

INSPECTION REPORT

Shotton Colliery Primary School
Shotton Colliery

LEA area : Durham

Unique Reference Number : 114152

Headteacher : Mrs M Hepplewhite

Reporting inspector : Mrs M Fitzpatrick
24326

Dates of inspection : 15th-18th November 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 707252

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school : Primary

Type of control : County

Age range of pupils : 5 to 11

Gender of pupils : Mixed

School address : Grange Terrace
Shotton Colliery
Durham
DH6 2JP

Telephone number : 0191 5262006

Fax number : 0191 5172198

Appropriate authority : Governing Body

Name of chair of governors : Mr J Atkinson

Date of previous inspection : March-1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mrs M Fitzpatrick, RgI	Art History Equal Opportunities	Characteristics of the school Attainment and progress Teaching Leadership and Management
Mr T Smith, Lay Inspector		Attendance Support, guidance and pupils' welfare Partnership with parents and the community Staffing, accommodation and learning resources
Mrs A Lowson, Team Inspector	English Physical Education	The efficiency of the school
Mr J Collins, Team Inspector	Science Geography	The curriculum and assessment
Mr I Johnston, Team Inspector	Mathematics Music	Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development
Mr A Margerison, Team Inspector	Special educational needs Information technology Resource Base – Moderate Learning Difficulties	Attitudes, behaviour and personal development
Mr A Wilson, Team Inspector	Areas of learning for under five Design and technology Religious education	

The inspection contractor was:

Nord Anglia School Inspection Services
Strathblane House
Ashfield Road
Cheadle
Stockport
SK8 1BB

Telephone: 0161 282 2982

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

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MAIN FINDINGS

What the school does well

- Pupils make good progress in most subjects.

The school is very well led. The headteacher provides inspirational leadership and is very well supported by the senior management team, staff and the governors in improving provision and raising pupils' attainment.

- The quality of teaching is a strength of the school. Teaching in 98 per cent of lessons is satisfactory or better; in 70 per cent of lessons it is good or better and in 26 per cent of lessons teaching is very good or excellent.
- The quality of relationships in the school is excellent. Pupils and teachers work very well together in a supportive and friendly learning environment producing very good attitudes to learning.
- Pupils' behaviour is very good. In lessons and around the school they are considerate of others and show respect for people and property. This behaviour is supported by the school's very good procedures for monitoring and promoting good behaviour and discipline.
- The school is very effective in promoting its aims and values. Everyone in the school is involved in making the school an attractive, lively and stimulating community where everyone is valued and expected to give their best.
- The provision for the spiritual development of pupils is good and provision for the moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good.
- The provision for extra-curricular activities for pupils at both key stages is excellent; the wide range of activities is well supported by pupils and their families at lunchtimes and after school.
- The school's accommodation provides a very good environment for learning.
- All of the above produce a very good ethos in the school.

Where the school has weaknesses

There is low attainment in the National Curriculum tests in English, mathematics and science. The school needs to develop its use of assessment data to plan more efficiently what pupils need to learn in order to meet their targets in these subjects.

- I. The school needs to develop the role of all subject co-ordinators so that they gain first hand knowledge of standards in the subjects for which they are responsible through more classroom observation of teachers and children.

The school's strengths far outweigh its weaknesses. The weaknesses will form the basis for the governors' action plan, which will be sent to all parents or guardians of pupils at the school.

How the school has improved since the last inspection

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and all issues identified in the previous inspection report have been dealt with effectively and efficiently. Teaching and planning have improved considerably, as have teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is now a broad range of teaching styles which involve pupils more fully in their own learning and helps to develop their speaking and thinking skills. Good policies and new schemes of work ensure that pupils progress well in most classes in the school. Pupils make good progress in almost all subjects of the curriculum; the standard of work in number and writing has improved at both key stages. The school has developed a number of initiatives aimed at raising attainment, including the setting of targets for improvement using analysis of assessment data, identifying pupils for further support and monitoring pupils' progress towards targets. The school has improved its extra-curricular provision for all pupils and this is now excellent. The quality of relationships, provision for the personal development of pupils and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have all been improved since the previous inspection and are now very good or excellent. Pupils with special educational needs, in the main school, make good progress and their annual reviews are carried out effectively, though the school recognises the need to provide more classroom support for these pupils. Systems and structures for improvement are effective and the school is well placed for further improvement.

Standards in subjects

The 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	C		
Science	E	E		

The table above shows that pupils' standards in English, mathematics and science in the 1999 National Curriculum tests were well below the average of all schools and that in comparison with similar schools they were average in English and mathematics and well below average in science. Standards for pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 in school at present are below the national expectation in English and they are in line with the national expectation in mathematics and science. These improvements in attainment are due to improved schemes of work and more effective teaching methods through the National Literacy and Numeracy strategies. In science improvements are due to a more effective scheme of work and a focus on teaching the language of science to help pupils to a better understanding of ideas. By the end of both key stages pupils reach the expected levels in information and communication technology. In religious education they reach the levels required by the Locally Agreed Syllabus. In other subjects of the curriculum they attain standards similar to other children nationally, except in art where they attain above national expectations. Children who are under five make very good progress in their knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development; they make good progress in language and numeracy and are well prepared for school by the time the time they are five.

