

ERRATUM

Page 12, paragraph 9, fourth line should read 'high levels of **unemployment**'

INSPECTION REPORT

Highfield Community Primary School

Highfield Road

Rowlands Gill

Tyne and Wear

Unique Reference Number: 108351

Inspection Number: 187474

Head Teacher: Mrs K E Welsby

Reporting inspector: Mr D Hardman

17794

Dates of inspection: 29th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 706903

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school: Infant and Junior

Type of control: County

Age range of pupils: 3 to 11

Gender of pupils: Mixed

School address: Highfield Road
Rowlands Gill
Tyne and Wear
NE39 2LX

Telephone number: 01207 542086

Fax number:

Appropriate authority: The governing body

Name of chair of governors: Mrs J Simpson

Date of previous inspection: 18th March 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

| Team members | Subject responsibilities | Aspect responsibilities |
|-----------------------------------|---|---|
| D Hardman Registered inspector | Science Design and technology Religious education | Characteristics of the School Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and management |
| L Buller Lay inspector | | Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Staffing, accommodation and learning resources The efficiency of the school |
| K Ford | Areas of learning for children under five Mathematics Information technology History Geography Equal opportunities | Attitudes, behaviour and personal development The curriculum and assessment |
| K Wallace | English Art Music Physical Education Special educational needs | Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development Partnership with parents and the community |

The inspection contractor was:

Wallace Way Educational Consultants
3 Bramley Court
Victoria Glade
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE7 7FP

Tel: 0191 2150693
Fax 01661 886930

Any concerns or complaints about the inspection or the report should be raised with the inspection contractor. Complaints which are not satisfactorily resolved by the contractor should be raised with OFSTED by writing to:

The Registrar
The Office for Standards in Education
Alexandra House
33 Kingsway
London
WC2B 6SE

REPORT CONTENTS

Paragraph

MAIN FINDINGS

1 - 7

What the school does well
Where the school has weaknesses
How the school has improved since the last inspection
Standards in subjects
Quality of teaching
Other aspects of the school
The parents' views of the school

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

8

INTRODUCTION

9 - 17

Characteristics of the school
Key indicators

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Educational standards achieved by pupils at the school

18 - 34

Attainment and progress
Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Attendance

Quality of education provided

35 - 70

Teaching
The curriculum and assessment
Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Support, guidance and pupils' welfare
Partnership with parents and the community

The management and efficiency of the school

71 - 84

Leadership and management
Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
The efficiency of the school

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

Areas of learning for children under five

85 - 95

English, mathematics and science

96 - 129

Other subjects or courses

130 - 176

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

Summary of inspection evidence

177 - 183

Data and indicators

184 - 187

MAIN FINDINGS

1. What the school does well

- The school is very well led by a strong and effective head teacher, very ably supported by the deputy head teacher and by an effective governing body. The quality of teamwork in the school has a positive impact on pupils' progress.
- The quality of teaching is good throughout the school, particularly in English.
- The curriculum provision and high quality of teaching for children under five is a strength of the school.
- The school makes good provision for pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress.
- The school makes very good provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and good provision for cultural development.
- The school has very good links with the community and good links with the parents; these are used very effectively to support pupils' learning. The school makes very good provision for extra curricular activities including sport.
- There is an excellent ethos in the school which has a positive impact on pupils' self esteem, attitudes to learning and good relationships. The school is a caring community in which pupils receive very good support and guidance.

2. Where the school has weaknesses

- Standards in national tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999 were well below average in English, mathematics and science.
- Pupils' attainment is unsatisfactory in information technology in both key stages.
- The behaviour and attitudes of a minority of pupils limit their progress and sometimes adversely affect the learning of others.
- Attendance is satisfactory, but the regular absence of some pupils slows their progress and limits their attainment.

The school has strengths in a number of important areas, not least in relation to pupils' personal development. Despite the well below average attainment reached by 11 year olds in English, mathematics and science, the implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is having a positive impact on standards and progress in lessons. The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis of the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents.

3. How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made very good progress in addressing the issues raised in the last inspection. The school is now very effectively led and there is a clear and shared sense of direction. The roles of the head teacher, senior management team, governors and staff of the school are clearly defined. There is a strong team ethos amongst staff, which is now having a positive effect on the life of the school, the quality of education and pupils' progress and attainment. The large turnover of staff in the last three years has adversely affected the attainment and progress of pupils and this, together with the numbers of pupils with special educational needs, partly accounts for the fact that pupils' attainment is not higher.

The school has re-organised its provision for children under five and this is now a major strength. Children understand classroom routines and the behaviour of the vast majority is very good. The quality of teaching and learning has improved in Year 1 and pupils are making good progress in most subjects. The school has successfully and enthusiastically introduced the national programmes for literacy and numeracy and these are having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. This is also reflected in improvements in science.

The school has put in place policies and schemes of work for all subjects, together with procedures for assessing pupils' learning. These ensure a consistent coverage of the National Curriculum and religious education and teachers use them effectively when planning their lessons and in assessing their pupils' progress. The school has made progress in improving its provision for information technology and teachers have made considerable efforts to ensure that the subject is now taught more systematically. Further improvements in provision for this subject are imminent, as the school begins its participation in the National Grid For Learning initiative. All staff understand the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs and the provision for these pupils is good. In view of the progress made by the school in improving its provision, its capacity for future improvement is very good.

4. Standards in subjects

This table shows the standards achieved by 11 year olds in 1999 based on the National Curriculum tests:

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

The table shows that in the 1999 national tests for 11-year-olds, the school's results were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, when compared to similar schools, pupils performed better, attaining standards that matched the average for these schools in English, although standards in mathematics and science were below the average. These results largely reflect the outcomes of the inspection, which finds that, by the age of eleven, standards in English and science are below average and well below average in mathematics.

The inspection finds that standards for eleven-year-olds in religious education are in line with those expected in the locally agreed syllabus but standards in information technology are below those expected for eleven year olds.

Pupils make good progress in English, science, religious education and music and they make satisfactory progress in all other subjects except some strands of information technology. There have been many teaching staff changes in recent years and the very good leadership of the school has not yet had time to make an impact on the attainment of pupils currently in Year 6. In addition, in each year group a substantial proportion of pupils have special educational needs and this contributes to the below average standards.

5. Quality of teaching

| Teaching in | Under 5 | 5 – 7 years | 7 – 11 years |
|------------------------|-----------|--------------|--------------|
| English | Very good | Good | Good |
| Mathematics | Very good | Good | Good |
| Science | | Good | Good |
| Information technology | | Satisfactory | Satisfactory |
| Religious education | | Good | Good |
| Other subjects | Very good | Good | Good |

Forty nine lessons or part lessons were seen. Teaching was satisfactory or better in 96 per cent of lessons, it was good in 39 per cent and very good or better in a further 31 per cent of lessons. Teaching was unsatisfactory in the remaining 4 per cent of lessons. This was due to a lack of discipline within lessons. Teaching was consistently very good for children under five and good for both key stages. Good teaching was seen in every class in the school.

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

6. Other aspects of the school

| Aspect | Comment |
|---|---|
| Behaviour | Good. The vast majority of pupils behave well and relationships are good. However, a small minority of pupils often behave immaturely in lessons and disturb the learning of others. |
| Attendance | Satisfactory. However, there are a number of pupils who are regularly absent and this adversely affects their attainment and progress. There are a few pupils who regularly arrive late, although lessons start on time. |
| Ethos* | Excellent. The very positive ethos underpins all aspects of the school's work. Relationships are good. The school strives to do well and teachers are committed to raising standards. |
| Leadership and management | Very good. The head teacher leads the school very effectively, very well supported by the deputy head teacher and governors. Since the last inspection, the quality of this leadership has brought about substantial improvement. The very good teamwork of all involved with the life of the school is having a positive impact on pupils' progress. |
| Curriculum | Good overall and very good for children under five. The curriculum is broad and balanced although more time needs to be given to information technology. Very good extra curricular activities, visits and visitors enhance the curriculum and widen pupils' horizons. The curriculum is well planned and there are good procedures for assessing pupils' learning. |
| Pupils with special educational needs | The provision made for pupils with special educational needs is good. The targets set for pupils are clear and well defined and they are well supported in lessons. |
| Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development | The provision made for spiritual, moral and social development is very good and effectively promotes the good relationships in the school. It is good for cultural development. The school's work in these areas is considerably enriched by its links with parents and the community. |
| Staffing, resources and accommodation | Teaching and support staff are committed to the aims and values of the school. Resources are adequate for most subjects but there are gaps in information technology. The school uses its accommodation effectively and it is well maintained, although there is an element of outside vandalism which results in broken glass and litter in some areas. |
| Value for money | The quality of leadership is very good, teaching is good and pupils' standards are improving. Despite the low attainment by the end of Key Stage 2, the school provides good value for money. |

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

7. The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school

- The school encourages parents to play an active part in its life.
- Staff are approachable.
- The school encourages children to get involved with more than their daily lessons.
- The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on their children.
- Their children enjoy school life.

What some parents are not happy about

way the schoo

work the child

standards of t

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Inspectors' judgements support the positive comments expressed by the vast majority of parents. The school has an 'open door' policy and welcomes parents. The head teacher is very approachable and deals with concerns as effectively as possible. The school has recently implemented the homework policy and teachers use homework appropriately to support pupils' learning. The behaviour of the majority of pupils is good although a small minority of pupils behave immaturely and this sometimes adversely affects their own and other pupils' progress. The school is committed to improving pupils' behaviour and it is a key issue for the school to resolve.

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· **KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION**

In order to further improve the quality of education, standards and progress in the school, the head teacher, staff and governors should:

1. Improve standards in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science by:

- I. focusing more closely on the needs of pupils whose attendance is giving cause for concern, since these pupils tend to make slower progress;
- II. targeting the small group of pupils, usually boys, whose attitudes and behaviour are having a detrimental effect on the progress of themselves and others and considering further strategies to motivate them;
- III. finding ways to work more closely, wherever possible, with the parents of these two groups of pupils;
- IV. further improving the quality of the weekly assessments and evaluations of lessons in order to ensure that the needs of under achieving pupils are consistently met.

Paragraphs: 20, 21, 24, 29, 30, 34, 36, 49, 56, 74, 96, 97, 102, 108, 110, 111, 112, 113, 117, 118, 120, 122, 127.

2. Improve pupils' standards of attainment in information technology by:

- V. improving the number and quality of computer resources in line with the school's action plan;
- VI. giving more time to the direct teaching of computer skills in order to ensure that all aspects of the subject are regularly taught;
- VII. using information technology more regularly to support teaching and learning in other subjects so that pupils apply the skills they are learning on a more regular basis.

· **Paragraphs: 26, 43, 80, 149, 150, 151.**

3. Improve standards of behaviour further by:

- VIII. more stringent application, at an early stage, of the school's discipline procedures to control immature behaviour.

Paragraphs: 29, 30, 33, 36, 56, 74, 99, 108, 113, 118, 120, 153.

The school has identified these issues in its own priorities and has appropriate action plans in place to address these matters.

In addition to the key issues above, governors may wish to consider the following issues as part of the action plan.

- IX. Attend to the health and safety issues identified during the inspection, **paragraphs 64, 79.**
- X. Provide appropriate window blinds for all classrooms, **paragraph 110.**
- XI. Consider ways to involve more boys in the very good range of extra curricular activities, **paragraphs 45, 164, 165.**

· **INTRODUCTION**

· **Characteristics of the school**

· 9. Highfield Primary School is situated in the centre of the village, south west of Gateshead town centre in the western corner of the borough. It has recently been designated as a Health Authority Action Zone. The school serves an area of social deprivation, which is characterised by high levels of employment. There are few facilities in the local area.

10. There are 56 boys and 78 girls currently on roll with an additional 27 children attending the Nursery on a part time basis. The Early Years Unit, comprising the nursery and reception classes, and Year 1 are in a separate building to the rest of the school. The overall level of attainment of pupils entering the school is well below the national average although the full ability range is represented. There are currently very few pupils who have English as an additional language and few come from ethnic minorities. Approximately forty eight per cent of pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is well above the national average. Thirty five per cent of pupils have been identified as having special educational needs; this is higher than the national average and two per cent have statements of special educational need, which matches the national average.

11. The mission statement is as follows: ‘Our continuing aim is to make Highfield Primary School an excellent school. To do this we will work in partnership with each other and parents to develop a broad, balanced and relevant curriculum underpinned by entitlement given to every child through the National Curriculum. This must build on the knowledge and skills children already have when they enter school and equip them effectively for the next stage of learning when they leave us for secondary school.’

12. The school aims are to:

- value every individual and to maximise the opportunities for his/her intellectual, moral, spiritual, physical, aesthetic and social development;
- help pupils to develop lively, enquiring minds, the ability to question and argue rationally and to apply themselves successfully to tasks;
- develop within the individual the ability to contribute as a member of a co-operative group and to recognise his/her responsibility within a community;
- help pupils acquire knowledge, skills and understanding of and a tolerance towards the various races, religions and cultures present in our modern society;
- develop an awareness and appreciation of human achievements, whilst recognising mankind’s place in the natural world.

13. The main targets for development are to:

- further raise achievement by continuing to monitor teaching and learning and on going data analysis;
- continue to review, develop and monitor the effectiveness of curriculum guidelines and policies for all subjects in line with national initiatives;
- review and monitor the implementation of the behaviour policy;
- maintain and improve the buildings and grounds;
- continue relevant development for all staff through appropriate in service training;
- continue the governors’ involvement in the school and monitor progress towards the identified targets;
- monitor the provision for special educational needs;
- develop and build on existing links with the parents and local community.

