40p, and is the same as £0.40. They place decimals and fractions in the correct order and develop their knowledge and understanding of mode, median, mean and range.

82 Teaching is good. Teachers plan their lessons to include activities for different ability groups, supporting pupils of lower ability and those with special educational needs, but also providing appropriate challenges for higher attaining pupils. Pupils are told quite clearly what the purpose of the lesson will be, and these objectives are checked at the end of the lesson to ensure that pupils know and understand what they have done. Mental calculation activities are taught at a brisk but manageable pace, especially in Key Stage 2. This is having a positive influence on pupils' numeracy skills. Pupils are encouraged to use appropriate vocabulary and terminology at all times and this supports their literacy skills as well as deepening their mathematical understanding. Teachers use resources very well to maintain the interest and attention of pupils – this is effective and makes an impact on the ability of pupils to concentrate on their tasks for longer periods, especially boys. For example, in a Year 2 lesson the teacher used a large 100 square to focus the attention of a group of boys on the purpose of identifying odd and even numbers. In the mixed year group classes of Year 4/5 and Year 5/6, there is a disproportionate group of lower-attaining boys, who lack concentration, basic listening skills and can sometimes present challenging and immature behaviour. These pupils are well managed and firmly controlled. Homework is used effectively to build upon the knowledge, skills and understanding of concepts developed in classrooms. The Year 6 homework club is an effective strategy to provide pupils with small group teaching in a quiet, relaxed atmosphere.

83 The school has been very successful in the implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy – this is helping to raise standards in mathematics. The school has been listed on the DfEE website as a school showing significant improvement in mathematics through the use of the Numeracy Strategy. Parents reflect this view and feel that mathematics teaching in school is good and their children make good progress. Numeracy is promoted effectively throughout the school by good quality displays, which provide pupils with an element of challenge. For instance, all classrooms feature number lines or correct vocabulary cards and “maths challenges”.

84 The co-ordinator has successfully promoted the introduction of numeracy throughout the school. The monitoring of teaching has been thorough, as has the monitoring of the structure of numeracy lessons, teachers' planning and the work of pupils. This all contributes to the improvement in mathematics since the last inspection.

SCIENCE

85 By the age of seven, standards in science are not high enough. In the national assessments for seven year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below the national average. This was due simply to the fact that pupils had not been taught the full range of topics they needed and, as a result, their knowledge and understanding had gaps in it by the time they were assessed. Pupils did not know enough about physical processes such as sound, light and dark, forces and movement, and using electricity. The school has recognised this problem and changed its topic cycle to make sure that it does not happen again.

86 By the age of 11, standards in science are still too low. In the national tests for 11 year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below the national average, and were also well below average when compared to similar schools. The school's performance had been better in previous years, but standards are still not high enough – they are below the levels expected for 11 year olds. By the end of Year 6, pupils have a sound grasp of scientific facts, such a naming the main bones in the human skeleton, but they struggle to explain how to plan and record investigations. Pupils learn at a steady rate but their limited literacy skills and their lack of use of information technology affect their ability to record and interpret the results of their practical work. For example, when writing up experiments to put switches into a circuit, pupils described a switch “like a litel gota” (like a little gate).

87 The science curriculum has improved since the last inspection but pupils' achievements are still patchy across the different aspects of this subject. The quality of teaching has also improved. Teaching is now satisfactory across the school with the result that pupils' learning is also satisfactory.

88 Teachers use the school's scheme of work to guide their planning in science. This is effective in making sure that the curriculum is broad and balanced, but it does not take sufficient account of the fact that there are mixed age classes in Key Stage 2. As a result, teachers' planning does not clearly identify the skills that pupils should learn at different ages. This means that teachers often plan their lessons with a broad objective in mind. Although this promotes steady progress for most pupils, it does not focus work sufficiently tightly on the different needs and abilities in each class, especially the impact of pupils' literacy skills on their work in science. For instance, in a Year 2 lesson, many pupils already understood the basic principles of magnetism but struggled to record their findings after carrying out simple experiments. This caused a group of boys to lose interest and become boisterous during the lesson. In a lesson in the Year 5/6 class, pupils understood the concept of electrical circuits and metals as conductors but had difficulty explaining themselves and were often constrained by the nature of the worksheet they were given. Pupils' learning is better in the factual content of science than in being able to explain and present their ideas following investigations. Pupils use simple diagrams and sentences to record their work but they do not make sufficient use of other ways of presenting their findings, such as tables and graphs.