Quality of teaching

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

The quality of teaching was at least satisfactory in 98 per cent of lessons; in 70 per cent it was good or better and in 26 per cent of lessons teaching was very good or excellent. In the majority of lessons the quality of teaching promoted good progress for the pupils. Teachers have good subject knowledge and understanding of the subjects they teach. They use a range of teaching methods, have clear objectives and sequence the learning so that pupils have a good understanding of concepts. Teachers' management of pupils is very good. The teaching of literacy is good and is promoted in other subjects of the curriculum besides English. The teaching of numeracy is good and pupils have opportunities to apply these skills in science, geography and some art and technology lessons. There are examples of good teaching in all subjects. Only two unsatisfactory lessons were seen, one each in science and English and these contributed to unsatisfactory progress for the pupils in those classes. The teaching of under fives is consistently good and contributes to the good progress they make.

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

Other aspects of the school

Aspect	Comment
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Behaviour	Very good. All pupils behave very well in class and around the school. They are courteous and considerate. Pupils show very good levels of independence and initiative from an early age. The number of exclusions is below the national average and relate to one pupil.
Attendance	Satisfactory. The vast majority of pupils attend school regularly and arrive punctually. The school's system for monitoring and promoting attendance is very effective.
Ethos*	The school has a very good ethos. The headteacher, teachers and support staff create a very good environment for learning through their high expectations, the care they take in making the environment stimulating and through the quality of relationships which they promote.
Leadership and management	Very effective leadership from the headteacher. Highly effective and competent management in the school as a whole. Very supportive and active governing body. There is a strong commitment to raise standards further and the systems are in place to do this.
Curriculum	Broadly based and balanced. Planning is good and assessment procedures for English, mathematics and science are good. The provision for extra-curricular activities is excellent.
Pupils with special educational needs	The provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. There are good procedures for identifying pupils experiencing learning difficulties and the quality of support they receive is good.
Spiritual, moral, social & cultural development	Very good provision overall. Pupils are taught to reflect on their experiences, they are taught right from wrong, have many opportunities to develop social skills and work in an environment where their own and the culture of others is celebrated.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	Good overall. Very good accommodation, good resources for learning and good arrangements for the professional development of staff. There is a need for more support staff to help lower attaining pupils.
Value for money	The school gives very good value for money.

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

The parents' views of the school

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
II. They are very pleased with the progress their children make. III. They like the values the school promotes and the happy and secure atmosphere which pervades the school. IV. They like the homework programme. V. They think the school has good systems for supporting pupils who need additional help. VI. They like the good reputation the school has for high standards of behaviour. VII. They appreciate the way the school values them and any contributions they make to the life of the school.	VIII. That on occasion a parent might not be

Inspection findings support all the positive views of parents. Their children are well taught and make good progress. The school's ethos is very good. Pupils' learning and personal development are well monitored and teachers quickly identify pupils who need extra help or support. The behaviour in the school is very good and helps create a secure and happy atmosphere. Parents are very welcome in the school and make a good contribution to children's learning. The school has good systems for contacting parents when children are ill and health and safety procedures are followed properly. Inspectors could find no evidence that the school does not make every effort to contact parents when a problem arises.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

To further improve the standards of pupils' attainments and the quality of education provided, the headteacher, staff and governors should:

- Continue to improve attainment in English, mathematics and science by:
 - monitoring the impact of initiatives such as the Literacy and Numeracy strategies
 - evaluating the progress pupils make and using the results of assessment in order to develop target setting further, as outlined in the school development plan
(see paragraphs 84, 91,97,99,100, 102, 111,113, 119)
- Further develop the role of co-ordinators so that they have the opportunity to monitor standards in the subjects for which they are responsible by:
 - planning a programme of classroom observation for each co-ordinator
 - using the information gathered to plan appropriate professional development for colleagues
 - devising strategies to share good practice
(see paragraphs 96, 100, 120, 126, 160, 168)

In addition to the key issues above the following less important weakness should be considered for inclusion in the governors' action plan:

- develop and monitor the home reading programme for pupils at both key stages in order to raise standards in reading throughout the school (see paragraphs 86, 88, 93)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1 Shotton Colliery School is situated near the town of Peterlee in County Durham. There are 375 pupils on roll, which makes the school larger than the average primary school. There is a nursery on site with places for 32 children. There are currently 81 pupils on the register of special educational needs, which is above the national average. Eight pupils have statements of special educational need, which is below the national average. There is a local authority designated unit on site for ten pupils with moderate learning difficulties between the ages of five and eleven. . Only one pupil has English as a second language and this is below the national average.
- 2 The majority of pupils who attend the school come from the village of Shotton, but the school does attract a significant number of pupils from other villages outside of its catchment area. Unemployment in the area is well above the national average and pupils' socio-economic circumstances are below those found nationally. The percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (38 per cent) is above the national average. Pupils enter the school with attainments which are well below the standards expected nationally.
- 3 The school's mission statement sets the goal for high achievement. "It is our aim to utilise all available resources, both personal and material, to provide the best education possible to our pupils." The school aims to provide a happy, stimulating environment where children are expected to work to high standards and become independent learners.
- 4 In the current year, the school's main priorities are to:
 - raise pupils attainment in literacy - especially in reading through parental involvement
 - reduce class sizes to below 30 at Key Stage 1
 - develop target setting to raise attainment in literacy and numeracy
 - develop personal, social and health education as a means of raising pupils' self esteem
 - to further improve pupils' performance in National Curriculum tests in English and mathematics