14. Key indicators

Attainment at Key Stage 1¹

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

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1999 | 7 | 13 | 20 |

| National Curriculum Test/Task | | Reading | Writing | Mathematics |
|---|----------|-----------|-----------|-------------|
| Results | | | | |
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys | 5 | 3 | 7 |
| | Girls | 9 | 10 | 11 |
| | Total | 14 | 13 | 18 |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above | School | 70% (36%) | 65% (68%) | 90% (59%) |
| | National | 85% (80%) | 86% (81%) | 90% (84%) |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above | Boys | 3 | 5 | 4 |
| | Girls | 8 | 9 | 8 |
| | Total | 11 | 14 | 12 |
| Percentage at NC Level 2 or above | School | 55% (64%) | 70% (59%) | 60% (77%) |
| | National | 82% (81%) | 86% (85%) | 87% (86%) |

Attainment at Key Stage 2²

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

| Year | Boys | Girls | Total |
|------|------|-------|-------|
| 1999 | 11 | 17 | 28 |

| National Curriculum Test | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Results | | | | |
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| | Girls | 10 | 9 | 10 |
| | Total | 15 | 13 | 15 |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 54% (73%) | 46% (27%) | 54% (64%) |
| | National | 73% (65%) | 72% (59%) | 83% (69%) |

| Teacher Assessments | | English | Mathematics | Science |
|---|----------|-----------|-------------|-----------|
| Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above | Boys | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| | Girls | 12 | 10 | 11 |
| | Total | 17 | 15 | 17 |
| Percentage at NC Level 4 or above | School | 61% (91%) | 54% (91%) | 61% (82%) |
| | National | 68% (65%) | 69% (65%) | 75% (72%) |

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

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

2 **15. Attendance**

| | | | |
|---|--------------|---------------------------|-----|
| Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year: | Authorised | School | % |
| | Absence | National comparative data | 6.5 |
| | Unauthorised | School | 5.7 |
| | Absence | National comparative data | 0.1 |

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2 **16. Exclusions**

| | | |
|--|--------------|--------|
| Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year: | Fixed period | Number |
| | Permanent | 3 |
| | | 0 |

2 **17. Quality of teaching**

| | | |
|---|------------------------|----|
| Percentage of teaching observed which is: | Very good or better | % |
| | Satisfactory or better | 31 |
| | Less than satisfactory | 96 |
| | | 4 |

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

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

2 **Attainment and progress**

18. The provision made for children under five is very good and is a strength of the school. Children enter the nursery as soon as they are three years old and attend on a part time basis, until they move into the reception class. The school has made a decision that the nursery and reception classes should work closely together and they form a very effective Early Years Unit. At the time of the inspection only five children in the reception class were five years old; some children in the nursery were very young, and still settling in to nursery routines. When children enter the nursery, most have extremely limited language, mathematical and personal and social skills. Very few are working at the levels expected of three-year-olds and there is a wide range of both attainment and in their pre-nursery experiences.

19. Children make a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes and they make good progress. Nevertheless, by the age of five, children attain standards which are often still well below those expected for five-year-olds in many areas of their learning, especially in the key areas of language and mathematical development.

20. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in English and mathematics is well below the level expected for their age. Pupils' attainment in science is below the level expected for their age. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below the national average in reading and writing. When compared with similar schools, the 1999 results matched the average in reading but were below that level in writing. Speaking and listening skills are similarly low. In the tests for mathematics for seven year olds, pupils' attainment matched the national average. When the school's performance is compared with similar schools, the results are well above the average. In the teacher assessments for seven year olds, pupils' attainment in science was well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was also well below average

21. In the 1999 tests for eleven year olds, the school's results were well below the national average in English, mathematics and science. However, when compared to similar schools, pupils attained standards that matched the average in English, although standards in mathematics and science were below the average. These results largely reflect the outcomes of the inspection, which finds that, by the age of eleven, standards in English and science are below average and well below average in mathematics. There were some significant differences between boys and girls in their performance in the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds, with considerably fewer boys attaining the expected level than girls. The results from 1999 show a dip from the previous years but, as there was a smaller number of boys in the year group, the make-up of each successive year group is different, and the number of pupils with special educational needs was higher in last year's classes, it is statistically unreliable to compare trends over time.

22. The school's implementation of the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies is beginning to have a positive impact on the current Year 2 and Year 6 pupils. The targets set to improve pupils' attainment and progress, in both subjects, are having a positive effect on standards. Standards against individual targets have improved and the school has set realistic targets for the end of Key Stage 2 tests, which take careful account of pupils' present levels of attainment.

23. Pupils with special educational needs are identified at an early stage and good individual education plans are written for them. These pupils are well supported by teachers and when working with specialist staff in the classroom and in small groups. Teachers and other support staff know their pupils well. As a result, pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language make good progress in both key stages towards the targets set for them in their individual education plans.

24. Progress in English throughout the school is good and this is due in part to the good implementation of the Literacy Strategy in all classes including the nursery and reception. Pupils generally make good progress in reading due to a combination of good teaching and parents who work with their children at home. Where progress is slower it is because this partnership with home is not so well maintained and

therefore pupils lose interest. The progress made in writing is not yet so secure but it was often good in the lessons and the work seen. The school has recognised a need to promote handwriting and provide more opportunities for extended pieces of writing in a variety of subjects. Progress in speaking and listening is also good due to the opportunities that are provided for pupils to speak in a range of different contexts. Progress in mathematics and science, in Key Stage 1, is satisfactory.

25. Although pupils' attainment is still below the level expected for their age by the end of Key Stage 2 pupils make good progress in English and science. In English, pupils' speaking skills have improved and they listen to each other with respect, express ideas clearly and thoughtfully and make relevant comments, both during class discussions and when working in groups. Improvements are being made in reading and, by the end of the key stage, pupils read more fluently and many talk sensibly about the plot, characters and the parts they enjoyed the best. In Year 6 most pupils' writing is well organised and they are aware of basic punctuation and the need for paragraphs. As pupils move through Key Stage 2, they make satisfactory progress in mathematics and become increasingly proficient in all aspects of the number system. This includes work on all the number operations, odd and even numbers, place value, simple fractions and decimals. In science pupils carry out investigations and understand the conditions needed to make a test fair, make predictions and record their work accurately.

26. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in information technology is below the levels expected for their age and progress is unsatisfactory. This appears disappointing, since standards in the subject were also found to be lower than expected at the time of the previous inspection, as a result of the narrow range of experiences provided for pupils at that time. However, the school has made considerable improvements to its curriculum over the past three years. Pupils' attainment in communicating information is close to the levels expected and they make satisfactory progress in their lessons. Information technology is valued as an essential part of the curriculum, although the time given to it varies from class to class. This affects adversely the quality of what is achieved in the various strands of the subject, which include communicating and handling information, modelling, control and measuring. The school is aware of areas for development and has good plans to improve provision for information technology.

27. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in religious education matches the level expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has not maintained the high standards identified in the last inspection. The many teaching staff changes in recent years and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs contribute to the lower standards. The very good leadership of the school has not yet had time to make an impact on the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1 in developing an understanding of Christianity and Judaism. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. They explain clearly the celebrations of Christianity they have attended in the local church such as Christmas and Easter. In discussions with Year 6 pupils, they described a church visit they enjoyed and explained the important role of church artefacts, such as the font, cross, Bible and stained glass window. Pupils appreciate the importance of rules and recognise the guidance for life found in the stories of Jesus.

28. Pupils make good progress in music and satisfactory progress in both key stages in all other subjects.

2 Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

29. The majority of pupils, from the time they enter the nursery, have good attitudes towards school and their work. This is borne out by observations in lessons and through formal and informal discussions with pupils. In these discussions, pupils were invariably polite and enthusiastic. All expressed enjoyment of school, even when they identified some personal difficulties, for example in reading. Pupils are interested in all aspects of the curriculum and most respond positively to the many opportunities that the school provides. These include extra curricular activities, competitions and environmental projects, although boys show less interest in extra curricular activities than girls. The attitudes of most pupils with special educational needs are good especially in the small withdrawal groups where they receive specialist support. A small number of pupils, often but not always boys, have less positive attitudes to their work and appear to be poorly motivated. A number of these pupils are identified as having special educational needs in relation to attitudes and behaviour. They find it difficult to concentrate for any length of time, even when the tasks are

practical and stimulating. This affects their ability to retain what they have learned and has a negative impact on their attainment and progress. Because they sometimes take up a significant amount of the teacher's time in a lesson, this also affects the progress of others.

30. Most pupils behave well in lessons, in the dining room and in the playground and they are courteous to adults. Pupils also behave well in assemblies and show real interest in the proceedings. This was very evident in the achievement assembly during the inspection, when, even during quite a long session, all pupils behaved very well and listened carefully, showing keen interest in the success of a young pupil who had won a competition. Pupils tend to be very boisterous and noisy in the playground and when lining up outside their classrooms, but most behave appropriately towards each other. There was no sign of bullying or aggressive behaviour in the playground during the inspection. Despite this positive picture, there is a small but significant number of pupils whose behaviour, together with their general attitudes to lessons, is unsatisfactory. The numbers excluded by the school remain stable; there were three fixed term exclusions, all relating to pupils' behaviour, in the previous reporting year. It is to the credit of staff that the numbers are not higher.

31. Relationships in the school are good because of the commitment of staff to the pupils in their care. All teachers know their pupils well and are keenly aware of their needs. In the playground pupils relate well to each other and play amicably, if boisterously, in small and large groups. During the inspection no child was observed playing alone or apparently unhappy. When their tasks require it, pupils usually co-operate well and there were good examples of this in lessons during the inspection. Pupils in Year 6 co-operated on measuring tasks in their mathematics lesson; in Year 4, pairs of pupils worked on census material and completed a questionnaire collaboratively. Very young children in the nursery and reception classes were observed regularly sharing resources and co-operating well with adults in their work, and pupils worked effectively together in pairs and small groups to carry out scientific experiments. Most pupils work well for reasonable periods of time on individual tasks.

32. The personal development of pupils is good and most respond positively to the school's encouragement to take some personal responsibility for their actions and progress. For example, as part of the school's 'Goals for Success' project, visiting football coaches discussed with older pupils their personal targets for behaviour and attitudes to work. Pupils responded maturely, showing that they had given some thought to these matters. This was also obvious in a lesson with Year 6 pupils where they engaged in a sensible discussion with the teacher about their personal targets and their progress towards these. Most pupils show respect for the personal views of others. Year 4/5 pupils in a class assembly listened quietly and respectfully as pupils shared their thoughts about helping others. Even young pupils showed some personal maturity by spontaneously clapping the good work done by another pupil in a mathematics lesson in Year 1. The personal development of the youngest children in the nursery is very good because they are encouraged to take responsibility for their actions at an early stage. They are individually involved in deciding upon their daily tasks in discussion with adults and are expected to review these carefully later in the day. Many pupils broaden their personal horizons by their involvement in after school and lunchtime clubs and by taking part in competitions, music festivals and sporting events in which they learn that taking part and doing their best is as important as winning.

33. Pupils' current attitudes and behaviour represent an improvement since the previous inspection, when attitudes to learning and behaviour were described as variable. Some of the concerns raised at that time are still valid in relation to the behaviour of the small minority and these need to be addressed by the school.

2 Attendance

34. Attendance levels are above 90% and are satisfactory. Authorised absences are above the national average, however unauthorised absences are below the national average. As identified at the time of the previous inspection report, attendance in some classes regularly falls below 90%; this is particularly the case in the Early Years and Year 1. The poor attendance of a significant minority of pupils especially those in the Reception class and Year 1 is having a negative impact on their attainment and progress and these pupils are often identified as having special educational needs. Attendance is also affected by the number of pupils who take holiday in term time. For example, in the academic year 98/99, 171 school sessions were missed in the Year 1/2 class because of holiday. This, together with the poor attendance records of some pupils is hindering the school's ability to further improve the overall levels of attendance. Most pupils arrive at school on time, however there are a few who regularly arrive late. This is often the same pupils who have poor records of attendance therefore their poor punctuality contributes to the negative impact on their attainment and progress.

2 QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

2 Teaching

35. Teaching for children under five in the nursery and reception classes is never less than good and often very good. The Early Years Unit has been successfully re-organized and it is now strength of the school. There is effective use of all staff and the quality of their teamwork is having a very positive impact on children's learning.

36. The quality of teaching throughout the school is nearly always at least satisfactory, often good or very good. Teaching is unsatisfactory in very few lessons. This is because the immature behaviour of a few pupils is allowed to disrupt the lessons and pupils do not make sufficient progress. However, good teaching was seen in every class in the school. Teaching is good or very good in over half the lessons. The quality of teaching and learning has improved in Year 1 and pupils are making at least satisfactory and sometimes good progress in most subjects. The implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has improved the progress of pupils as they move through the school; this is also reflected in the improvement in science as pupils move from one year group to another. The introduction of schemes of work for all subjects and teachers' use of these guidelines to produce good lesson plans are ensuring that pupils build effectively on their previous experiences. Teachers have a sound knowledge and understanding of English, mathematics and science and all other subjects. This, coupled with good expectations of pupils' work and behaviour, is improving learning and having a positive impact on pupils' progress. There has not yet been sufficient time for the improvements in the stability of the teaching staff to have the desired effect on pupils' attainment by the end of Key Stage 2.

37. Teachers' planning is good in both key stages for most subjects. They make effective use of planning required by the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and this helps them to use time well and, in most instances, to organise their lessons efficiently. Teachers use the whole class sessions, with which these lessons begin, effectively to involve pupils of all levels of attainment and to encourage individuals to participate fully. For example, in a Year 6 mathematics lesson, good questions were used to encourage pupils to think about rounding three digit numbers to the nearest hundred and then to find the difference between the number and one thousand. Planning is consistent for all subjects; for example, in science, teachers' medium term planning shows the knowledge, skills and understanding to be taught. As a result, pupils build effectively on their previous learning. Other effective strategies used by teachers include working with groups and individuals, helping to solve specific problems. For example, in a Year 6 writing task pupils were set the challenge of composing a newspaper report about the conditions in a hospital during the Crimean War, they used their historical knowledge to recreate the horrors caused by war. Teachers are aware of the needs of pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language and make time to support them either individually or in small groups.

38. Teachers in both key stages know and manage their pupils well, and provide good support for different activities, the exception to this is in the few unsatisfactory lessons where the management of behaviour is inadequate. The good relationships between staff and pupils create a secure climate in which

to learn. In a Year 1 class, the teacher used mathematical language effectively and insisted that pupils 'look very carefully' at a number before deciding if a second number was 'more than' or 'less than' the one given. Teachers respond well to the needs of pupils, including those with special educational needs and English as an additional language; they intervene sensitively to offer support and encouragement. For example, teachers assess what pupils are learning in the lesson and make constructive suggestions as to how they can improve. This was particularly evident when a teacher was working with groups of pupils in Year 3/4 improving their mathematical skills. Pupils were using a clock face to move the hands a given number of minutes and then giving the new time. This was a stimulating session and allowed the teacher to observe and assess pupils as the activity proceeded, adapting questions according to the needs of different pupils.

39. Lessons are usually taught at a brisk pace. Teachers, in both key stages, use time efficiently and, in the best lessons, they make very clear to pupils the amount of time allocated to tasks. For example, in a Year 4/5 science lesson a clear target was set for pupils to write the results of an experiment completed earlier in the week. For the most part, teachers use time in the Literacy Hour well, allowing appropriate time for whole class, group and individual work as required. They use resources effectively, for example, in a Year 1 English lesson using a big reading book, the teacher asked challenging questions that encouraged pupils to predict what was likely to happen next. This was also evident in a Year 6 music lesson when a variety of tuned instruments were used to create 'ostinato' patterns of five notes. Pupils went on to produce accurate patterns which they performed well.