89 Teachers have sound knowledge of science and manage their lessons well. They use resources effectively and encourage pupils to learn by their own mistakes. For example, in a Year 1 lesson the teacher asked pupils to predict which materials would float and sink before discussing the properties of the different materials and testing them. In a lesson in the Year 4/5 class, the teacher used a good range of books and a life-sized skeleton to introduce the major organs in the human body. She handled some difficult behaviour well and kept pupils interested and motivated by asking them to create a three-dimensional model of a human torso from a pre-printed paper template.

90 The science curriculum has undergone a full review since the last inspection and now meets statutory requirements. The co-ordinator manages the subject efficiently and has developed a broad range of good quality resources. However, there has been no monitoring of teaching yet and pupils' performance is not analysed in sufficient depth to inform future changes in teachers' planning. There is insufficient use of information technology to support science.

ART

91 Only two art lessons were seen but there was sufficient evidence available to indicate that standards in art are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection.

92 Pupils learn at a steady rate through Key Stage 1. For example, they begin to develop their knowledge and understanding by looking at the work of famous artists, such as Gauguin, and explore different approaches to art. They produce still-life sketches, draw patterns (such as Turkish table designs) and experiment with tie and dye techniques. Pupils experience mixing colours and learn that dark and light shades can be obtained by using black or white paint. They develop a suitable range of techniques, such as painting, printing and collage, to apply texture to their work. Pupils make good progress in Key Stage 2. Their drawing skills develop well as they sketch portraits relating to famous people to produce a "Millennium Gallery". These portraits are well observed and carefully drawn. Similarly, a display of reflective symmetrical drawings shows good attention to detail and work on a variety of scales. Pupils begin to use their art sketchbooks effectively to plan their work and choose their materials carefully, with an attention to detail and colour blends. For example, when using a variety of paper materials to weave paper through wool.

93 The quality of teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good and this reflects the rate of pupils'

learning. Pupils are made aware of the context of their work although teachers' objectives are sometimes too loose. Despite this, teachers have high expectations of the quality of the end products to be produced - this shows in the excellent quality of displays around the school and in pupils' enthusiasm to talk about their work. For example, pupils were extremely proud of the portraits they had produced for the school's "Millennium Gallery" and were keen to talk about them. The majority of pupils enjoy their art lessons and sustain their concentration for quite prolonged periods. They try hard to improve their work, apart from a very small minority who are in too much of a hurry and have yet to develop a pride in their finished work. Pupils are interested in art and enjoy looking at the work of famous artists, such as self-portraits by Rembrandt, pictures and posters of trees and cats, and of the seated figure of the "Gardener Vallier" by Cezanne, which are all thoughtfully displayed in the cloakroom areas.

94 The co-ordinator has only very recently taken over this role, but has already developed a clear view on how to develop art in the school. This includes focusing more clearly on the specific development of skills, and developing portfolios of art to record and extend the range and quality of work across the curriculum. The teaching of skills has improved since the last inspection but the school recognises that further improvements can be made, especially by using assessments more effectively, to increase the rate of progress pupils make in their knowledge, skills and understanding in art.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

95 No design and technology lessons were seen and there was insufficient evidence available to allow judgements to be made on teaching and standards. However, teachers' planning indicates that the breadth and balance of the design and technology curriculum has improved since the last inspection.

96 The school has overhauled its planning for design and technology since the last inspection. The curriculum is now based on the nationally recommended scheme of work – it is broad, balanced and links well into the topics being studied in each class. For instance, pupils in Year 1 make toys that float linked to their science work on floating and sinking while Year 6 pupils make "shelters" linked to their history studies. Teachers' planning indicates that pupils experience a range of activities that systematically introduce them to new materials and techniques. For example, pupils in Year 1 begin simple work with food by making a fruit drink and this is developed in Year 2 by making sandwiches and by making biscuits in Year 5. In Year 2, pupils are introduced to the concept of levers when making simple puppets and this is picked up again in Years 5 and 6 when pupils make moving toys and controllable vehicles.

97 The school has recently purchased additional resources for design and technology. These are good quality and provide pupils with a broad range of hand tools and equipment to support their work. Similarly, there is a good selection of construction kits for younger pupils to build models. A design and technology club has been running this year and this has given pupils in Year 6 the opportunity to experience simple computer control mechanisms using equipment on loan from the local comprehensive school. The co-ordinator has a clear understanding of where design and technology sits in the school's curriculum and has put a secure framework in place to support the development of pupils' skills.

GEOGRAPHY

98 No geography lessons were seen but there was sufficient evidence available to indicate that standards in geography are satisfactory and have been maintained since the last inspection.