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	26	25	51

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	12	22	18
	Girls	19	22	22
	Total	31	44	40
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	61 (52)	86 (96)	78 (85)
	National	82 (80)	83 (80)	87 (85)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	20	18	23
	Girls	22	22	23
	Total	42	40	46
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	82	78	90
	National	82 (80)	86 (84)	87 (85)

¹

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

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	37	29	66

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	15	17	16
	Girls	18	17	17
	Total	33	34	33
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	50 (52)	51.5 (48)	50 (51)
	National	70 (65)	69 (65)	78 (69)

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	15	20	18
	Girls	18	18	19
	Total	33	38	37
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	50	58	56
	National	68 (65)	69 (65)	75 (72)

Attendance

Percentage of half days (sessions) missed through absence for the latest complete reporting year

		%
Authorised Absence	School	7.5
	National comparative data	5.7
Unauthorised Absence	School	0
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

Number of exclusions of pupils (of statutory school age) during the previous year:

	Number
Fixed period	2
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	26
Satisfactory or better	98
Less than satisfactory	2

²

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

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

- 5 The attainment of pupils on entry to the school is well below the standard expected nationally. This is reflected in the assessments made shortly after pupils enter the reception classes. Baseline assessments made of children shortly after admission to the reception classes indicate that attainment is well below the average for the local authority. Because of the good teaching and the very caring and stimulating provision in the nursery and reception classes, children under five make very good progress overall and they make good progress in language and literacy and in mathematics. Children under five in the reception classes are on course to meet national expectations overall by the time they are five. They are likely to attain the desirable learning outcomes for each of the required areas of learning – knowledge and understanding of the world, physical development and creative development - except for language and literacy and mathematics, in which overall performance is likely to fall below expected levels. The average age of below five, of the children in the current reception classes is lower than in previous years.

- 6 In reading, the percentage of pupils reaching the expected level (Level 2) in the national tests for seven year olds in 1999, was very low in comparison with the national average. Pupils' performance in writing was much better than in reading; the percentage achieving Level 2 or higher, was above the national average. Compared with the results of pupils from similar schools in the 1999 tests in reading, pupils' results were well below average and in writing they were well above the average. Inspection findings show a slightly improved picture and judge that standards are now below the national expectation. While reading is well below the average, standards in writing are well above the average for girls and above the average for boys. In speaking and listening, pupils attain standards which are in line with expectations for their age. Although reading standards remain well below the national average, the school provides good resources and well planned opportunities for pupils to improve their skills. Part of the explanation for the low standards in reading is the lack of parental support for this in many of the pupils' homes. Another reason is the varied practice in sending books home for reading. Pupils are encouraged to join in class discussion and they develop confidence and fluency when speaking to the class in both formal and informal situations. In writing, they write instructions clearly, use a word bank to help with their spelling and higher attainers make correct use of punctuation, including exclamation marks and apostrophes. Pupils make very good progress throughout the key stage in writing and they make good progress in reading, speaking and listening. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress in all aspects of their English and when they are withdrawn for additional literacy support they make very good progress.

- 7 In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, the percentage of pupils achieving Level 4 or above was well below the national average in English. Compared with the results of pupils from similar schools, pupils' results were well below the average. There is little difference in the attainment of boys and girls in these tests. Although the trend in attainment in the national tests has been downward in the past three years, inspection findings indicate an improving picture at the end of the current Key Stage 2, so that overall attainment is now below the national expectation.. Pupils have higher standards in reading than writing; they

use the library effectively for research and higher attaining pupils in Year 5 and Year 6 read accurately and fluently with good understanding. Lower attaining pupils have sound strategies for reading but still read hesitantly. In writing, pupils' attainment is well below the expected level by the end of the key stage. Although higher attaining pupils are able to write convincing arguments the majority of pupils have difficulty with spelling and punctuation. Overall by the end of the key stage taking all aspects of English into consideration, pupils' attainment is below the national expectation. All pupils make good progress overall, including pupils with special educational needs and, all make very good progress in handwriting and presentational skills.

8

In mathematics, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level in the end of Key Stage 1 tests was below the national average in 1999. In comparison with similar schools, the results at the end of Key Stage 1 were just below the average. Inspection findings indicate that pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 are attaining in line with the national expectation in all attainment targets. Pupils have a good grasp of mathematical vocabulary for addition. They have a secure understanding of place value of tens and units. They count forwards and backwards to 30 and higher attaining pupils can mentally add and subtract numbers up to 20. These skills are due to the teaching of mental skills through the numeracy initiative. Pupils know two-dimensional shapes and units of measurement. In the 1999 national tests for eleven year olds, the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was well below the national average. Compared with the points score results of pupils from similar schools their results were below average. Pupils currently nearing the end of Key Stage 2 are attaining in line with the national expectation as a result of improved teaching and the impact of the National Numeracy Strategy. Year 6 pupils solve problems such as measuring a floor for a kitchen; higher attaining pupils have secure understanding of the grid method of multiplication and can find the product of numbers to two decimal places, lower attaining pupils understand co-ordinates and can plot graphs. Pupils at Key Stage 1, including those with special educational needs, make good progress. At Key Stage 2 progress is good in most classes, except in a Year 4 class where pupils make satisfactory progress.