40. The procedures to assess pupils' attainment and progress are good and used effectively to guide future planning. In their day to day work, teachers assess pupils' work well. They listen carefully and patiently and record their findings to help them plan future lessons. For example, in a year 6 planning file for science, the teacher noted the areas of difficulty for pupils in a previous lesson on dissolving substances and effectively revised the use of a fair test to ensure that pupils clearly understood the concept. The majority of teachers include positive comments when marking but do not consistently provide precise comments on what pupils need to do in order to improve. This makes it more difficult for some teachers to assess how well pupils are learning from their mistakes.

41. Teachers are implementing the recently introduced homework policy. They use homework effectively to support pupils' learning. There are opportunities for pupils of all ages to undertake homework, and in discussion with pupils, the majority are keen to complete the task given. The school is aware of parents' previous concerns over the amount of homework but feel that the situation has now been resolved.

42. Teaching for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is good. All staff have a very positive attitude towards pupils with special educational needs and plan lessons to take account of them. When pupils are withdrawn for specialist teaching these lessons are very carefully matched to what is going on in their classes. Pupils have the opportunity to be challenged at their own level and therefore feel a sense of pride and achievement in the work they complete. Good use is made of day-to-day assessments to note any areas of concern and plan future lessons. For example, when one pupil in Year 2 was seen to be having difficulty forming the letter 'h', practice on this was planned for in a future lesson. As a result of good teaching pupils with special educational needs make at least satisfactory and often good progress.

2 **The curriculum and assessment**

43. The school's curriculum meets the statutory requirements to teach all the subjects of the National Curriculum and religious education. It includes effective provision for teaching drugs awareness and sex education in a comprehensive and wide ranging health education programme. The curriculum for children under five is very good. It covers all the required areas of learning and is taught in such a way that opportunities for language and mathematical development are exploited, through a rich range of practical and relevant activity. Pupils in Key Stages 1 and 2 benefit from a rich curriculum, which is broad and well balanced overall. However, within one or two subjects there is some imbalance that needs to be addressed. For example, the time allocated to information technology and to physical education makes it difficult to provide consistently for all aspects of these subjects. Particularly in relation to information technology, this has a detrimental effect on the standards that pupils attain.

44. Careful attention is paid to personal and social education and the school has recently won a 'Healthy School' award for the quality of its work in this area, which includes work on road safety, personal safety, smoking issues, healthy eating and lifestyles. This work is closely linked to work in science on 'life processes', in which pupils study the growth and development of animals and human beings. The curriculum also includes, wherever it is appropriate, other issues such as economic and industrial understanding and citizenship. The School Council and recent work on European awareness have contributed to pupils' geographical understanding and to a greater awareness of what it means to be a member of a local and European community.

45. The curriculum is enriched by the school's commitment to involve pupils in the life of their local and wider community through sporting links with other schools, music, work with artists and environmental projects, such as their successful garden project. The school encourages pupils to participate in numerous competitions, with the aim of helping them to see that participation and doing one's best is really important. Winning is of less importance, but celebrated enthusiastically when it occurs. During the inspection a pupil in the art club won first prize in a painting competition and both pupils and staff took great pleasure in his success. The curriculum is further enhanced by numerous extra curricular activities to which teachers give generously of their time. These alter according to the time of year, but currently include football, netball, gymnastics, music, art, reading and mathematics clubs. These are very well attended by pupils, although it is noticeable that there are far fewer boys than girls attending most of these activities. In relation to extra curricular activity, clubs are generally open to all pupils, but it may be beneficial both to individual pupils and to the school, if ways could be found to directly encourage greater involvement by boys, possibly by targeting them specifically.

46. All pupils enjoy equality of access to the curriculum because teachers know their pupils, plan well and are aware of the needs of different groups and individuals. Pupils with special educational needs are well supported and teachers go to considerable lengths to ensure their involvement, demonstrating considerable sensitivity towards those with behaviour problems. The curriculum is well planned to meet the needs of pupils with special educational needs. There is good liaison between teachers and support staff so that pupils benefit from all curriculum opportunities available.

47. The school prepares pupils well for the next stages of education both at the age of five and when they leave the school at eleven. The work of the Early Years Unit is very effectively planned to support the early stages of the National Curriculum and excellent records are passed on as pupils move into Key Stage 1. Similarly, at the age of eleven, pupils' move to secondary school is effectively supported by good links with the comprehensive school to which most of them transfer. Pupils and staff visit the school and there are good relationships and effective liaison which smoothes the transition.

48. The school has effective procedures for assessing pupils' attainment and progress. Statutory, standardised and optional tests are carried out efficiently and good use is made of these in monitoring pupils' progress and in identifying issues that need to be followed up. The school uses the statutory baseline assessment of the youngest pupils extremely effectively in planning the curriculum for children under five and in identifying children's personal targets for learning, which are then shared with parents. Regular assessments are carried out of pupils' attainment and progress in all subjects and these are usefully collected in pupils' individual files that are compiled as they move through the school. Teachers are conscientious and make insightful comments on each piece of pupils' work. Presently these assessments are under used both by teachers and at the time of transition to the next school. This is partly due to the increasing amount of work in the file and the difficulty of accessing it easily. At present the work is not sorted into subjects and there is little discrimination about what is retained as significant evidence by the end of Key Stage 2. School portfolios of work in English, mathematics, and science are available to help teachers in assessing pupils' progress by reference to the National Curriculum levels of attainment.

49. The marking of pupils' work is usually done conscientiously and positively although it is rare for marking to indicate what pupils need to do to improve. Teachers' assessments of pupils' progress in reading are helpful and identify clearly the problems that pupils are experiencing. Pupils are encouraged to assess their own progress by reference to individual, group and class targets, although the individual targets for

pupils are not always as specific and measurable as they might be. This is true of all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Teachers carry out weekly assessments and evaluations of the work that has been done, which form the basis for the next stage of learning. These are presently inconsistent in their quality although often carried out conscientiously. There was evidence in some weekly planning files of teachers amending their lessons in the light of what had been assessed the previous day.

50. The school has significantly improved its curriculum planning since the previous inspection. The deputy head teacher has managed and co-ordinated this very effectively, in collaboration with teachers and curriculum co-ordinators. There are curriculum policies and schemes of work to support planning. The school has a coherent approach which aims to ensure that pupils' learning builds on what has previously been learned. This is largely successful. Teachers use these schemes of work effectively, together with the recent guidance on numeracy and literacy, in planning their lessons. They do this in detail and consider carefully the needs of individuals and groups. This pays dividends in relation to the quality of teaching and the organisation of lessons. Senior staff carefully monitor curriculum planning and the school is always looking for ways to improve the quality and effectiveness of its planning procedures as a tool for teaching.

51. The school's curriculum and assessment procedures are effective. This is a significant improvement since the previous inspection. The school is well placed to make further improvements in this area.

2 Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

52. The provision made for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is very good.

53. The provision made for pupils' spiritual development is very good. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on the meanings of prayers and hymns and understand how beliefs and values shape the way people think and behave. The daily act of collective worship is of a consistently high standard whether it is part of a whole school or a class assembly. Great care is taken to set the right atmosphere for quiet reflection through the use of music and the lighting that is part of a special place. This is evident in all classrooms but the backdrop of the Millennium celebration of Christ's special birthday in the school hall is a good example of this. A similar display in the Early Years Unit gives the same message in a simpler format. Teachers regularly build in a time of quiet reflection at the end of lessons which leads naturally into a time of prayer. One pupil in Year 1 described this as, 'A time to talk to God'.

54. During the week of the inspection the theme for assemblies was Light and this was used to explain that Jesus was the light of the world and also to show that other religions such as Hinduism and Judaism also use light as a symbol for faith. The visiting rector clearly demonstrated the symbolism of the Advent wreath with the four candles lit on the four Sundays before Christmas to show the time of waiting and ultimate celebration. Younger children followed this up with an exploration of the Advent calendar while pupils in Year 6 linked their assembly to the work they had done in class on Florence Nightingale. The teacher skilfully moved them into seeing that the 'Lady with the Lamp' was a symbol of hope to the men who were existing in the terrible conditions of the Crimean War. The memorial to one of the 'Highfield Helping Hands' is also an indication of the way pupils are encouraged to give thanks for the people who help them.

55. The provision made for pupils' moral development is very good. The school places great emphasis on teaching pupils to have respect for one another and school property. The school behaviour policy and anti-bullying policy are known and followed by all staff who deal with pupils fairly and openly. Pupils know what is expected of them and in the main they respond well. Where pupils have emotional or behavioural problems staff are sensitive to their needs but also have procedures in place to protect other pupils. Good behaviour, care, and consideration for others are rewarded through an effective house points system that culminates in a weekly award assembly.

56. Pupils are taught to be courteous and polite. Teachers, support staff and mid-day supervisory staff

set good examples in the way they relate to pupils and one another. Regular lessons in personal and social education give pupils opportunities to perceive right and wrong and issues of fairness. For older pupils this takes the form of a school council where issues of concern are aired. All staff, pupils and parents understand the sanctions that are applied in cases of unacceptable behaviour. They are applied fairly. Procedures for dealing with problem behaviour within lessons are clear and teachers use them, but sometimes they are over tolerant of pupils who disturb the learning of others. The expectations of the school are made clear to parents and the majority of them work in partnership with the school to promote the values of honesty, fairness and respect for one another.

57. The school makes very good provision for the social development of pupils. When children are admitted to the nursery they are taught to play with one another and share the resources and equipment. Through the 'plan, do and review' routine that is operated in nursery and reception they quickly learn to take some responsibility for their own learning. They show that they can take responsibility for tidying away resources and listen politely to one another and class visitors. The visit of a local postman was a good experience both for the children and the adults.

58. Pupils are taught to take pride in their achievements and those of others and this was seen in the genuine pleasure when one pupil won an important art prize. All are taught to take pride in their school and look after property. Extra-curricular activities are organised to give pupils opportunities to work co-operatively in small groups and those pupils who take part become more confident in their dealings with adults and pupils from other schools. Pupils take part in a wide range of sporting events and festivals that require them to behave responsibly. The initiative set up with Newcastle United Football Club to coach pupils and work on attitudes to learning has a positive impact on pupils in Year 6. The school involves pupils in raising funds for charities and has very recently collected gifts to be sent to children in Bulgaria. In history, they explore the lives of people such as Florence Nightingale and their impact on the lives of others. Pupils are encouraged to look after one another and older pupils help to set up assemblies and look after the library.

59. The provision made for pupils' cultural development is good. Pupils are taught to take a pride in themselves and their own area. The school makes good use of local museums and art galleries to promote the cultural awareness of pupils, for example, the recent work with Shipley art gallery. Pupils are encouraged to take part in a range of competitions in handwriting, art, music, dance and sports. In history lessons they learn about past cultures and in geography they learn about their own locality and contrast that with others. Pupils have opportunities to work with writers and artists as seen in the sculpture using a Shakespeare play as an inspiration. Music plays an important part in the life of the school although there is little evidence of music from other cultures and the range of musical instruments does not always interest boys. Pupils are taught to appreciate the natural world both through visits to Chopwell Woods and also in their drawings and paintings of plants. They learn about other cultures but do not have a strong sense of the multi-cultural nature of modern Britain.

60. These aspects of the school are stronger than they were at the time of the previous inspection. This reflects the excellent ethos created by the head teacher and staff. There is every indication that this very good provision will be maintained and developed further.

2 Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

61. Procedures for the support, guidance and welfare of pupils are very good; this is an improvement since the time of the previous inspection report when several issues regarding pupils' safety were raised. Very good records of what pupils can do in most areas of the curriculum, together with detailed analyses of tests in English, mathematics and science, provide teachers with good quality information to ensure that pupils receive the support and guidance needed to make progress. Pupils' personal development is a priority of the school. Teachers know pupils well and are quick to alert the head teacher to any concerns that may be having an adverse effect on pupils' ability to learn. Pupils with special educational needs are supported well. The school has good links with the local education authority support service and makes good use of the advice and information it receives. As a result, most of these pupils make good progress.

62. There are very good procedures for the monitoring and promoting of good behaviour and discipline.

The policies for the management of behaviour and dealing with bullying are clear and are followed consistently by staff. There is a system of rewards which recognises pupils' personal development, behaviour and attainment. Pupils look forward to the whole school assembly that each week celebrates their achievements in the presenting of 'Aiming High' certificates. These occasions are used effectively as an example to all pupils of the standards they need to attain in order to be rewarded.

63. Procedures for the monitoring and promoting of attendance are good. The educational welfare officer checks attendance records regularly in order to identify any poor attendance and these are followed up effectively. Through their monitoring procedures the school is aware that the poor attendance of some pupils is slowing their rate of progress and having a negative impact on the standards attained. They have begun to recognise the need to use this information to set targets for improvement as part of the drive to raise standards but this is not yet consistent across the school.

64. The school is a community with a very strong caring ethos. The health, welfare and safety of pupils continue to be the main priority of governors and staff. Teachers value pupils as individuals and treat them with respect. Child protection arrangements are very good. The head teacher has responsibility for contacting support agencies and all teachers and governors have received appropriate training. Checks of the premises are carried out with the support of the local education authority and regular reports are made to governors by the head teacher. Some minor health and safety concerns were raised with the head teacher during the inspection and are being addressed.

65. The very good procedures in place, together with the high priority the school places on this area of its work, ensure that they are well placed to maintain these levels of care and support.

2 Partnership with parents and the community

66. The partnership that the school has with parents and the community is very good. Parents are well informed about the life of the school through regular newsletters. The school brochure is very detailed and gives a full account of the aims and values promoted by the school and its day-to-day organisation. Parents and visitors are welcomed into the school and any concerns raised are addressed promptly and without fuss. Letters sent out to parents are clear, informative and written in a user-friendly style. Reports to parents give good information about what pupils know and understand and set clear targets for future learning so that parents can support their children at home. Home/school reading diaries are used as a good means of communication about pupils' reading and regular meetings are held to give parents an opportunity to discuss their children's progress with the class teachers. Notices in the school building give parents and pupils good levels of information about the activities taking place.

67. The annual governors' meeting with parents and their report provide detailed information about the aims, values and priorities set by the school. When formal meetings are held to discuss curriculum matters, these are not as well attended as the activities that involve pupils and their parents together, for example the mathematics activity trail and the Health Education Day where pupils and parents all had fun while they learned. Parents of pupils with special educational needs are well informed about the procedures to be followed and the progress made by pupils. Open afternoons or mornings, when parents can come in to school and see what their children are learning, are also well supported. Parents generally find staff very approachable. The head teacher is regularly to be seen out in the playground at the beginning or end of the school day to meet informally with parents. The school does all it can to gain the involvement of parents.