99 Pupils learn at a steady rate. Their work is presented neatly in books, and in discussions they easily recall facts about geography and talk confidently about their experiences and visits. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about their local environment. For example, they follow a village trail, visiting St Paul's Church to look carefully at the building inside and out, and visit the local Methodist church to compare the buildings. Pupils visit a local farm, where they experience practical fieldwork activities and develop their knowledge and understanding about living and working on a farm. They also visit Seaham Harbour to

look at a locality different to their own, where they compare shops, houses and aspects of the old fishing industry. By the age of seven, pupils are very familiar with the local environment and talk knowledgeably about their likes and dislikes of the areas of Trimdon Station and Trimdon Colliery. They have developed appropriate skills, such as making maps and plans of real and imaginary places, using pictures and symbols to locate features on their maps, and using pictures and aerial photographs of the local area.

100 In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to build steadily on their geographical knowledge and skills. For instance, pupils use maps of the British Isles to place countries, capital cities, the location of rivers and the seas and waters surrounding the British Isles. They look at the grid and scale bar on maps, and use and interpret colour codes to show mountains, the lowlands and the sea. This leads on to the use of maps and aerial photographs to identify features in a landscape which gives evidence of human activity, and discussions about how this affects environmental changes. Pupils study rivers to look at the source, mouth and tributaries, and begin to use ordnance survey maps and four-figure grid references and co-ordinates to locate features. By the end of Year 6, pupils have studied features of Kapsokwany in Nairobi and St Lucia in the Caribbean to look at the contrasting features and cultural differences in places in the wider world. They have also carried out an in-depth study of the locality of Middleton-in-Teesdale during a residential fieldtrip visit.

101 The co-ordinator has only very recently taken responsibility for this subject. The school's scheme of work has recently been revised to take account of nationally recommended guidance and the school has also moved from a topic-based approach to a subject based approach to learning in Key Stage 2. All these changes have yet to be fully assessed and evaluated by staff. The co-ordinator has rightly highlighted the need to develop the curriculum further by providing a clear structure of how pupils' geographical skills will be developed throughout the school, and by planning assessment opportunities to enable staff to monitor and evaluate the progress made by pupils in each year group.

HISTORY

102 In the last inspection there was insufficient evidence to make judgements about history. In this inspection, only one history lesson was seen but there was sufficient evidence available to indicate that standards in history are satisfactory.

103 Pupils learn at a steady rate and achieve appropriate levels of work. For instance, in Key Stage 1, pupils learn about events from the history of Britain such as Guy Fawkes and the Gunpowder Plot. They develop a sense of chronology and the gradual passing of time by looking at the features of the local area. For example, they have examined old photographs of Trimdon Station and looked at how houses, shops, roads and transport have changed. Pupils begin to appreciate how time affects the objects in use, for instance the differences between candles, lanterns and modern lamps and by looking at how clocks have changed by examining sundials, chiming analogue clocks and digital clocks. In Key Stage 2, pupils are encouraged to develop their knowledge and understanding of history by being aware of their own rich cultural heritage. This is developed by conversations and interviews with family members who recall the mining heritage and traditions of the area, and visits from a local historian to talk about events from the past. Pupils learn about the major events and personalities in Tudor times and life in Victorian Britain. For example, they used the library to research the life of Queen Victoria and begin to organise facts and data in a chronological way. They study what life was like in their local area in Victorian times and use a range of artefacts, photographs, original documents and printed census data to research local history, particularly aspects of local social and economic history.

104 Teaching is at least satisfactory since pupils learn steadily and reach satisfactory standards. In fact, teaching was good in the lesson seen. The teacher used resources well to develop pupils' historical knowledge and understanding, with a focus on Wingate Parish archive material. The lesson was planned to develop specific historical research skills, with appropriate vocabulary used to develop literacy skills within the history curriculum. For instance, pupils were encouraged to use "inference" and "deduction" in

their use of the archive materials. Pupils made good progress in this lesson due to the impact of well chosen and interesting resources. Pupils are interested in history. They enjoy handling artefacts, such as old photographs and Victorian household items, and are particularly interested in their local area. For instance, when looking at old photographs of Deaf Hill, pupils enthusiastically pointed out that the windows in the village post office have remained unchanged. In the Year 5/6 class, a pupil brought an original certificate from the Durham Miners Association, which had been presented to her grandmother's grandfather for other class members to look at – they responded well.