- 9 In the teacher assessments in science at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was judged to be well above the national average. Inspection evidence shows that pupils at the end of the key stage are now attaining above the national average and are set to improve upon this by the end of the school year. By the end of the key stage pupils have a sound knowledge of the lifecycle of a butterfly and know how materials can be changed by bending, twisting and squashing. In the National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds the percentage of pupils achieving the expected level was well below the national average and well below the average for pupils from similar schools. Inspection findings show that attainment in science is rising steadily at Key Stage 2 and that pupils at the end of the key stage are attaining standards in line with the national expectation. This is due to the new scheme of work recently introduced, which is giving good support to teachers' planning for progression. Pupils know that light travels in straight lines, how to test circuits and that higher attaining pupils are able to draw conclusions from experiments they conduct. Pupils make good progress in scientific knowledge and understanding at Key Stage 1; at Key Stage 2 they make satisfactory progress. Pupils with special educational needs make similar progress to others in their class.
- 10 In information technology, pupils' attainment is in line with the nationally expected level at the end of both key stages. At Key Stage 1 pupils make satisfactory progress. By the end of the key stage they know the main functions of the keyboard, use the mouse to control a program and type in text. Higher attaining pupils print and save their work. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils word process documents, they use software to create pictures, save and retrieve files and can produce spreadsheets for their work in science. All pupils including those with special educational needs make satisfactory progress.
- 11 In religious education, attainment is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus at the end of both key stages. This marks an improvement since the previous inspection. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity and a satisfactory knowledge of the Bible. They have some knowledge of the customs and beliefs of major world faiths. At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils have sound knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus. They develop an understanding of how religious belief affects the way

people live their lives and see a pattern of common factors across different faiths. All pupils make satisfactory progress, including pupils with special educational needs.

- 12 Pupils with special educational needs make at least as good progress as others in the class. When they are withdrawn for intensive literacy sessions they make very good progress. When they are supported in class by classroom assistants and support teachers they generally make good progress, though there are instances of pupils from the resource base only making satisfactory progress because there is no record kept of where their strengths and weaknesses are in foundation subjects.

13

Pupils make good progress at both key stages in history and in physical education. In swimming the majority reach the expected standard by the time they are eleven. They are well taught in these subjects and teachers make good use of resources to improve pupils' learning. In art, pupils make very good progress. They are taught systematically to develop skills and technique throughout both key stages and attain high standards in the work they produce. In design and technology, geography and music pupils make satisfactory progress and attain standards similar to those of pupils of a similar age.

- 14 Literacy is promoted across the curriculum, for example in Key Stage 1, pupils write prayers to God in religious education, in health education they write about exercises they enjoy doing, and the youngest pupils write their name and address on envelopes for work in geography. In the Junior Department, a "Good Work" display shows literacy skills used to record work in science, history and geography. Teachers are careful to place emphasis on correct vocabulary and good examples of this were seen in physical education and science when pupils were encouraged to use technical words such as 'fair test' and 'invasion' appropriately.
- 15 Standards of numeracy are close to the national average at both key stages. Pupils' understanding and use of number develop satisfactorily. Pupils carry out mental calculations with increasing accuracy as they move through the school. They use their numeracy skills in science when calculating and recording observations during experiments and in geography as they develop and refine their mapwork skills.
- 16 Standards in literacy and numeracy have improved since the previous inspection. Inspection evidence suggests that pupils at the end of both key stages are on target to improve on the school's performance in this year's National Curriculum tests and that their skills in all areas of the English and mathematics curriculum have increased.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

- 17 At the time of the previous inspection pupils' behaviour was generally good in lessons and in class; they were polite and courteous; had respect for people and property and responded well to responsibility. This position has been improved upon since the previous inspection in all the key areas of this aspect of the school.
- 18 Children under five in the nursery and reception classes are very keen to learn, and are very well behaved. They settle happily when they start school and quickly begin to play independently and with others. The oldest children listen carefully and respectfully to adults and to each other. They are good at taking turns and sharing equipment. They concentrate for an appropriate length of time for their age when they are working on tasks. They show friendly care and concern for other children in the group and celebrate each others' successes, for example in a reception class when identifying the initial letters in the words of a poem at the end of a literacy lesson.
- 19 Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. In lessons and activities throughout the school, in the classroom, in the library when working on the computers or researching information and in physical education lessons, they show interest and enthusiasm. When they are given new or challenging tasks they persevere well and try their best to do what is asked of them. They are

able to use resources appropriately and have a pride in their work. They listen carefully to the teachers and classroom assistants and respond enthusiastically to questions; however their capacity to generate ideas for themselves and to develop lines of enquiry in, for example mathematics and science are less well developed.

20

Pupils' behaviour in lessons and around the school is very good. They are courteous and polite to staff, visitors and each other. They can be trusted to carry out jobs such as organising the library and maintaining computers unsupervised. They have a respect for the fabric of the school, handling equipment and resources carefully. The displays of pupils' work around the school are left undamaged and the staff are able to have a wealth of artefacts such as historical items and costumes on display in classrooms and corridors, confident that they will remain untouched. At lunchtimes and play pupils of all ages play well together. There have been two exclusions in the last school year. Although this is a rising trend it relates to one pupil. Bullying was not seen as an issue either by parents or children. There were no reported incidents of bullying during the inspection.