68. Home school agreements have been negotiated with parents and clearly identify what the school is trying to do for pupils and how parents can support them. Homework is regularly provided for pupils and the majority of parents are very supportive of the work their children are expected to do at home. Where this help is not forthcoming it is reflected in lower levels of attainment for those pupils. Some parents have been involved in courses arranged by the school on 'Parents as Partners' or providing a 'Caring Start' for pupils in the nursery and reception classes. Parents that attended these courses feel that they have helped them in bringing up their own children to become more independent. An extra bonus has been their improved relationships with the staff of the school. Some excellent home packs have been made by parents working with Early Years staff. They are targeted at those areas that the assessments identify as weaknesses among some children. These are loaned out to parents for them to help their children with the

early skills of literacy and numeracy and the progress of children at the beginning of their school life has been enhanced. Parents are very appreciative of the wide range of extra-curricular activities provided by the school and are always willing to help with supervision on trips or to provide transport where they can.

69. The school is a focus for much of the life of the community. The community room situated in the Key Stage 1 building is regularly used for meetings of community groups. Regular contact with local churches brings an added dimension to the school and significantly enhances the spiritual development of pupils. Governors represent some of the local businesses and the school has good relations with local businesses. Good links are established with the community policeman who comes regularly into school to discuss areas of concern in the community, for example, bullying and the impact it has on everyone. Good use is made of services such as the school crossing patrol staff, the fire service and the post office to give pupils a better understanding of the importance of their jobs in the life of the community. This gives pupils a sense of their own place within the local community. Visitors to the school are made welcome so there are good relations with outside agencies such as the education welfare officer and the school psychologist. The school makes good use of a local arts centre and the visitors' centre in Chopwell woods to give pupils the chance to perform within the community. It also takes every opportunity to take part in festivals, competitions and celebrations. Liaison with local primary schools and the comprehensive school are good and therefore pupils make a smooth transition to the next phase of their education.

70. The partnership with parents and the community is stronger than it was at the time of the previous inspection report and this is consistent with the views expressed by parents. The school is committed to working effectively with parents and is therefore in a good position to maintain and improve these relationships.

2 THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

2 Leadership and management

71. The school has made very good progress resolving the issues raised in the last inspection and the capacity for future improvement is very good. The school now has very effective leadership and a clear direction for future developments. The roles of the head teacher, senior management team, governors and staff of the school are clearly defined and the quality of the teamwork is having a positive effect on pupils' progress and beginning to improve their attainment. The large turnover of staff in the last three years has adversely affected the attainment of the pupils in the present Year 2 and Year 6 and, coupled with the differing number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group, accounts for the fact that pupils' attainment is not higher.

72. The Early Years Unit has been successfully re-organized and it is now a strength of the school. There is effective use of all staff and the quality of their teamwork is having a very positive impact on children's learning. The implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies has improved the progress of pupils as they move through the school; this is also reflected in the improvement in science as pupils move from one year group to another. There are policies and schemes of work for all subjects. Teachers use these well to guide their planning and ensure pupils receive an appropriate breadth of curriculum experiences, which build on their previous learning. There is now a consistent approach to curriculum planning and the assessment of pupils' progress and achievements is effective. All staff understand the requirements of the Code of Practice for pupils with special educational needs. The provision for these pupils is good. Pupils are identified early in their school life and appropriate action is taken to provide clear, well defined targets to help them overcome their difficulties.

73. The head teacher, senior management team and governors work together closely and manage the school very well. There is clear direction for the work of the school ensuring that strategic decisions determine the financial and educational development of the school. The role of curriculum co-ordinators has been developed to include monitoring of their subject across the school. The head teacher, English and mathematics co-ordinators have monitored teaching and learning and they identify and share good practice. Very detailed analysis of pupils' national test results is being undertaken regularly by the head teacher and

the results are used very effectively to set realistic targets for pupils' future attainment. The staff meet regularly, both formally and informally, to discuss curriculum matters. Curriculum co-ordinators undertake their roles conscientiously. They help prepare the school development plan and set priorities through a systematic analysis of needs in their areas of responsibility, which are fully discussed before implementation.

74. Governors show interest in the school and give it very good support. The sound committee structure enables them to support the head teacher and meet their statutory responsibilities. There are link governors in place for literacy, numeracy and special educational needs who visit the school regularly and effectively monitor the delivery of the curriculum. The school fulfils all legal requirements for special educational needs and a knowledgeable co-ordinator handles work very efficiently and effectively. Good policies and procedures aimed at ensuring early identification and support are in place. The register is well organised and up-to-date and any changes in the circumstances of pupils are noted and, if necessary, acted upon. Individual education plans are in place for those pupils who require them and parents are involved in the review of their children's progress. The school liaises very well with outside agencies when necessary. The support for pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language is effective, as a result, the majority of pupils make good progress. The school has a good attitude to pupils with special educational needs even though they do at times cause problems in some classes. Some of the behaviour presented in classes is very challenging and difficult to deal with. The head teacher is very involved in all the school procedures. The governor with a responsibility for special educational needs has a watching brief over the procedures followed by the school and is very aware of the issues and also the concerns of parents.

75. The school development plan is an effective management tool, which clearly identifies the priorities and targets to be tackled and guides the work of the school. It provides a baseline against which future development can be measured and is having a positive effect on raising pupils' attainment. Educational and financial planning is clearly cross-referenced. Priorities include the continued monitoring of the curriculum intended to improve pupils' progress and raise attainment. The school has clear targets for improvements. For example, the school has identified further training for staff and the purchase of new equipment and resources to improve pupils' attainment and progress in information technology.

76. The school and the governing body have responded positively and effectively to the outcomes of the previous report with regard to leadership and management in the school. There is a clear emphasis on high achievement, providing all pupils with an effective learning environment in which they can flourish and establish good relationships with staff. As a result, there is an excellent ethos in the school. With their current level of involvement and commitment the governors, in partnership with the head teacher and staff, are well placed to plan and implement further improvements.

2 Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

77. The school has sufficient qualified teachers and classroom assistants to provide effective learning experiences in all subjects of the curriculum. There have been many changes to the teaching staff since the time of the previous inspection. Teachers currently employed in the school have a broad range of experience and work very effectively as a team to ensure that pupils receive a good quality education. There are sufficient administrative, caretaking and cleaning staff to support the daily running of the school. Mid-day supervisory staff make a positive contribution to pupils' well being at lunchtime. Staff morale is high and reflects the strong team spirit that is evident in the school.

78. Procedures for the professional development of staff are good. This is a significant improvement since the time of the previous inspection when the professional development of staff was found to be a low priority within the school. Recent in-service training has resulted in the successful implementation of the Literacy and Numeracy Strategies and is having a positive impact on the quality of teaching in these subjects. There are good systems to ensure the successful induction of new staff who have settled into school well and are making a positive contribution to the quality of education provided.

79. The school accommodation is satisfactory and allows for a range of activities to take place across all areas of the curriculum. Since the time of the previous inspection improvements have been made to the heating and fire alarm systems. Vandalism is still a problem for the school and does at times result in

disruption to learning due to classrooms and resources being affected by large amounts of broken glass. The solving of this problem by erecting a perimeter fence has been a priority of the governors for some time and is to be in place by the end of the summer term. Outdoor areas of the school provide well for the teaching of physical education but similarly have been affected by problems of vandalism. Displays of pupils' work are used effectively to celebrate achievement, raise pupils' self-esteem and support personal development.

80. Resources are satisfactory to support teaching and learning in the majority of subjects. Learning resources for the teaching of English, mathematics and science are good and this is beginning to have a positive impact on standards. Information technology resources are unsatisfactory which contributes to the below average attainment in this subject. The school has already allocated additional funds from this year's budget to improve these resources.

2 **The efficiency of the school**

81. The efficiency of the school is good. Financial planning and control are good; the governing body has a finance committee who, together with the head teacher and support from the local education authority budget officer, take responsibility for monitoring the school budget. The head teacher effectively exercises day-to-day financial control within agreed limits. The finance committee discusses the school's budget proposals and the full governing body meets to examine and approve the full budget recommendations linking spending to the priorities laid down in the school development plan. Although there was a large budget surplus in the last reporting year, the school has saved money to support specific projects; for example, the erection of the perimeter fence and the provision of computer resources. Each governor is linked to a subject area, which ensures that governors are aware of the needs of pupils and staff in order to raise standards. This is an improvement since the previous inspection when governors were judged not to be taking a sufficiently active interest or role in the life of the school.

82. The day-to-day administration of the school is good. Systems are computerised and the newly appointed secretary is developing a good knowledge and understanding of both the school and local authority systems. All points raised at the last audit have been addressed. The school runs smoothly and efficiently. Money allocated for the support of pupils with special educational needs is directed towards meeting their needs. Funding intended for professional training of staff is effectively used for that purpose.

83. Satisfactory use is made of the expertise of staff. This is particularly effective in the teaching of children under five, those identified as having special educational needs and English as an additional language. They use their professional expertise and time well to support one another and to help the school to improve. Staff make satisfactory use of resources and accommodation. Curriculum co-ordinators have carried out audits of their subjects and have prioritised the buying of resources.

84. The school's spending per pupil is high when compared with national figures. The provision for pupils' spiritual, moral and social development is very good. The quality of education provided by the school is good and pupils make good progress. The school provides good value for money and is well placed to continue the improvements made to the efficiency of the school since the time of the last inspection.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

2 AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

85. The provision made for children under five is very good and is a strength of the school. Children enter the nursery as soon as they are three years old and attend on a part time basis, until they move into the reception class. The school has made a decision that the nursery and reception classes should work closely together and they form a very effective Early Years Unit. At the time of the inspection, only five children in the reception class were five years old; some children in the nursery were very young and still settling in to nursery routines. When children enter the nursery, most have extremely limited language, mathematical, personal, and social skills. Very few are working at the levels expected of three-year-olds and there is a wide range of both attainment and in the pre-nursery experiences.

86. Children make a good start to their education in the nursery and reception classes and they make good progress. Nevertheless, by the age of five, children are attaining standards which are still well below those expected for five-year-olds in many areas of their learning, especially in the key areas of language and mathematical development.

87. Children make good progress in developing their personal and social skills and they form very good relationships with familiar adults. They become more confident and listen attentively, at least for short periods. They are willing to share resources; children in the reception class worked together independently and amicably, sharing the sticky shapes that they needed for their mathematical tasks. With encouragement, children take turns to speak to the teacher. They are interested in new learning and showed great interest in a recently purchased mathematical game, listening attentively to the teacher as she explained its use. Children were very interested when the postman visited them and they asked questions politely. Their personal and social development is greatly enhanced by the approach to learning adopted in the nursery, which involves even the youngest children in a process known as 'plan, do and review'. This helps children to think carefully about their activities and encourages them to take some personal responsibility for their learning, appropriately supported by an adult.

88. Children make good progress in developing their skills in speaking, listening, reading and writing from a weak baseline. Young children in the nursery often give one word answers to adults in response to questions and some lack confidence. By the age of five in most aspects of language, many children are still working at levels well below those expected. They listen well to the teacher, enjoy stories and often recall their favourite part and the main characters, but their speech remains limited and for some it is still indistinct and immature, despite constant and sensitive encouragement from adults. Many children lack the range of vocabulary to describe their ideas and needs. However, one or two children are confident in their speech and can explain what they are doing. Children enjoy books and stories and they treat them carefully. Few have developed appropriate reading skills by the age of five, although they understand how to handle books and know that they need to turn the pages in order. Children develop their letter and word recognition skills slowly. Some children in a literacy session in the reception class recognised words such as 'look', and one or two, working with the teacher, talked about the title of the book and its author and illustrator. Similarly, children's writing skills remain well below what is expected by the age of five. They are developing their skills in forming letters and words but not all write their name.

89. Children make satisfactory progress in their mathematical development. They recognise simple shapes such as square and circle and some created a number line of up to eight objects and by the end of this session, some higher attaining children could say how many more they needed to complete their work, for example, 'I need two more to get six'. Children count up to five accurately and understand the meaning of 'zero'. They used their knowledge of number appropriately in a 'shopping' session with the teacher, but struggled with simple addition. Few could respond to the teacher's question 'four and one make how many?' as she held up the correct number of fingers. Children do not yet, use specific mathematical language, although when encouraged by the teacher they compare things as being taller or shorter, smaller or larger. Children show very little awareness of numbers in their everyday lives or larger numbers, such as telephone or car numbers.

90. Children make good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world. They are curious

about the world around them, although many lack a wide vocabulary to describe their experiences or even their immediate family and where they live. Their school environment provides rich experiences with plants and animals to look after, interesting visits, visitors, and computers to support learning. They are interested in technology and computers and are encouraged to use these from an early stage in the nursery. In their cooking activity young children in the nursery, with encouragement from the teacher, talked about how an oven 'makes things hot' and the need for care when eating hot food which 'burns your mouth'. In the reception class pupils extend their experiences, for example during the inspection postmen came to visit, as part of a topic on 'people who help us', and children were interested to learn about their work.

91. Children make good progress in their physical and creative development. However, by the age of five many are still below the level expected for their age. Most are confident and enjoy climbing and balancing, as they use large apparatus. Children handle tools, small blocks, scissors and paintbrushes with reasonable confidence and dexterity. Children enjoy many opportunities for music, movement, painting and craft activities and make satisfactory progress in these areas of their work.

92. The quality of teaching for children under five is very good in both the nursery and the reception class. All the adults in the Early Years Unit work very well together to create a secure and happy but challenging atmosphere for children. They have a very good understanding of the needs of young children and use this most effectively in planning and teaching an extremely enriched curriculum which is securely based on their knowledge of individual children and what they need to develop their personal confidence and self esteem as well as their skills and knowledge.

93. Parents are welcomed as partners in their children's education. Staff have run workshops and prepared a range of materials to support parents in this endeavour. Very good booklets are available which show parents how to help their children with reading and mathematics and others which explain carefully the way the curriculum is organised. An impressive range of Home Packs has been prepared and these are well used by parents. A particular strength of this initiative is the way the staff encourage parents to choose activities that link to the specific needs of their children as identified in the baseline assessment that is undertaken in school. The results of this are shared with parents at a baseline meeting and a copy of targets is given to them. Through this considered approach, the school is also careful to identify children already giving cause for concern and provides well-structured support. The curriculum and general organisation for children under five are managed extremely well by a knowledgeable and insightful teacher who, with the support of the head teacher, has undertaken a major and very successful re-organisation of this area of the school's work.