105 The co-ordinator is new to this role, but has already clearly identified areas to be developed. These include writing a scheme of work to look at the progression of specific historical skills within each year group, and to plan areas of study which will avoid a repetition of previously taught topics. This was mentioned in the last inspection and is still an area for improvement. The school makes good use of resources on loan from the local education authority's school's museum service, and uses a wide range of visits in the local community to support the history curriculum. These resources are used well to promote first-hand learning experiences. However, although information technology is used to allow pupils to examine local census data, it is not used sufficiently to support pupils' learning.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

106 Standards in information technology are not high enough. The school's new scheme of work has only been in place since last September and this has not had sufficient time to impact on pupils' learning and to raise standards. Pupils have lacked sufficient skills in the past and this is still influencing their achievements. There have been a number of improvements in this subject since the last inspection but standards are still too low.

107 Pupils learn at a steady rate but within a narrow range of activities. For example, in Key Stage 1, pupils learn to use simple art packages and talk enthusiastically about playing different games on the computers, but they have limited understanding of word processors. For instance, they cannot explain how to carry out basic operations, such as changing the size, colour and layout of text. Pupils do not understand how to control the movement of a floor robot. By the age of seven, standards are below the levels expected for pupils' age. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to use word processors and extend their basic skills. For instance, they learn to put a border around their text and to use a spellchecker. However, pupils' use of graphics is confined to basic clipart and they do not understand how to combine text and graphics using the computers. Pupils in Year 6 have just been introduced to spreadsheets for the first time. They have very limited understanding of how to handle and manipulate data or how to use information technology to present data in different ways, such as graphs and tables. Similarly, pupils have had little experience of storing and retrieving information using databases and CD-ROMs. Pupils have seen how a computer can control a set of toy traffic lights but have superficial understanding of the use of computers to monitor and control physical processes in the real world. By the age of 11, standards are well below the levels expected for pupils' age.

108 No teaching was seen but there was sufficient evidence from discussions with teachers to confirm that they lack sufficient knowledge and expertise to teach the full range of skills that pupils require. Teachers have worked with outdated equipment and have not had the chance to get to grips with new technology themselves before using it in the classroom.

109 The curriculum has been completely reviewed since the last inspection. The co-ordinator has mapped the nationally recommended scheme of work against the school's topics to identify how information technology can support this work. Although this clearly identifies the skills that pupils need to develop in each year group, it does not indicate how and when they will be taught these skills in order to use them to support their topics. At present, there is insufficient use of information technology in mathematics and science, and this affects pupils' data handling skills in both these subjects.

110 The school is fully aware of the shortfalls in information technology. This subject has been identified as a major priority in the school development plan and is earmarked for development through the use of a national grant to purchase new equipment and provide training for teachers. The school's strategic long term development plan for information technology provides an effective blueprint to improve the quality and range of provision in order to raise standards.

MUSIC

111 Few music lessons were seen but sufficient evidence was available to allow judgements to be made. The school has maintained satisfactory standards in singing, listening and appraising since the last inspection. Standards in performing and composing have improved but, due to disruption in their previous learning, the oldest pupils are still not meeting expected levels in their knowledge of percussion instruments and composing.

112 Pupils learn at a steady rate. They develop an appropriate repertoire of songs and hymns as they progress through the school. They learn to sing tunefully and with clear diction and enthusiasm, and add actions and memorise choruses and verses well from an early age. Pupils learn to recognise the different families of instruments, such as strings and percussion, and they use percussion instruments confidently in their lessons. For example, pupils in Year 2 composed a series of pieces of music on the weather with the help of symbols and pictures, following the "score" and taking turns to conduct the finished compositions. Pupils learn to appreciate different styles of music by listening to music from different countries and of varying types such as jazz, classical, Austrian yodelling music and South American music. In addition, a wide selection of taped music is used well to enhance the quality of assemblies and pupils experience a wide range of music for expressing themselves and adding suitable movements in physical education.

113 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers are confident in teaching music and most use the recently acquired commercial scheme of work and taped music well to plan their lessons. The school also benefits from the expertise of a piano accompanist who works on a volunteer basis regularly and frequently. Some, but not many, older pupils benefit from additional lessons in brass and woodwind. Resources for music are good and are well organised – this is a further improvement since the last inspection. Extra-curricular activities, such as the choir and recorder groups, are well attended and enhance the music curriculum. Pupils have frequent opportunities to perform in the local community – this supports their social development and contributes to the school's good reputation in the local area.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

114 Few physical education lessons were seen but there was sufficient evidence to indicate that standards are satisfactory. Standards have been maintained since the last inspection.