- 21 The relationships between adults and pupils and between the pupils themselves are excellent. They are strength of the school and have a significant impact upon the quality of education. Pupils like their teachers and the teachers obviously like and respect their pupils. There is an excellent rapport between them and pupils are confident in joining in discussions and asking for help. Pupil's ability to work with others in pairs or small groups is highly developed. They share equipment and exchange ideas freely in discussions, confident that these will be accepted and respected. This level of respect is extended to all adults in the school including support staff, visitors, parent helpers and lunchtime supervisors. During the inspection no incidents of inappropriate behaviour, bullying or harassment were seen. Pupils with special educational needs are effectively integrated in to the classes and are valued equally by all the pupils.
- 22 The pupils' personal development is very good. When they are given opportunities to take responsibility they execute these duties efficiently and conscientiously. For example, younger pupils fulfil classroom-based jobs quickly and effectively. The older pupils take responsibility for meeting younger ones at the school gate and escorting them into school, help with the supervision of the Nursery and the Breakfast Club and a small team switch on the computers in classrooms and the library each morning and check them at lunchtime. Without prompting from adults, pupils will assume responsibility for doing small jobs around the school. The oldest pupils in the school organise events to support specific causes, such as the Blue Peter Bring and Buy Appeal and a School Newsletter is currently being drafted by a pupil in Year 6.

Attendance

- 23 Attendance is satisfactory, but is slightly below the average for primary schools nationally. There is no unauthorised absence. Lateness is not a problem. Pupils arrive on time and are settled in class promptly at the start of sessions.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

- 24 The quality of teaching throughout the school is good. In 98 per cent of the 94 lessons seen

teaching was at least satisfactory and in 70 per cent it was good or better. In 26 per cent of lessons the teaching was very good or excellent, which is a high proportion for this quality of teaching. The only unsatisfactory teaching occurred at Key Stage 2. The strength of the teaching is a significant indicator of the school's ability to maintain and improve standards and standards in teaching have improved since the previous inspection.

25

The quality of teaching for children under five is good or better in 75 per cent of lessons. This represents an improvement since the previous inspection when teaching was judged to mainly satisfactory. There are many strengths in the teaching shared by teachers, nursery nurse and support staff. Particular strengths in all the teaching are the knowledge and understanding of the required curriculum, as well as knowledge of each child's needs. This is used well to plan effective, stimulating activities and to make thorough assessments on a daily basis. The nursery nurse makes a significant contribution to children's good progress and the support in the reception classes is equally skilled, although it is not available regularly enough. The detailed assessments are very conscientiously carried out by all adults during activities and are very well used in planning by staff. Management of children is caring, friendly and firm. It ensures that children all have equal opportunities to take a full part in the very good provision.

- 26 In Key Stage 1, the quality of teaching is good or better in 92 per cent of lessons; and satisfactory in the remainder. This quality of teaching supports pupils to make good progress in almost all areas of the curriculum. In a Year 2 English lesson observed, the teaching was excellent and led to very good progress for the pupils in giving oral instructions on how to clean your teeth. In all mathematics lessons the teaching is good or very good with a clear focus on improving knowledge and use of number through the use of puzzles and problems. In science all teaching at Key Stage 1 is good and promotes knowledge and understanding through careful observation.
- 27 In Key Stage 2, the quality of teaching is good or better in 60 per cent of lessons, satisfactory in 96 per cent and unsatisfactory in four per cent of lessons. There is some very good teaching in literacy and some excellent teaching in mathematics. There is some unsatisfactory teaching in science in a Year 4 class, where the lesson lacks pace and pupils are not motivated to become enthusiastic or make the best progress. The teaching of literacy to pupils in the resource base is sometimes unsatisfactory due to a lack of pace and a weakness in subject knowledge on the part of the teacher. There are examples of very good teaching in art, history, music and religious education at Key Stage 2.
- 28 Teachers' subject knowledge is good at both key stages. Where teachers' subject knowledge is good, as in mathematics, then lessons are injected with enthusiasm and pupils make good progress in lively and stimulating lessons. There have been improvements in teachers' subject knowledge since the previous inspection when there were weaknesses in some subjects which have now been eliminated. The exception to this is in the teaching of reading in the resource base. Because of this weakness in expertise, older pupils in the resource base do not make satisfactory progress towards the targets of their statements which largely centre on learning to read.
- 29 Teachers have good expectations of their pupils. They present pupils with challenging work and in the best lessons set time limits for its completion. The majority of teachers make judicious use of praise to support these high expectations and they reward pupils with appropriate feedback about their progress during lessons in order to keep them on task and motivated. Teachers usually have high expectations in English, mathematics and science lessons at both key stages.
- 30 Teachers' planning is good at Key Stage 2 and very good at Key Stage 1. Medium term plans identify learning objectives and these are translated into daily lesson plans which ensure progression and continuity in learning. They have good assessment procedures which give them a clear picture of the strengths and weaknesses of individuals in their class. They make

good use of this information to plan for the different needs of pupils in their classes. This is not always the case in science where at Key Stage 2 there is a lack of simplified or extension work to meet the needs of pupils at different stages of learning. In some lessons, for example literacy, numeracy and art teachers plan for a balance of activities which complement the topic studied and lead to rapid progress for the pupils. In almost all literacy and numeracy lessons teachers share the learning objectives with the pupils and make them aware of the expectations for their learning in the lesson.