94. The quality of provision for children under five represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection and the school is very well placed to consolidate and improve this provision further in line with next year's new requirements.

95. Young children with special educational needs are identified and staff take account of this when they work with children. Staff are very clear about what they want children to learn from the good range of activities they provide. They make effective use of the baseline assessment procedures. The curriculum is very well planned in the Early Years Unit and careful attention is paid to ensuring that all areas of learning are valued, whilst at the same time paying particular attention to language and personal and social development.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

96. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment in English is well below the level expected for their age. In the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, the school's results were well below the national average in reading and writing, although the proportion of pupils attaining the higher level in reading matched the average. When compared with similar schools the 1999 results matched the average in reading but were below that level in writing. Speaking and listening skills are similarly low. The results reflect the trend over time but the number of pupils in each year group with special educational needs, always a significant factor, varies significantly enough to render year on year comparisons unreliable. There have also been major staffing changes in this key stage. The inspection findings are that this is a true reflection of standards of attainment but does not give a fair picture of the good progress made by the majority of pupils. The poor attendance record of some pupils in nursery, reception and Key Stage 1, shows in the slower rate of progress made by these pupils over time.

97. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' attainment in English is below the level expected for their age. In the national tests for eleven year olds in 1999 the school's results were well below the national average although the number of pupils attaining the higher level matched the average. When compared with similar schools results matched the average. This is not consistent with the trend over time but there was a large proportion of pupils with special educational needs in that year group. What differences there are between the attainment of boys and girls are explained to some extent by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the majority of these pupils are boys. Despite these variations good progress is made by the majority of pupils. There is a wide variation between year groups as shown in the 1998 English test results where the school performance was well above national averages. The inspection findings are that, although there are pupils in each year group who attain high standards in English in relation to their age, overall standards are below average in reading, writing and speaking and listening.

98. Progress in English throughout the school is good and this is due in part to the good implementation of the Literacy Strategy in all classes including the nursery and reception. Pupils generally make good progress in reading due to a combination of good teaching and parents who work with their children at home. Where progress is slower it is because this partnership with home is not so well maintained and therefore pupils lose interest. The progress made in writing is not yet so secure but it was often good in the lessons and the work seen. The school has recognised a need to promote handwriting and provide more opportunities for extended pieces of writing in a variety of subjects. The consistent efforts of teachers are beginning to be reflected in improved work. Progress in speaking and listening is also good due to the opportunities that are provided for pupils to speak in a range of different contexts. However, there are still some pupils at the upper end of Key Stage 2 who have a limited range of vocabulary or cannot articulate their views.

99. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in English in both key stages in relation to the individual education plans drawn up for them. When there are added behavioural problems, this does sometimes disturb the learning of others. Pupils with English as an additional language also make good progress.

100. Pupils' attainment in speaking and listening is well below average at the beginning of Key Stage 1. A significant number of pupils have immature speech and their vocabulary is too limited for them to speak confidently with adults except in very small groups. Most pupils make good progress in this aspect of English and improve their ability to listen attentively and talk about what they are learning. Most speak quite audibly, their range of vocabulary is growing and they enjoy trying to use new words. They listen and join in with familiar stories, songs, nursery rhymes and poems. In assemblies they join in with the songs they know and respond to the theme of the assembly. As they approach the end of Key Stage 1, the majority of pupils are confident enough to talk about their work and their own experiences when the topic is of interest. They generally listen attentively to their teacher or one another but many pupils experience difficulties when they are expected to listen or wait for their turn to speak. Several pupils lack the range of experiences to talk with confidence. Most pupils know that there are times when it is appropriate to use more formal forms of English as shown in the pupil with special educational needs who said: 'Thank you for coming. I will see you in my class', to one of the inspection team.

101. In Years 3 and 4 pupils use talk to explore their own thoughts and ideas as seen in a religious education lesson on helping others. They talked about what co-operation meant and related this to experiences such as a brother hiding a school uniform or Dad needing help to push the car. By Year 5, they contribute to a class discussion and use the ideas provided by others to extend their thinking as seen in the debate about the events surrounding the historic sinking of the Titanic. Their lack of experiences still continues to limit some pupils. For example, some pupils had little understanding that the journey of the Titanic was from England to America because they did not know that Southampton is in England and New York is in America. Pupils in Year 6 adapt the way they speak to suit the audience as can be seen in the way they lead prayers or express opinions about the conditions in the hospitals in the time of Florence Nightingale. Most listen carefully and ask questions to clarify what they think. However, there are some pupils who need considerable support to express their ideas

102. Although the full range of ability is evident at the beginning of Key Stage 1, the standards attained in reading are well below average. A significant minority of pupils are just beginning to re-tell simple stories with the aid of pictures. Most pupils, both boys and girls, make good progress in this aspect of English. However, there are still some pupils, usually those with special educational needs, that are reading below the levels expected for their age. They are more likely to be boys than girls. Pupils' attainment in reading by the end of Key Stage 2 is below the level expected for their age.

103. At the beginning of Key Stage 1 pupils enjoy books and handle them carefully and understand how they are organised. They know that words and pictures tell a story. Readers that are more able enjoy books and talk about them with confidence to identify their favourite characters and parts of the book. They use a range of strategies to make sense of unfamiliar texts and read a selection of books that includes fiction, non-fiction and poetry. Most pupils build up simple words from the letter sounds but are more confident with the initial letter sounds. They use the pictures in the books to make sense of the story. Pupils recognise their own names and re-tell the story from a sequence of pictures. By the end of Key Stage 1, some pupils are reading at about the level expected for their age. They read simple texts with understanding and accuracy. They talk about the main characters in stories like 'Fireman Sam' and correct any errors by using the context of the story, pictures or by the initial letter sounds of words.

104. In Years 3 and 4, many pupils read at an appropriate level from a range of texts fluently and accurately. They enjoy reading for pleasure and know the style of writing they prefer and some of the authors. They read a lot at home and use a wide range of strategies to decipher and understand new words. Most pupils understand the library classification system and readily find information by using the index and contents pages. They respond well to characters in books. They blend sounds to construct words but find a word like 'though' more difficult to deal with. A few pupils in Years 5 and 6 read above the levels expected for their age; they obviously enjoy books and relate well to the characters and the plots of the stories they read. They read a wide range of materials, including poetry, and often persuade other pupils to read a book they have enjoyed. By Year 6, they skim through the text to find what they are looking for. In both year groups these pupils are no longer constrained by the reading scheme and they have good strategies for choosing books that are at an appropriate level and of interest. Although some pupils attain levels that

are appropriate for their age, many are still reading books included in the structured scheme adopted by the school and are below the level expected for their age. They do not read so much for pleasure at home and are still quite dependent upon the pictures or a range of familiar words to make sense of unfamiliar texts.

105. Although the full range of ability is evident at the beginning of Key Stage 1, the standards attained in writing are well below average. A significant number of pupils have poor pencil control and do not yet see the relationship between spoken and written words. Most pupils, both boys and girls, make good progress in this aspect of English. However, by the end of Key Stage 2 there are still some pupils, usually those with special educational needs, that are writing below the levels expected for their age. The overall standard of attainment in writing is below the national average.

106. At the beginning of Key Stage 1, most pupils associate the initial sound of words with the letter symbol. They can see that words that rhyme often have the same letter pattern. Some pupils form letters correctly and use simple words and phrases to write about their own experiences. They create simple words like ten, dog and hen from their knowledge of the sounds the letters make. Most pupils can form letters correctly when copying the words written by the teacher and write their own names using a combination of capital and lower case letters. However, a significant number of pupils still need a lot of support to control pencils to make shapes that resemble letters. They successfully match familiar words, such as daddy, to a picture of a dad. They learn to use full stops and write short sentences. Letters are usually clearly shaped and correctly orientated. There is evidence of considerable improvement in the formation of letters since the beginning of this term. This reflects the emphasis that teachers have placed upon handwriting. Towards the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write stories and use words to make lists and write instructions. Simple words are usually spelt correctly. Pupils write sequences of sentences and often use capital letters and full stops correctly. They spell simple words by building up the letter sounds in words like pull and full. Most pupils write neatly and work is well presented.

107. In Years 3 and 4 pupils' writing is moving towards a recognisable and fluent style. They change the style of their writing according to the task or the audience and understand that words with similar meanings are used in different contexts. Most pupils write in sentences and see that words can be built up using a combination of sounds and regular spelling patterns. However, several pupils in both year groups are attaining levels that are below the expectation for their age and continue to need a lot of help to write simple sentences. In Years 5 and 6 pupils' writing is more organised and they write imaginatively or to order their thoughts. They adapt their writing to create a diary or a newspaper report of an event in the past, for example, the sinking of the Titanic. The basic structure of sentences is usually correct and they change the tense, for example, hide into hid or will hide. They use speech marks correctly and some pupils start to use commas. Handwriting is usually in a recognisable script and, by Year 6, most pupils are writing with pens. Pupils start to appreciate that the computer can be used to import text from encyclopaedia programs and to word process their own work. For example, pupils in Year 6 found some information about the Crimean War to supplement what had been learned in class. They use a dictionary or a thesaurus to make their writing more interesting and understand that writing has to take account of the intended audience. All make use of notes to draft and re-draft their work.

108. Pupils respond well to English lessons and the routine of the Literacy Hour in each class. They listen attentively to their teachers and join in with the class activities well. They are courteous to one another and to their teachers. Pupils with special educational needs respond very well to the adults that support them within class and in small withdrawal groups. When teaching is very good in both key stages they are enthusiastic about their learning and therefore make good progress. This is also true of pupils with English as an additional language. However, there are some pupils in each class who quickly become bored and can disrupt the learning of others. It takes strong teaching to keep them focused upon their work. When teaching is unsatisfactory, some pupils behave badly. They pay little attention to their teacher or other adults.

109. The quality of teaching is good in both key stages and good for pupils with special educational needs. Teaching of reading and handwriting is good and this is reflected in the progress made by pupils. Some excellent teaching was seen at the upper end of Key Stage 2. The teacher's subject knowledge and expertise were used very effectively to motivate pupils and challenge them to make good progress. Teachers have sufficient knowledge and understanding to make good use of the Literacy Strategy framework to plan lessons and teach them successfully. In all classes teachers make good links between the spoken and written words and texts. Their expectations of pupils are high in terms of behaviour and the work that can be achieved. In the best lessons the learning outcomes are shared with the pupils and the success of them is noted at the end of the lesson. For example, in the Year 6 class the teacher clearly set out

that by the end of the lesson she wanted to have a range of different writing about the conditions in the hospital in Scutari in 1854. Each group was clear as to what they would learn during the course of the lesson and it was achievable for them. This was also apparent for a pupil with special educational needs. The teacher was supportive but also set targets in terms of behaviour and the work that needed to be completed by the end of the session. Both were then able to measure their success and identified that an area for future learning was to form the letter 'h' correctly.

110. English lessons are planned very carefully so that work builds upon previous learning effectively. In all classes good links are made to other subjects, literacy skills are planned into history, geography, science and religious education. In most lessons teachers use good strategies to engage pupils' attention and challenge them to make good progress. Work is well matched to the attainment levels of groups or individual pupils. Teachers generally organise lessons to make best use of the good range of resources available to them. In several classes for example, pupils use computers to reinforce their understanding in English. Teachers also make use of overhead projectors to focus attention on the text that is studied. This is less successful when the pupils cannot read the words either because sunlight makes the words difficult to see or the prepared acetate contains too much text. When teaching is unsatisfactory work is not closely enough matched to the needs of lower attaining pupils. In most lessons, including those focused upon pupils with special educational needs, the discipline is good and teachers have a good relationship with their pupils. This good relationship is also evident in the support provided for pupils with English as an additional language. Most lessons have a sense of pace and purpose and support staff are used effectively to promote the learning of small groups of pupils. Teachers assess pupils' progress and attainment accurately and use the information to plan future learning. Careful records are kept of pupils' progress in reading and teachers identify areas that need more attention. Work is marked regularly and targets for future learning are identified. Homework is set regularly and used well to support the work going on in class. This is seen in all classes in the regular pattern of reading books sent home, spellings learnt and older pupils researching class projects.

111. The subject fully meets statutory requirements and is planned in line with the National Literacy Strategy. English is well led and managed by a very knowledgeable and experienced co-ordinator. The curriculum and teaching are monitored regularly and improvements are made in the light of findings. Resources for English are good and well used. All classes make good use of the school library and many pupils use the local library. Regular Book Fairs are used well to maintain pupils' interest in books. Two teachers run a regular after school reading club and about 12 pupils attend. Girls heavily dominate this activity so the school needs to consider how to get boys more interested. Assessment procedures are good and the school makes very effective use of the data generated by national tests to identify areas of concern and address them. Annual reports to parents give a clear picture of what their children know and understand and what needs to be improved. Pupils are involved in this process and identify future targets for their own learning. The room used for teaching small groups of pupils with special educational needs is well organised and provides a relaxed atmosphere for learning. Since the previous inspection standards attained by pupils have dropped at the end of both key stages. This is explained by a growth in the number of pupils with special educational needs in all year groups. The quality of teaching is still good and the teaching of reading and handwriting has improved. The leadership and management of English have improved significantly. Now that the previous instability among teaching staff has settled and the leadership and management of the subject are strong, the school is in a very good position to improve further the provision for English.

2 **Mathematics**

112. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in mathematics is well below the level expected for their age. The inspection findings largely reflect the pupils' performance in national mathematics tests in recent years, although the most recent test results show some improvement and are a cause for optimism. In the 1999 test for mathematics for seven year olds pupils' attainment matched the national average, although many pupils are still performing at the lower end of the expected level. The proportion attaining the higher level was below the national average. When the school's performance in 1999 is compared with similar schools, the results are well above the average for these schools. This is an improvement on previous years. In the 1999 mathematics tests for eleven-year-olds pupils' attainment was well below the average for all schools nationally. The proportion reaching the higher level was also well below the

average. However, when compared with similar schools, the school's results showed an improvement, with the numbers of pupils attaining the expected level matching the average for these schools. This also represents an improving picture. However, the number of pupils in each year group with special educational needs, always a significant factor, varies significantly enough to render year on year comparisons unreliable.

113. There were some significant differences between boys and girls in their performance in the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds, with considerably fewer boys attaining the expected level than girls. This was reflected during the inspection, where, because of the poor self discipline and concentration levels of a small group of pupils, often boys, in each class, there was a negative impact on their progress and attainment. The picture is different at Key Stage 1 where, over time, boys have performed better in tests than girls. However, this was not reflected during the inspection, where the behaviour of a small group, usually boys, in both Years 1 and 2, had an adverse impact on the standards attained.