115 Pupils learn at a steady rate. From an early age they know the importance of warming up before physical activities and understand the need for safety during lessons. By the end of Year 6, pupils can sustain vigorous activities for appropriate periods of time. Pupils develop sound games skills. For instance, in a lesson of kwik cricket in Key Stage 2, most pupils could catch and throw small balls with reasonable accuracy and some were developing their skills of attack well. By the end of Year 6, all pupils have experienced a programme of swimming tuition, and most can swim at least 25 metres by the end of their time in school. The oldest pupils have the opportunity of a residential visit, which provides a programme of outdoor and adventurous activities that makes a good contribution to their personal and social development.

116 The quality of teaching has improved since the last inspection. Teaching is satisfactory and sometimes good. Teachers have improved their class management skills and now set clear aims for their activities. For instance, there is an explicit emphasis on the direct teaching of skill development in the planning of all lessons. Good pace and the use of praise are typical features of all lessons, although

teachers do not often give pupils opportunities to demonstrate and evaluate each other's work. Pupils are enthusiastic and enjoy their physical education lessons. They work well together and behave well.

117 The physical education curriculum is well planned – it is broad and balanced. A comprehensive scheme of work gives good support and guidance to teachers to ensure that lessons build upon what pupils have learnt previously. The school uses the expertise of coaches from the local Sports Council and members of local football clubs and rugby teams to work with the pupils. This enhances pupils' experiences and also serves to provide useful professional development for teachers. The school has a full programme of extra-curricular sports activities for both boys and girls at Key Stage 2. For example, clubs in football, rugby netball, short tennis and kwik cricket involve both boys and girls from Year 3 upwards, and the school teams take part in inter-school matches in rugby and football. This extra-curricular provision promotes a good team and school community spirit as well as enhancing the curriculum for physical education.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

118 Few religious education lessons were seen but sufficient evidence was available to indicate that standards are satisfactory. The school meets statutory requirements in providing a curriculum that matches the needs of the locally agreed syllabus – this is an improvement since the previous inspection.

119 Pupils learn at a steady rate. In Key Stage 1, pupils acquire a sound knowledge and understanding of the two world faiths of Christianity and Buddhism as well as some additional understanding of Judaism. They hear stories of Christianity from both the Old and the New Testaments of the Christian Bible, such as David and Goliath, Noah's Ark, the birth of Jesus and his life as a boy in the synagogue school. Pupils develop sound knowledge of how Jesus lived as a boy and how he spent his time at school. For example, they recall their knowledge well to explain the use of parchment and tablets for writing. Pupils visit the local church and chapel to gain an understanding of the special buildings, symbols and artefacts that are used in Christian worship. For instance, the uses in a church of the font, the lectern and the pulpit. They record their work and visits in religious education lessons well in pictures and writing. In studying the Buddhist faith the youngest children learn about Buddha as a baby and hear stories from Buddhism, which typify the need to care for others.

120 In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to learn at a steady pace. They extend their knowledge of Christianity and Judaism and gain insights into Sikhism and Hinduism. They continue to develop their knowledge of the Christian Bible in both Testaments and, during assemblies, pupils display a wide ranging knowledge of the stories and miracles of Jesus. For instance, they remember well the story of the Loaves and Fishes and learn about Jesus' miracle at the wedding feast in Cana. In their studies of Judaism, pupils recognise the importance of the need for rules in a society and compare these with the need for school rules. They develop secure knowledge of the life of Moses in the Old Testament and the lives and practices in Judaism today. Pupils write their own thoughtful prayers. They learn and write about the places of worship and the symbols of the Sikh religion and the place of worship for the followers of the Hindu faith. In studying these major world faiths, pupils at the end of the key stage gain an insight into the importance of the different Holy Books to people of differing religions and their beliefs about God.

121 Teaching is satisfactory. Teachers have sound knowledge of religious education, although some are more confident with the teaching of Christianity than of the other world faiths in the curriculum. Religious education is seen as an important and interesting area of study and makes a sound contribution to pupils' knowledge of living in a multi-faith society. The school plans the overall curriculum for religious education well but in some mixed age classes the programme of work is not taught sequentially to ensure that pupils receive the entire programme as planned. This has not yet influenced standards but could affect pupils' learning as they move into different year groups in future. Pupils' responses to religious education are good. They are interested and respond in a positive lively way to their teachers and visiting speakers.

122 School assemblies make a good and sometimes very good contribution to the curriculum for religious education. In these assemblies, frequently taken by visitors from local churches, pupils have the opportunity to listen to and interpret the events in Jesus Christ's life and how he was special. They develop an understanding of how committed Christians live their lives and how important their faith is to them. They also experience Christian worship in their prayers and hymns. The school is aware that its own collection of artefacts for religious education is barely adequate and therefore makes good use of borrowed resources from the local education authority to support pupils' learning.