31

At both key stages teachers use a wide range of class organisation and methods to teach their classes. They make very good use of questioning and promote discussion to develop pupils' thinking. Very good examples of allowing pupils to use talk to explore meaning and improve understanding were seen in literacy, numeracy and religious education lessons. In the majority of numeracy lessons pupils are encouraged to explain their solutions to problems, while in religious education, Year 3 pupils engage in thoughtful discussion about the nature of God. Teachers plan their lessons so that pupils are given opportunities to work independently, in pairs and in small groups. In a design and technology lesson effective use of group work was seen when a group explained its design to the class. In the best art lessons, teachers demonstrate technique to pupils to ensure that they develop the correct skills to produce high quality work.

- 32 The excellent relationships which teachers develop with their pupils are a strength of the learning process. These are marked by mutual respect, tolerance and understanding and they create a very secure, positive learning environment. The fact that all pupils in all classes are confident about expressing opinions, volunteering answers and making suggestions, is a tribute to the very good ethos produced by the quality of relationships and the shared enjoyment of learning. Because of the quality of relationships, teachers' management of pupils is very skilled, is unobtrusive and does not stop the flow of lessons in the rare instances of inattention seen.
- 33 Teachers make good use of time at Key Stage 1. Pupils are kept working and make good progress in briskly paced mathematics and literacy lessons. In history, Year 1 pupils make good progress when they are presented with a range of toys and join in a lively discussion with their teachers who maintain a good pace through team teaching. At Key Stage 2 whole class teaching in literacy and numeracy is conducted at a brisk pace, with pupils enjoying the challenge of rapid mental calculations or lively discussion about language. The teachers make good use of the high quality resources available in the school and supplement these with those they make themselves. Most teachers make use of computers to effectively enhance the learning of pupils in a number of subjects such as history, English and art. Lessons in history, art, religious education and geography all are enhanced by the range and quality of resources used. Teachers also make good use of the local environment, museums and visitors to the school to enrich the learning experiences of pupils.
- 34 Teachers set regular homework at both key stages and this increases in frequency and difficulty as pupils approach the end of Key Stage 2, thus preparing older pupils for the next stage of learning. However, not all teachers set reading homework nightly and this is a weakness when so many pupils have a low level of reading skill. Pupils' work is marked regularly, with comments on how it might be improved. Pupils are reminded of subject and individual learning targets through the use of displays in most classrooms reminding them of this aspect of their learning.
- 35 The quality of teaching for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are well supported in class by the thorough planning of teachers and the good quality of support they receive from educational support staff. When they are withdrawn from class for specific work on language development and phonics they make very good progress.
- 36 There have been improvements in all aspects of teaching since the previous inspection. Now, there is a higher percentage of satisfactory, good and very good teaching overall. There have been improvements in assessment procedures, schemes of work and the range of resources used by teachers. Pupils now experience a wide range of teaching and learning methods and

are now given more opportunity for independent learning.

The curriculum and assessment

- 37 The school's curriculum is broad and balanced and meets the requirements of the National Curriculum and the locally agreed syllabus for religious education in both key stages. Personal, social and health education is taught and includes sex education and information about drugs. All relevant statutory requirements are met and all pupils have equality of access and opportunity. This is a reflection of the findings of the previous report. An appropriate amount of time is allocated to the teaching of literacy and numeracy and these lessons take place in the morning session.

38

The planned curriculum for the children under five is good. It is based around the recommended areas of learning and shows progression to enable children to meet the desirable learning outcomes by the age of five. Planning is topic based and the activities planned for each week relate to long term plans. The nursery and reception teachers work very well together in order to provide consistency across the different classes. Reception teachers have a very good understanding of the nursery curriculum and ensure smooth progress between the two classes.

- 39 The curriculum for pupils in both key stages has an appropriate emphasis and time allocation to literacy and numeracy. Planning for both is thorough and clear and is beginning to contribute to the raising of standards in both subject areas. A nationally approved scheme by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority has been adopted this term for science and is helping to address issues of continuity and progress. Similar schemes have been adopted for information technology, history, geography and design technology. Each subject has a policy and guidelines to support the teaching and learning of the subject.
- 40 The provision for pupils with special educational needs, in the main school, is good. There are clear processes for identifying pupils experiencing learning difficulties from an early age and these are followed throughout the school. The school fulfils the requirements of the code of practice in having a special educational needs register, consulting parents, holding annual reviews and drawing up individual education plans for these pupils. Support is given in the classroom as well as in the special educational needs unit. The provision for pupils with moderate learning difficulties in the resource base is satisfactory.
- 41 There is an excellent programme of extra-curricula activities and clubs provided by the school. Parents and pupils are currently involved with the making of a “Millenium Banner” after school and there is a wide range of activities including sport and music for pupils to join in and enjoy. Some of these activities are available to Key Stage 1 pupils also. While pupils no longer enjoy a residential weekend at an outdoor centre in the Lake District, there are a number of external visits made to the local area based around the “Business Partners” programme with Year 5 pupils and geography studies in other year groups, and the school is actively seeking a suitable venue for residential visits.
- 42 Parents express their appreciation for all these activities and they are well supported both during and after school.
- 43 The formal and informal procedures for assessing pupils in the nursery and reception classes are good and used well to inform teachers’ planning. On entry the school uses two forms of baseline assessment to begin the process of monitoring the progress of its pupils. In addition to the end of key stage tests, there are standardised tests in Years 3, 4, and 5. The information from these is used to identify targets for improvement for individuals and groups of pupils in English, mathematics and science. These targets are passed on to the next class teacher as pupils move through the school. Teachers make sound use of these tests to plan future work although at present this is not consistent practice throughout the school. The next step in this process is for the school to make more effective use of this data to plan exactly what it is that pupils need to learn in order to achieve their targets and further raise standards. Assessment in the foundation subjects is less well developed but there is some end of topic assessment. Day-to-day assessment of pupils’ work is good in the majority of classes. Oral feedback is supportive, marking is constructive and up-to-date, and most lessons feature good quality questioning. Pupils respond positively to praise and all this contributes to the raising of standards.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