114. Pupils begin from a very low baseline of knowledge and skills in mathematics when they enter the nursery. They make steady progress in the nursery and reception classes but by the age of five children are still working well below the levels expected in mathematics. In Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in relation to their prior attainment. Progress is good in their oral and written skills with numbers, as this is currently a focus in mathematics work across the school. Pupils develop the facility to add, subtract, double and halve numbers mentally, although their skills in instant recall are not good. By the age of seven, many pupils are competent with numbers to twenty but have not developed their skills in using larger numbers and do not have a good grasp of place value with simple two digit numbers. Many Year 2 pupils know their two times table and demonstrated this most effectively in a stimulating game of 'Head to Head', at the end of a lesson, in which they successfully recalled these number facts very quickly and with obvious enjoyment.

115. Pupils in Key Stage 1 develop an understanding of shape and space, measuring and estimating. Pupils in a Year 1 lesson made particularly good progress in their work on measurement. By the end of their lesson, many showed some understanding of the need to use different tools for different tasks, suggesting that the blackboard might be measured using a garden cane while a pencil might be measured against small unifix cubes. Pupils in Year 2 build on this knowledge appropriately although they struggle with the idea of estimation and do not understand its usefulness. They begin to use terms such as 'centimetre' and 'metre', 'o'clock', 'half past' and 'quarter to', accurately although they struggle to see the relationships between different measures, for example seconds, minutes and hours. In a Year 2 lesson, most pupils had difficulty in relating the number of seconds in half a minute. These pupils could measure accurately using a ruler, although some needed considerable support from the teacher to complete their task successfully. The work in pupils' books shows that in Key Stage 1 they develop an understanding of simple shapes and of symmetry but this work is at a low level for their age. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make slower progress in developing their ability to solve mathematical problems or to be creative in the methods that they use. This is linked to their limited language skills when trying to explain their thinking and reasoning.

116. Pupils in Key Stage 2, continue to make satisfactory progress and become increasingly proficient in all aspects of the number system. This includes work on all the number operations, odd and even numbers, place value, simple fractions and decimals. Pupils' written work shows an increasing ability in addition, subtraction, multiplication and division, using hundreds tens and units. These skills remain well below average in relation to what is expected by the age of eleven and pupils' mental and written skills in relation to larger numbers remain weak. Pupils make satisfactory progress in learning their multiplication tables although even older pupils do not have good instant recall of the six, seven, eight or nine times tables. In a lesson with Year 6 pupils, some still struggled with the five times table. Inevitably this has a negative impact on pupils' ability to calculate mentally. Pupils in Year 4 were observed making good progress in recalling their multiplication tables, and in a lesson with Year 5 pupils, many could use the numerator and denominator correctly in their work on equivalent fractions.

117. In the areas of measurement, shape and space and handling data there is a satisfactory picture of progress in Key Stage 2. Pupils develop their skills in measuring length and weight and in telling the time in various ways with both analogue and digital clocks. Pupils develop their skills in organising and

interpreting data although there was less written evidence of this aspect of mathematics during the inspection. There was a good example in a mathematics display by Year 6 pupils using a variety of graphs to communicate their work on favourite newspapers. This included line and block graphs although pupils were still working in simple ratios of 1:2 or 1:5. Older pupils make appropriate use of information technology to support their work in data handling. As in Key Stage 1, pupils make slower progress in developing their ability to solve problems in the broadest sense. They are not imaginative about the strategies they might use in their work and show no sign of being able to deal with multi-stage problems, which require the application of logical thought. Pupils make satisfactory progress in developing their numeracy skills and mental capability and this is beginning to accelerate as the numeracy programme begins to impact on their learning. They use their numeracy skills appropriately in other subjects such as science, English and geography, for example, working out simple grid references and using knowledge of co-ordinates.

118. Most pupils are enthusiastic and have positive attitudes towards mathematics. In discussion with pupils all expressed an interest in the subject. They respond well to the range of motivating, often practical activities prepared by their teachers. Often pupils are diligent about their tasks, settling well to their work and working well together when asked. This was obvious in a lesson with Year 6 pupils who enjoyed very good relationships with their teacher. They worked very well in pairs, in a calm and sensible way. Relationships between pupils and teachers are very good, because teachers know their pupils very well. This means that many pupils feel confident about offering suggestions and explanations in whole class sessions without fear of being wrong. Although this is a very positive picture, there is a small but significant number of pupils in most classes who do not behave well and who have poor attitudes to their work. They often appear tired, struggle to concentrate, shout out unnecessarily and are easily distracted from their tasks.

119. The quality of teaching in mathematics is good throughout the school and is having a very positive effect on pupils' motivation and on their current progress. This represents a significant improvement since the previous inspection. During the inspection, good teaching was seen in every class and there were instances of very good and excellent teaching. Teaching is strong in almost all aspects, although there is room for further improvement in the quality of teachers' weekly assessments and the evaluation of their lessons. The introduction of the national numeracy programme, together with the considerable work done by the school on its planning procedures, is having a positive effect. It provides a very clear framework for teachers and they have responded very positively to its requirements. Teachers use a good range of methods in their lessons, working with individuals and groups according to the requirements of the task. They organise and prepare effectively for their lessons. For example, in a lesson on measurement with Year 2 pupils the teacher's good organisation and use of time meant that she was able to work with different groups offering good support so that most completed their measuring task successfully.

120. Mindful of some pupils' low level of concentration, all teachers provide very clear and carefully phrased explanations and instructions, often repeating these several times. They work very hard at establishing and maintaining good relationships particularly with difficult pupils. Occasionally teachers are too lenient in this respect and defer taking further action until pupils have 'overstepped the mark' considerably. This has a negative impact on those concerned and sometimes on the progress made by other pupils. Teachers use their knowledge of pupils effectively when asking questions, often targeting questions at just the right level for the pupil to be appropriately challenged. Homework is given regularly and this contributes effectively to pupils' learning. Teachers are very explicit with pupils about the aims of lessons and the class targets for what is to be learned. In a lesson with Year 6, the teacher spent considerable time discussing pupils' personal targets and pupils responded maturely to this discussion.

121. The mathematics curriculum is well organised and in line with the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. Every opportunity is taken, when appropriate, to link the subject to other parts of the curriculum so that pupils can apply their mathematics knowledge and skills. A very good example is the 'Marvellous Maths Trail' which, as part of a parents' workshop, includes several curriculum areas such as time zones in geography and number and shape rhymes in English. The subject is very well managed and monitored both by the co-ordinator and by other senior staff. Although standards at the time of the previous inspection were found to be 'sound overall', the make up of the school's population has changed since that

time. Provision, planning and teaching in the subject have improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is good.

2 Science

122. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in science is below the level expected for their age. In the teacher assessments for seven-year-olds in 1999, pupils' attainment in science was well below the national average. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was also well below the national average. When compared with similar schools, pupils' attainment was well below average. In the 1999 tests for eleven-year-olds, pupils' attainment in science was well below the national average. The number of pupils reaching the higher levels was also well below the national average. The results, when compared with similar schools were better but still below the average. The results from 1999 show a dip from the previous years but the number of pupils in each year group with special educational needs, always a significant factor, varies significantly enough to render year on year comparisons unreliable. Since the last inspection, the rate of improvement in test results has been variable due to the differing number of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and the nature of their special needs. What differences there are between the attainment of boys and girls are explained to some extent by the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs in each year group and most of these pupils are boys. Inspection evidence shows that standards are rising in the school because of good teaching and pupils' improving progress.

123. In both key stages, the introduction of the National Literacy Strategy is having a positive impact and is contributing effectively to the improvement in pupils' progress in science seen during the inspection. Pupils in Year 2 study different materials to determine simple properties such as texture. In their investigation of living things and life processes, pupils name the type of food eaten by different animals; for example, the lion eats meat and the mouse cheese. They investigate different materials and describe how a plastic ruler bends more than a metal one. In these investigations and studies, pupils improve their skills effectively in experimental and investigative science. For example, in a lesson in Year 2, pupils discussed the effects of heat on ice and they accurately predicted which block of ice would melt first. Pupils explained the concept of making the test fair by keeping all three blocks of ice in the same place so that each one had the same heat and the only difference was the size of each block. Good discussion in these practical lessons makes a positive contribution to pupils' language skills.

124. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have studied a wide range of science and talk about their experiments accurately. However, their written work and presentation are not so well developed. By the end of the key stage, pupils have acquired appropriate knowledge and understanding of a range of scientific topics. They know about plants and how they are affected by different conditions. For example, in a Year 6 experiment pupils had to predict the likely results of depriving plants of certain elements needed for healthy growth. They accurately predicted that if left in the dark it will be 'weak and floppy' and with no water, it will 'die away'. Pupils' studies include the way some creatures are adapted to survive in different habitats. For example, the otter has 'nostrils that close to allow swimming easily under water' and 'long whiskers to feel vibrations through the water'. Pupils describe how they construct and draw electrical circuits and some have a rudimentary knowledge of conductors and insulators.

125. Pupils make satisfactory progress in Key Stage 1. They begin the scientific studies in the reception class when they link drawings using 'hot' or 'cold' as the criteria. Pupils learn about the conditions needed to make a plant grow and identify the importance of warmth and water. Year 1 pupils name different parts of the body and illustrate their knowledge by drawing simple accurate diagrams. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils investigate materials and sort these into sets. They use simple scientific vocabulary to identify different materials and sort them by their properties such as, hard, soft, rough or smooth. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in science, especially when guided by teachers and support staff.

126. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make good progress in lessons, especially those of a practical nature. For example, in a Year 4/5 lesson, pupils carefully noted the changes made to different solids when they were heated. They accurately predicted the likely outcome and recorded their results following the experiments. In Year 2/3, pupils learn about healthy diets and know that exercise is an important element in keeping

people fit and well. In Year 3/4, pupils study teeth and explain the importance of looking after them by regular cleaning and eating sensibly. In their studies of rocks, they correctly identify how they were formed and use correct scientific vocabulary such as, igneous, metamorphic and sedimentary. Year 5 pupils learn about the life cycle of humans and conducted an experiment to find out if taller people had bigger feet. Their results confirmed their predictions that most taller people do have bigger feet. Pupils in Year 6 build effectively on their knowledge of the solar system and, following their visit to the Star Laboratory, used coloured shapes to show the outline of star patterns such as, 'Ursa Major-the Great Bear'. The majority develop their scientific vocabulary using words such as 'orbit' and 'rotate' accurately. Pupils with special educational needs continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. They produce accurate diagrams of plants and clearly label these with suitable words. Throughout the school, science makes a positive contribution to pupils' literacy and numeracy skills.

127. Pupils respond well to science teaching. They are interested, keen and enthusiastic. In one lesson observed, Year 6 pupils were keen to give their explanations of a fair test following work they had completed in experiments on substances dissolving and evaporating. Pupils enjoy their work, particularly when they carry out practical experiments and investigations. They work well independently or in groups during experiments. They work collaboratively when asked to, sustain concentration and they respond with enthusiasm. Pupils record their investigations carefully in a variety of ways. Relationships between pupils and teachers are good. Behaviour is good, apart from the isolated instances when some pupils lack focus, behave immaturely and disrupt the progress of themselves and others.

128. The teaching of science is good in both key stages. Teachers have good subject knowledge and use this well in science teaching. Their classroom management skills are used efficiently. For instance, in a Year 4/5 lesson on substances changing when exposed to heat, the focused use of questioning helped pupils to understand the requirements of a 'fair test' and record accurately the results of their experiments. Teachers' planning for science is good, it is firmly based on a comprehensive scheme. This is an improvement on the previous inspection findings. Short term planning is good and clearly identifies the learning outcomes for pupils of different previous attainment. Teachers use resources effectively and they use the school grounds for practical investigations. Teachers assess science attainment and progress regularly and these assessments are used effectively to inform their future planning. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good; teachers and other staff support pupils well both individually and in small groups.

129. The science curriculum is broad, balanced and meets National Curriculum requirements. A comprehensive policy and scheme are in place and have a positive impact in ensuring that pupils build effectively on their previous learning. This is an improvement since the last inspection. The school has placed emphasis on teaching practical activities and this is now starting to have a positive impact on pupils' understanding. The science co-ordinator is enthusiastic and has good subject knowledge, supports other staff effectively and has established an overview of science in the school. There is a clear timetable for monitoring the teaching of science and time has been allocated next term for this to take place. Planning and monitoring in the subject have improved considerably since the time of the previous inspection and the school's capacity to improve further is good. Resources for science are good and well used. The school uses visits well to extend the experiences of pupils. Good examples are the liaison with the local comprehensive school for the 'Star Laboratory' visit and work undertaken at a power station. Pupils are given insufficient opportunities to use information technology to enhance their science work. This is particularly obvious in Key Stage 2, where pupils rarely use graphs and data handling programs to support their work.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

2 Art

130. No art lessons were seen during the inspection but there was an opportunity to speak with pupils about the work done during one lesson. Judgements are made on the basis of pupils' work on display in classrooms and in their work folders. Pupils' attainment in art is what is expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in all classes. Finished pieces of work are displayed well to show the range of techniques used and value the efforts made by pupils in all classes.

131. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn to mix paints to make shades of the same colour and use these colours to print using printing blocks or to paint the jungle animals on display in classrooms. They experiment with different textiles to make collages that depict a range of plants and fishes under the sea. They paint faces of their families and friends using shades of colours to get the right effect. They sketch what they see, for example, old buildings. Pupils regularly draw the characters from familiar stories and with growing attention to detail. They work on larger projects to make class friezes and so emphasise what is currently being learned in the class. Pupils at the end of the key stage often link art activities to other forms of art. For example, where they had been experimenting with different shades of the same colours they also wrote poems; 'Red is the sunshine in the morning, Red is the colour of blood', was one example. Pupils use computer programs to design and print out logos for 'Teddy's tee shirt'.

132. In Key Stage 2, pupils experiment with a wide range of techniques and materials. They use the work of great artists for inspiration to create similar pieces of work. They make models of faces using clay and build 3 dimensional structures to represent the lines seen in a Kandinsky picture. Pupils in Years 4 and 5 talked knowledgeably about the way they used pastels to create an image which small groups of pupils translated from their large sculptures using straight and curved lines. Pupils take part in a number of art competitions and much of this work is on display in the school. Very careful still life drawings in pastel, the involvement of a group of special educational needs pupils in the Gateshead Garden Project and the impressive display on the theme of 'A Midsummer Nights Dream' done with a local artist give a good account of the range of work covered. Older pupils made a collage of the gallery where some of their work was displayed. Pupils learn to look at the horizon to develop a sense of perspective and create shields in the style of medieval England but with mottoes that reflect the aims and values of the school. They illustrate books and poems with increasing awareness of colour and texture to interpret the mood of books. They use sketchbooks to record images to try out ideas for more detailed work. Through their work linked to topics such as 'The Vikings', they appreciate how art is used to reflect the culture of different times.

133. From the evidence of work done in all classes it is apparent that art is taught satisfactorily throughout the school and pupils' attitudes to art are good. Teachers plan lessons carefully and make good links to other areas of the curriculum. Resources are used well to give pupils a wide range of experiences and build up their skills from one lesson to another. Pupils' spiritual and cultural development is fostered through the appreciation of great works of art and an understanding of the effort involved in creating high quality pieces of work. They are taught about other cultures through their work in art and feel part of the wider community through involvement with local artists and taking part in competitions.

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134. The full range of the art curriculum is covered including the use of textiles and opportunities to create three dimensional sculptures. The art curriculum is greatly enhanced for some pupils, mostly girls, who attend a regular after school art club. The school enters several art competitions during the course of each year with some considerable success. One boy, who regularly attends art club, learned during the week of the inspection that he had won first prize in a local competition. Teachers display pupils' work very well and this values the efforts made and creates an attractive and interesting place for learning. The subject is managed effectively by a recently appointed co-ordinator. The art policy and scheme of work are well written and provide good guidance for teachers on how to teach the different aspects of the subject. Staff display pupils' work well and this creates a good impression of the school. A portfolio of pupils' work is in its early stages and will be used as a resource for teachers. The range of resources is sufficient to teach the subject effectively and well supplemented by parents in terms of fabrics and wool.

135. The provision for art is very similar to that seen at the time of the previous inspection. The scheme of work was written shortly after that and is still in use. The displays of pupils' work continue to celebrate

the successes of pupils in all classes. The school is in a good position to maintain and improve the art curriculum.

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2 **Design and technology**

136. Few design and technology lessons were taught during the inspection and only one lesson observed. However, sufficient evidence was available from pupils' work, displays, planning and interviews with pupils and teachers to enable judgements to be made. Pupils' attainment in design and technology is what is expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in all classes. The school has maintained the standards since the previous inspection.

137. In Key Stage 1, pupils show good co-ordination and control, carefully cutting out and handling tools to achieve a desired effect. They understand pivots and simple moving parts and describe how their models are made. For example, in Year 1 pupils make model houses and carefully cut out the doors and use paper tape as hinges. In a good link with science, they cut out figures and use paper fasteners to join arms and legs creating movement in their models. Pupils in Year 2 make good progress in understanding the design process when they make a 'holiday tee shirt' for Teddy. Simple designs showed pupils' intentions and, in a follow up lesson, they evaluated their finished product and explained what they found difficult. One pupil suggested 'smaller stitches would have made the shirt better'. They work collaboratively in pairs sharing their ideas and recording them. They put into practice the skills they have learned in earlier lessons. Most pupils produce models of a satisfactory standard. Pupils with special educational needs and English as an additional language, in both key stages, are given appropriate support to enable them to make a similar rate of progress.

138. In Key Stage 2, pupils improve their accuracy when they measure, cut, fold and join, using a range of strategies suited to different materials. They use a variety of techniques to join materials together and produce working mechanisms. For example, pupils explained how, in Year 3/4, they made puppets using card, string and wood and enthusiastically explained how they could move the legs and arms on their models. As pupils move through the school they create designs and models that are more sophisticated. For example, in Year 6, pupils made Tudor houses and imaginatively used a variety of materials to make very realistic models, which included some furniture inside. Pupils in Year 6 are making wooden frames to build a vehicle; in discussions, they explained how they are going to use small electric motors to make them move. They used their knowledge of science well and used appropriate vocabulary such as 'axle' and 'cog' when describing their intentions.

139. Pupils have positive attitudes to their work. They listen carefully to their teachers and are eager to talk about what they do and are proud of their achievements. Pupils work well together, respecting each other's points of view. For example, in discussions with Year 6 pupils, they contributed their ideas and listened patiently to others' viewpoints. Behaviour is good and pupils often work diligently without direct supervision.

140. The teaching of design and technology is satisfactory in both key stages. All aspects of the design and technology curriculum are covered and pupils have clear recollections of work they have undertaken in the past. For example, Year 6 pupils discuss with enthusiasm previous work on designing and making sculptures using wire and papier mache to create interesting models. Teachers plan their lessons with good consideration for health and safety issues. Their planning provides sound links with other subjects such as English, mathematics and science. Relationships in the school between teachers, pupils, support staff and volunteer helpers are good and make a significant contribution to pupils' attainment, progress, personal and social skills. For example, pupils are encouraged to work together to make models and to critically evaluate their own and each other's work. Introductions to lessons are informative and clear instructions ensure that pupils know exactly what they have to do.

141. The design and technology curriculum is broad and balanced. There is a good, clear policy following national guidelines. The guidelines are used effectively by teachers to ensure that pupils build on their previous experiences. Assessment procedures are satisfactory and the knowledgeable and enthusiastic co-ordinator monitors teachers' planning and pupils' work. The quantity and quality of resources are satisfactory. The school is very well placed to improve its standards further.

2 Humanities

142. The school makes provision for history and geography under the umbrella of humanities. Very few lessons were observed in either subject during the inspection. However, sufficient evidence was available from pupils' work, displays, planning and interviews with pupils and teachers to enable judgements to be made. Pupils' attainment in history and geography is what is expected for their age and they make satisfactory progress in all classes.

143. In Key Stage 1, pupils learn about their environment and changes in their own lives, for example, how they change and develop over time, from babies to toddlers and how a community needs people who provide services, such as the postman. Pupils develop a sense of chronology and place. Year 1 pupils, in their study of homes and houses, learned about their own homes, drawing simple plans of these. Through their visit to Beamish open air museum, they extended this understanding effectively to homes in the past and learned how houses and household equipment have changed over time. In a Year 1 lesson, pupils showed a good grasp of the differences between household items then and now, commenting 'We write with pencils and not chalk' and 'I have a rubber not a stone hot water bottle'. In discussion with the teacher, one or two pupils understood why equipment and furnishings in their grandparents' homes might be different from their own. In Year 2, pupils further develop their skills and knowledge. They broaden their understanding of places in the region and beyond and why people choose to settle in particular places. This is linked appropriately to both their study of an island community and to their history topics on the Early Settlers. In Year 2, pupils use maps and simple map-making skills such as using symbols, to consolidate their understanding of settlements now and in the past.

144. In Key Stage 2, pupils make a detailed study of their local environment, both now and in the past, allowing pupils to make effective use of skills and knowledge gained earlier. A good example was the study in a Year 3/4 class, of local changes through the eyes of grandparents and parents. This drew together the use of historical and geographical skills very effectively, and pupils explained why grandparents had a better understanding of change in the community than themselves or their parents. Pupils understand the idea of a family tree and the relationships between the various generations. They have a satisfactory knowledge of their own community and understand how it has changed with the closure of the mine and the impact on jobs. Pupils in Year 5 build on earlier work on settlement and location, although their work did not always extend the previous learning as much as it might. However, pupils gave more detailed explanations of why and where people settle and they named their imaginary settlements appropriately using their historical knowledge of place names effectively. In discussion pupils identified the services that a community would need, such as health services, land for industry and attractions such as beaches.

145. By the end of Year 6, pupils have developed their knowledge, understanding, and skills in both history and geography. They recall useful information about several periods in history and know some sources of historical evidence such as talking to people, visiting museums and looking at old and new maps. They know how to research historical topics by reading and by using information technology and compact disc material. Pupils develop a broader sense of community through their work on European awareness. Their study of an African country develops an awareness of different cultures and life styles. They use maps and atlases appropriately to support their work.

146. In discussion, pupils are enthusiastic about their work in humanities although their response in the lessons observed was variable. Occasionally a lack of concentration and restlessness limits the progress made by some pupils. However, most pupils behave well and settle to their tasks. Pupils in a Year 3/4 class worked effectively in pairs in a history lesson in which they had to complete a questionnaire about the 1891 census.

147. The quality of humanities teaching is good, with the element of history stronger than geography.

Teachers plan effectively; they are very clear about what they want pupils to learn and are well prepared, with relevant and interesting activities. They strive to use interesting resources such as the very good range of household artefacts borrowed from a museum to support a Year 1 lesson, and the original census material, which the teacher had painstakingly translated to make it more accessible to pupils of all abilities. Teachers support pupils' learning by the good quality historical and geographical displays of work in classrooms and around the school. They assess pupils' understanding very well, as they teach and question individuals and groups in lessons, offering good support to pupils with special educational needs. However, teachers do not always make effective use of their weekly assessments and evaluations to ensure that the work is well pitched for all pupils; for example there is little evidence of work to extend higher attaining pupils.

148. The humanities are well planned in a coherent framework, which ensures that history and geography retain their identity, whilst ensuring that links across the two subjects are made. This is very efficient at a time when there is increasing pressure on curriculum time. It has resulted in these subjects contributing effectively to pupils' personal development, particularly in relation to their own culture and community. Efficient curriculum planning ensures that pupils in mixed age classes do not repeat topics. Planning is not yet so effective in ensuring that historical and geographical skills are taught in a careful sequence. Geography and history are well managed by an efficient and enthusiastic co-ordinator. This picture largely reflects the findings of the previous inspection in relation to standards, but a significant amount of work has been done on improving the quality of provision and in establishing a clear curriculum framework. The school is very well placed to improve its standards further.

2 **Information technology**

149. Very few lessons in information technology were observed during the inspection. However, these, together with the scrutiny of pupils' work, displays, discussions with pupils and teachers, allow judgements to be made. Pupils attain standards in information technology that are below those expected for pupils aged seven and eleven, although their attainment in communicating information is close to the levels expected and they make satisfactory progress in relation to their previous attainment. This appears disappointing, since standards in the subject were also found to be lower than expected at the time of the previous inspection, as a result of the narrow range of experiences provided for pupils at that time. However, the school has made considerable improvements to its curriculum over the past three years. Information technology is valued as an essential part of the curriculum, although the time given to it varies from class to class. This adversely affects the quality of what is achieved in the various strands of the subject, which include communicating and handling information, modelling, control and measuring.

150. Pupils in Key Stage 1 make satisfactory progress in developing their skills and knowledge. They use their keyboard skills to produce short pieces of text on the screen, for example a brief piece of personal news. Pupils know how to use the mouse and understand the use of the cursor and of several of the screen icons when amending their work. Pupils in Year 2, with encouragement, identified some possible advantages and disadvantages in using technology to produce their Christmas cards with comments like 'I could make more than one exactly the same', 'It's easier to rub out, you just click on the X'. They develop their skills in using a range of programs, for example a graphics program to produce their Christmas cards and a word processing package to add appropriate text and messages. In this lesson, the selected pupils, approximately one fifth of the class, used the mouse and cursor correctly. Several pupils described, albeit with some difficulty, how to save their work. In discussion, pupils in Year 2 identified some ways in which they use technology every day, although their understanding was limited, for example, in statements like 'I switch the television on and off', 'I can change channels by pressing the buttons'. Pupils in Key Stage 1 show little knowledge or understanding of the computer as a tool for investigating a range of possibilities and modelling the possible outcomes.

151. Pupils in Key Stage 2 build on their skills and knowledge. Several pupils in Year 4 showed some understanding of the Internet, the process of e-mail and why these are useful tools when they said for example, 'You can send a message quickly' and 'You can find out lots of things'. In a lesson in which they learned how to load and save their work, pupils were confident using the computer and understood how to bring up the various menus available, for example when wanting to close down the computer. In Year 5, pupils use more sophisticated techniques, such as methods for replacing or amending text. Some pupils in

Year 6 are very confident and have a good understanding of how to set up and load different computers including the personal computer and the laptops. They use the computer to support their work in other subjects, such as English and there was a good example of the use of compact disc material to support historical research about the Vikings. Older pupils know how to enter data into a database and how to convert this information to appropriate charts and diagrams, but their understanding of the principles and processes that underlie this procedure are weak. Pupils in Key Stage 2 make slower progress in developing their understanding of the control and modelling aspects of information technology.

152. In discussion with small groups, pupils expressed great enthusiasm and interest in information technology, although in the lessons observed their response was more variable. In one or two instances, pupils were noisy and inattentive so that they were unsure of what they had to do. Most pupils listened well to teachers' explanations and instructions and this had a positive effect on the outcomes of the work. In a Year 4 class where pupils were asked to work collaboratively at the computer in pairs to produce a Christmas card, they did so with good humour and worked diligently.

153. The quality of teaching in the lessons observed was variable, with good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory teaching seen. However, the scrutiny of teachers' planning, the satisfactory progress in skills development and work on display suggest that the overall quality of teaching is at least satisfactory. All teachers plan in detail and those observed were well prepared for their lessons. They had good knowledge and understanding of the subject, so that they gave careful and specific explanations to pupils and offered appropriate support to those experiencing difficulty. A feature of the good teaching, which contributed to good progress in a lesson with Year 3/4 pupils, was the measured and patient approach taken by the teacher in taking pupils through the program they were to use and checking their understanding before beginning work. In a less satisfactory lesson, the teacher struggled to maintain discipline and there were some weaknesses in the organisation of the activities, which slowed progress.

154. The school has an appropriate policy, scheme of work and detailed action plan to guide its work. The subject is well managed by an enthusiastic and well-organised co-ordinator who is keen to move the subject forward. The planned curriculum takes into account all the required aspects of information technology, but the limited time allocated for direct teaching of the subject makes it difficult to cover the curriculum consistently and regularly. This is a pressing need for pupils whose long term retention of knowledge is weak. Further improvement is hindered by events, which are mainly beyond the school's control, as it waits for the school's imminent involvement in the National Grid For Learning. The school is well prepared for this initiative. In the meantime teachers are working with a range of different computers. The school is making good provision within the limits of its resources, which require a complicated rota system between classes. The school has made significant improvements in provision since the previous inspection and is very well placed to make further improvements.

2 Music

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155. Pupils' attainment in music is what is expected for their age and they make good progress in all classes. Several pupils, mostly girls have high levels of attainment in singing and playing a musical instrument. The quality of singing in assemblies is good.

156. Pupils in Key Stage 1 sing a variety of songs and play simple pieces that maintain a steady rhythm. They clap out the beat in words like, 'fluffy brown cat' and recognise a change in tempo. They use their voices or a drum beat to maintain a regular pulse. They enjoy listening to music and appreciate that music creates an atmosphere, for example in collective worship. They enjoy singing familiar songs, particularly when they have actions as part of the accompaniment.