- 44 The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and cultural development of pupils is very good. The school has maintained the very high quality provision which was reported in the previous inspection and in many aspects has built upon these contributions and confirmed this aspect as a major strength of the school.

- 45 Social and personal development is very well planned for the children under five. Every opportunity is taken to discuss qualities such as kindness and sharing. Daily assemblies comply with statutory requirements and provide good opportunities for children to reflect on the good things they have. The school encourages children, from a very early age, to take responsibility for themselves and to carry out duties which help others. The education of the under fives is very successful in teaching the shared values and expectations of parents and the school.
- 46 The provision for pupils' spiritual development is good. Through the school's ethos spiritual development is successfully promoted throughout the school. The approach to teaching embodies clear emphasis on spiritual qualities of discovery and in the appreciation of art and music. In one history lesson pupils were seen to be genuinely excited by the models and artefacts concerned with their work on Tudor England. When learning and singing a song about the sinking of the Mary Rose, they shared the feelings which the song aroused and they expressed these sensitively. In art lessons pupils are enthused by the work which they see and take great pride in their own original work and work in the style of famous artists. Good spiritual development is provided through religious education and during assemblies which explore social and moral themes which are linked with pupils' own lives. Assemblies are well conducted, with themes which seize the interest of the pupils and involve them in the topic. In one assembly considering the work of the Bible Society pupils expressed their awe at the family bible which was on display with a wide selection of other materials. There are valuable opportunities for pupils to reflect on their own lives and on the lives of others, to share treasured possessions and contemplate how their lives differ from those who are less fortunate. Time is given for prayers, sometimes led by the pupils, in both assemblies and at the ends of lessons. Acts of collective worship are spiritual occasions and promote pupils knowledge and awareness.
- 47 The provision for pupils' moral development is very good indeed. The school's ethos includes sound values relating to what is morally right or wrong. Parents fully support these values which are communicated well to the pupils. The positive rules for behaviour throughout the school are consistently reinforced. Very high standards of behaviour are fostered through the school's approach. The school uses rewards and sanctions judiciously. Good work and good behaviour are rewarded by merit awards and well-deserved praise. Very good moral development is fostered through the stories which pupils hear. Many of these have a clear moral focus, for example telling the truth, and these dimensions are emphasised by the teachers who provide very good role models for the pupils to emulate. Pupils are given good opportunities for discussing moral issues. During the inspection pupils in Year 6 were observed debating the issues surrounding fox hunting. Arguments both for and against were well structured and pupils listened equally well to both sides of the debate respecting the views of others. The school's provision for personal, social and health education is based on strong moral principles and prepares pupils well for personal decision making.
- 48 The provision for pupils' social development is another strength of the school. The provision is enriched and enhanced by the excellent range of extra curricular activities which the school provides. These include a wide choice of sporting activities as well as music, art, PE, science, chess, computer and board games clubs. All of these positively support pupils' social development and skills. Many of these take place during the lunch time break and are well supported by large groups of pupils. During the inspection 38 pupils were observed taking part in a beginners recorder session and on another day 43 pupils were enthusiastically

involved in a choir practice. All teachers encourage pupils to take responsibility for a wide range of classroom and school activities where pupils act as monitors and give support to others. These occasions happen throughout the school day. A particularly good example is how older pupils meet the younger pupils at the school gate in the morning and escort them to their classrooms. This support is also evident during the pre-school breakfast time when older pupils help the younger ones. Later in the day pupils are given responsible for the playground equipment, to see that it is available and then properly stored after use. In lessons pupils also take responsibility for resources and during assemblies older pupils manage the overhead projector, lights and music. Another strength of the school's social provision is the promotion of pupils' awareness of the plight of others and the high levels of charitable giving involving the pupils throughout the school. They support a young person in Tanzania paying for his schooling and for his books and they send and receive letters regularly. Similar support is given to a donkey sanctuary, the PDSA, Macmillan Cancer relief, the RNIB and many others. The amount of support is unusually high and this awareness is a powerful influence on pupils' development. Valuable opportunities are created at times such as harvest festival and at Christmas for pupils to visit elderly residents of retirement homes and to invite them into school for concerts. There are also many opportunities for pupils to visit museums and places of interest concerned with their topics. These include visits to the local parish church as well as further afield to Beamish Open Air Museum, to the Sea Life Centre, to the theatre, to the wildfowl park and many others.