157. In Key Stage 2, pupils continue to enjoy singing and the opportunities they have to use untuned and tuned instruments to create their own music. They learn to sing songs and rounds that have two parts and sustain their part of an orchestrated piece of music through counting the beats. Pupils in Years 4 and 5, for example, composed patterns of notes to be played by deciding whether an instrument would be played on the beat or not. As the teacher conducted them they sustained their pattern of playing and so made a class orchestra. By Year 6, this is extended to make a repeated musical pattern (ostinato) using tuned

instruments and appreciating that the different instruments give quite distinct qualities (timbre) to the overall sound.

158. Pupils respond to music well and often identify the instruments played and name the composer of some well known pieces. They appreciate the different moods of music and respond appropriately. Pupils throughout the school enjoy music. They listen to it well and respond to the mood it creates in situations like the daily act of collective worship. They generally behave well during music lessons and learn that they need to have moments of silence as well as sound. They applaud the efforts of others as seen in the regular performances of the recorder groups in school assemblies.

159. The quality of teaching is good in music lessons and, in some instances, it is excellent. Teachers have a good understanding of the requirements of the curriculum and many play instruments themselves. Lessons are well planned and organised to give pupils opportunities to perform and experiment with a range of instruments. Singing is taught well and the songs chosen for school assemblies are a good combination of action songs for younger pupils and more complicated rounds for the older ones. In all lessons, teachers have good techniques for getting children to listen and repeat what the teacher has demonstrated. Lessons are well paced and keep pupils' attention throughout. Teachers listen carefully to the performance of pupils and identify areas of weakness and correct them quickly. When teaching is excellent the teacher explains very clearly what pupils will learn during the course of the lesson and uses praise well to encourage them to improve on their previous performance. There is a good sense of humour during the lesson but also moments of quiet reflection. In the best lessons all pupils are included and made to feel part of the activity. This is not the case when some pupils carry on with tasks on the computer during the course of the lesson.

160. The music curriculum is well planned into the topics covered in each class. The planned curriculum is greatly enhanced by the extra curricular activities, such as the school choir, the recorder clubs and the extra music tuition provided for some pupils on the violin or viola. These groups perform regularly in assemblies, in the local community and in music festivals. The groups are predominantly made up of girls so the school needs to look at ways to involve boys more in music making activities. Music is an important part of the performances given by the school at Christmas or other special events.

161. Music is used very well to promote the spiritual, social and cultural development of pupils. In all acts of collective worship music is used to set the mood of the assembly, pupils are actively encouraged to reflect on the moods and emotions created through music. Pupils learn to co-operate with one another in creating music and learn about their own culture and those of different countries from the music that is made and listened to. Performances within the local and wider community give pupils an opportunity to see themselves as part of that community.

162. The music curriculum is well organised and effectively managed through a whole school scheme of work. Good use is made of the expertise of staff to promote the range of activities at different levels of attainment. The co-ordinator regularly audits the resources and is aware that the school needs to upgrade them to include more tuned percussion and provide a wider range of unusual and more multi-cultural instruments. Resources are adequate but are in need of replenishment and upgrading to provide more variety, particularly in relation to involving boys more in making music. The school makes good use of the local education authority loans service to borrow different instruments and staff often bring in their own instruments for specific lessons.

163. The music curriculum remains a strong feature of the school as seen at the time of the previous inspection. The quality of teaching has improved from being sound to good. Resources for the subject are still satisfactory but would benefit from being supplemented by a wider range of instruments. Given the level of expertise within the school and the enthusiasm of staff the potential for further development is good.

2 Physical education

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164. Only two lessons of physical education were seen during the inspection and both of these were gymnastics lessons. From teachers' planning files and photographic evidence it is clear that the full range of the curriculum is covered. Pupils' attainment in physical education is what is expected for their age and most make satisfactory progress. The standards attained in swimming by the end of Key Stage 2 are good as almost all pupils swim the required 25 metres and have learned survival techniques and water safety. In other aspects of the curriculum the standards attained by pupils are enhanced by the extra curricular activities. As a result, some girls and a few boys are very good at gymnastics and most pupils have learned the appropriate games skills by the end of Key Stage 2. However, many pupils in both key stages still have immature gymnastics skills. They do not balance their body weight, use landings and rolls to break falls or make sequences of movements.

165. Pupils at the beginning of Key Stage 1 have little experience of gymnastic activities. They have not yet learned to land well, although they have a good sense of balance when walking along forms or climbing on the large apparatus. Pupils in Key Stage 2 attain the levels expected for their age. Pupils, usually girls, that attend the extra curricular gymnastics club control movements well and use landings, balances and rolls effectively.

166. Pupils enjoy the physical activities planned for them. Their behaviour is mainly satisfactory. However, some pupils are often very noisy and take time to settle to their tasks. In some classes, pupils with special educational needs are very challenging and need constant support from a classroom assistant to keep them and everyone else safe. Most pupils listen to the instructions and when asked to perform tasks they do so without fuss.

167. The quality of teaching is satisfactory in both key stages. Teachers are appropriately dressed and plan lessons carefully. Pupils are made aware of the importance of exercise and warm up and cooling down is planned in each lesson. The scheme of work gives good guidance for teachers but this is not always followed closely enough. Discipline in lessons is satisfactory and teachers work hard to get the attention of pupils. Coaching points are made and good use is made of high levels of performance from some pupils to show others what to do. In both key stages the learning outcomes for lessons are not always clearly identified so it is difficult for both pupils and teachers to measure the quality of the tasks performed.

168. Each class has one lesson of physical education each week. This is not sufficient to establish good class routines in the subject. Pupils in Years 5 and 6, also have a weekly swimming lesson as part of their physical education curriculum. Many of the older pupils take part in after-school clubs, which include netball, football and gymnastics. Pupils in Year 6 are currently involved in coaching sessions from Newcastle United Football Club. This is a combination of citizenship and building personal and social skills. When pupils in Years 5 and 6 go swimming, the Year 4 pupils that are in the combined Year 4/5 class join with the mixed Year 3/4 class for a physical education lesson. Pupils in Year 6 have the opportunity to take part in a range of outdoor adventurous activities during visits to local activity centres. The school is revising its scheme of work to give more guidance on the teaching of areas such as dance.

2 169. Pupils are involved in a good range of extra curricular sports that are open to both boys and girls. The school takes part in a range of competitions that include athletics, football, netball, kwik cricket and swimming. They regularly hold health and fitness days that involve parents and children together. Pupils also take part in skipping, dance and gymnastic festivals.

170. The subject is effectively managed by a recently appointed co-ordinator. There has been an audit of resources and priorities are set for purchases such as lightweight mats and hockey sticks. Resources are satisfactory and are being built up. The two halls provide satisfactory indoor facilities for the age range of the pupils. The hard play surface is marked out well for games but the school playing field is regularly vandalised so staff have to make a specific effort to clean it up before use. The standards in physical education remain satisfactory but there is more variation within the different strands of the curriculum. The school is well placed to build up the curriculum and maintain the good levels of extra curricular activity it currently offers.

2 **Religious education**

171. By the end of both key stages, pupils' attainment in religious education matches the levels expected in the Locally Agreed Syllabus. The school has not maintained the high standards identified in the last inspection. The many teaching staff changes in recent years and the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs contribute to the lower standards. The very good leadership of the school has not yet had time to make an impact on the attainment of pupils currently in Year 2 and Year 6.

172. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make good progress in Key Stage 1 in developing an understanding of Christianity and Judaism. They improve their understanding of right and wrong, learn moral values such as friendship, honesty and respect for others. As a result, relationships in the school are good. For example, in a Year 1 lesson, pupils knew that a feature of the life of Jesus was helping others and they related the idea well to people who help them now, such as, the lollipop man or members of their own family. The development of pupils' spiritual, moral and social values are a very good feature of religious education teaching in the school and opportunities are made to link these to Bible stories. For example, in discussions Year 2 pupils explained their work on the 'creation' story and how we all have to look after the world.

173. Pupils, including those with special educational needs, continue to make good progress in Key Stage 2. They explain clearly the celebrations of Christianity they have attended in the local church such as Christmas and Easter. In discussions with Year 6 pupils, they described a church visit they enjoyed and explained the important role of church artefacts, such as the font, cross, Bible and stained glass window. Pupils appreciate the importance of rules and recognise the guidance for life found in the stories of Jesus. For example, pupils in a Year 3/4 class understand how Jesus set a good example and they set their own targets such as, 'I will be better at helping others and being kind in the future'. Pupils understand the need for rules and link their studies with both the school rules and how they would feel if the rules were broken. They explain how important it is to live as a Christian in today's world by explaining how truth, honesty and helping others are important attributes. For example, pupils are keen to support different charities and they know that other people in the world need help. Pupils improve their understanding of differing world faiths. For example, in discussion, Year 6 pupils explained that God is Brahman in the Hindu faith and that followers believe he is revealed in different forms including Vishnu and Rama. Whole school and class assemblies make a significant contribution to pupils' awareness of the importance of ceremony and custom to religious belief. For example, in a school assembly led by the local rector, the meaning of the Advent Wreath was explained and pupils' understanding of the importance to Christians of the birth of Jesus was greatly enhanced.

174. Pupils' attitudes are good throughout the school. They respond positively in lessons and assemblies, the majority are well behaved and show tolerance and friendship. They listen attentively; for example, in a Year 6 class assembly, pupils showed interest in the story of Florence Nightingale and how she brought light to others in the same way that Jesus brought His own light into the world. Pupils enjoy their lessons and talk freely with each other in whole class sessions and smaller groups, which makes a positive contribution to the excellent ethos in the school and to pupils' attainment and progress.

175. Teaching is consistently good in both key stages. Teachers' planning is good with clear learning objectives for all pupils that ensure they are given work appropriate for their abilities. Teachers have a secure knowledge of the subject and use the recently introduced scheme of work, prepared by the co-ordinator, very effectively to ensure that the Locally Agreed Syllabus is followed. The introduction of this

religious education scheme of work is having a positive impact on pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers question their pupils skilfully to assess their knowledge and understanding of the lesson. Teachers' planning shows that they have high expectations of their pupils and place importance upon creating worthwhile experiences for them where they are given opportunities to develop their self confidence and explore their feelings. For example, in a Year 3/4 lesson teaching was particularly effective because discussion encouraged pupils to think about comparisons between the religious and commercial implications of advent. All teachers use available resources well and ensure that the blend of question and answer, co-operative and individual work improves pupils' attainment and progress. Teachers use the planned themes for whole school and class assemblies to make a good contribution to the subject and they encourage pupils to think about festivals celebrated by Christians and followers of other faiths.

176. The curriculum is broad and balanced and the Locally Agreed Syllabus and scheme of work provide a helpful structure for teachers' planning of lessons. The co-ordinator is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and has a very clear understanding and overview of the subject and there are detailed long and medium term plans. Resources are satisfactory although the co-ordinator has identified the need to improve them further to include more artefacts and further enhance the curriculum provision for religious education. The co-ordinator monitors planning and pupils' work and shares expertise with all the staff in meetings. The school benefits from visitors from the local church. The subject makes a positive contribution to art, music and to the spiritual, moral, social and cultural aspects of pupils' education. As a result, the school is very well placed to make further improvements.

2 **PART C: INSPECTION DATA**

2 **SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE**

177. Four inspectors visited the school for the equivalent of fourteen inspector days. During this time 49 lessons or part lessons were observed, covering all aspects of the National Curriculum and religious education. Inspectors listened to a representative sample of pupils read and talked to pupils about their work. Acts of collective worship and periods of registration were also observed as well as mealtimes, playtimes, arrival and dismissal procedures.

178. A large sample of pupils' previous work was examined, which included work completed in all curriculum areas from pupils of all ages and prior attainment. Displays in classrooms and public areas of the school were also examined.

179. The previous inspection report, completed in March 1996, and the school's action plan in response to it were examined.

180. A wide range of school documentation was examined including school policies, minutes of the governors' meetings, the school development plan, teachers' planning files, records of pupils' attainment and progress and samples of annual reports to parents. All documents and records relating to pupils with special educational needs were also scrutinised.

181. Interviews were held with all subject co-ordinators, the deputy head teacher, the special needs co-ordinator, the school secretary, the chair of the governing body and other governors, non teaching staff, parents and visitors to the school.

182. The head teacher met daily with the registered inspector and was interviewed by all members of the inspection team.

183. The views of parents were sought at a meeting prior to the inspection and through the completion of a questionnaire that was sent to all parents.

DATA AND INDICATORS**2 184. Pupil data**

| | Number of pupils on roll (full-time equivalent) | Number of pupils with statements of SEN | Number of pupils on school's register of SEN | Number of full- time pupils eligible for free school meals |
|---------------------|---|---|--|---|
| YR – Y6 | 134 | 2 | 49 | 65 |
| Nursery Unit/School | 14 | 0 | 2 | N/A |

2 185. Teachers and classes**2 Qualified teachers (YR – Y6)**

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent): | 7 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher: | 17 |

2 Education support staff (YR - Y6)

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of education support staff: | 3 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week: | 38 |

2 Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

| | |
|--|----|
| Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent): | 1 |
| Number of pupils per qualified teacher: | 14 |

2 Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

| | |
|--|------|
| Total number of education support staff: | 2 |
| Total aggregate hours worked each week: | 32.5 |
| Average class size: | 23 |

2 **186. Financial data**

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Financial year: | 1998-1999 |
| | £ |
| Total Income | 253,537 |
| Total Expenditure | 256,996 |
| Expenditure per pupil | 1,862 |
| Balance brought forward from previous year | 34,681 |
| Balance carried forward to next year | 31,222 |

2 **187. PARENTAL SURVEY**

| | |
|------------------------------------|-----|
| Number of questionnaires sent out: | 136 |
| Number of questionnaires returned: | 31 |

Responses (percentage of answers in each category):

| | Strongly agree | Agree | Neither | Disagree | Strongly disagree |
|---|----------------|-------|---------|----------|-------------------|
| I feel the school encourages parents to play an active part in the life of the school | 19 | 71 | 3 | 6 | 0 |
| I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren) | 39 | 48 | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| The school handles complaints from parents well | 6 | 45 | 19 | 26 | 3 |
| The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught | 16 | 55 | 10 | 13 | 6 |
| The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress | 23 | 61 | 3 | 10 | 3 |
| The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work | 23 | 60 | 10 | 7 | 0 |
| The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons | 32 | 61 | 3 | 3 | 0 |
| I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home | 16 | 45 | 3 | 16 | 19 |
| The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren) | 20 | 57 | 17 | 7 | 0 |
| The school achieves high standards of good behaviour | 10 | 43 | 27 | 17 | 3 |
| My child(ren) like(s) school | 42 | 42 | 10 | 3 | 3 |