- 49 The school's provision for the cultural development of pupils is very good. Pupils are made well aware of their own local heritage and of life in past times, how it has changed and how their lives differ from those of their grandparents and great-grandparents. Apart from the splendid displays around the school, of photographs and artefacts, the school has arranged frequent visits from people who remember or who have a special interest in the recent history of Shotton Colliery. These impressions and first hand information have a significant impact upon the knowledge and understanding of the pupils and enhance their awareness of the community in which they live, its traditions and culture. Through religious education pupils have a rich insight into the traditions and festivals of religions other than their own. There have been visitors to the school who have spoken with the pupils about their own cultures, such as a grandparent from a Jewish family and visitors from the Ukraine where this school had links with another school. There has been a recent visit from a missionary in Africa and the regular letters from Anthony in Tanzania. The school makes very good provision for the widening of pupils' understanding of other cultures through music and particularly through art where there is a wealth of experience through the work of famous artists of this generation and from the past. Valuable opportunities are regularly seized by teachers to expand pupils' knowledge and understanding of the impact which the rich diversity of cultural differences has upon our society.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

- 50 Provision for pupils' support, guidance and general welfare remains effective, and continues to make a positive contribution to the quality of their education. Pupils are secure and happy in their work and play, and all adults work well together to provide a caring and supportive environment for them. Children under five and their parents are introduced into the school with understanding and given clear guidance about its routines and expectations. Pupils in Year 6 are prepared effectively for the next stage of their education. The Pathways Initiative, running in Year 5, is particularly successful in raising pupils' self-esteem and in promoting awareness of the world of work. Almost all parents believe that their children like coming to

school and are well supported by staff.

- 51 Procedures for monitoring pupils' personal development are mostly informal, but effective. Praise and rewards are used appropriately to encourage effort and good behaviour, and significant achievements are celebrated in a variety of ways. Systems for tracking pupils' academic progress and achievements as they move through the school are thorough and used effectively. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good and they make good progress towards their individual targets.
- 52 The school has very good procedures for promoting high standards of behaviour and discipline that are followed consistently by all members of staff. Rewards and sanctions are used fairly and simple, but effective, rules ensure pupils' thoughtful and orderly conduct around school. Clear guidelines are in place to deal with bullying. Any reported incidents are taken seriously and dealt with effectively.
- 53 Registers are completed efficiently at the start of sessions. They are monitored regularly and all unexplained absences are followed up effectively. Good attendance is actively encouraged and rewarded in a variety of ways. Levels of authorised absence are reported appropriately to parents.
- 54 Pupils' general welfare is promoted successfully. The guidelines of the local education authority have been adopted for child protection and the head teacher and the special needs co-ordinator have designated responsibility for contacting outside agencies. A suitable health and safety policy is in place and governors are involved in its implementation. Risk assessment is appropriately carried out and followed up. Standards of cleaning are very high and the building is in good repair. Pupils are supervised carefully throughout the day, and lunchtime arrangements are well managed. As a result the school functions as a calm and orderly community. Arrangements for dealing with accidents and illness are satisfactory. Emergency equipment is serviced regularly and there are fire drills each term.

Partnership with parents and the community

- 55 Good relationships have been maintained with parents since the previous inspection. They are encouraged to support their children's learning through the work they do at home and are very welcome in school. From the time their children visit the nursery before starting school parents are encouraged to be involved with their children's learning. A strong supportive partnership is developed with all the parents of children under five. The Helpers in School course is well supported by parents, and there is now regular and committed help with information technology at Key Stage 1 from some parents following their involvement in a PACT (Parents and Children Together) initiative. Parents also provide valuable assistance with after school activities. Several are currently helping pupils to make a millennium tapestry depicting food and the local community. Many others accompany educational visits. A clear home school agreement has been produced and sent to parents. All fund-raising events organised by the school are well supported by the parents, with the proceeds being spent wisely for the benefit of pupils.
- 56 Communications with parents are satisfactory. Parents are well satisfied with the information they receive about their children's progress and are kept fully informed about all aspects of school life through regular correspondence. They also receive some advance notice from teachers about the work done in class. Written annual reports are generally informative and set appropriate targets for improvement. At other times, teachers make themselves available to talk to parents if there are any immediate worries or concerns, and parents indicate that matters raised are handled well. The school's prospectus gives useful and detailed information to parents and makes clear what the school's admission policy is. Communications with parents of pupils with special educational needs is satisfactory.
- 57 Very good links have been sustained with the local community since the last inspection, and these continue to make a positive impact on pupils' learning. Educational visits to places of interest and visitors to the school, such as sports professionals and occasional foreign nationals, extend the work pupils do in class and provide first-hand experiences for them. At present, there are no residential visits, although the school is hoping to find a new, more suitable, venue in the near future. Longstanding links with elderly residents, performances of the choir and involvement with other schools through various forms of sport make significant contributions to pupils' personal and social development. Their awareness of the needs of others is raised through generous support for charity. There are good links with a number of local businesses, and regular work experience opportunities are provided for students. Activities organised through the Pathways project greatly enhance pupils' knowledge and understanding of the world of work.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

- 58 The leadership of the headteacher is a real strength for the school. She shows an unwavering sense of direction for the development of the school. The high standards found in all aspects of the school's work reflect her commitment to continuous improvement. The inspiration provided by her energy, professionalism and dedication is a significant factor in motivating all those who work in and for the school. There is a clear and well understood educational vision which is shared by teachers and support staff alike. A high priority is given to pupils'

attainment and progress and there is a strong emphasis on the personal and social development of pupils. Since the previous inspection, there has been good progress in all aspects of the school; the pace of change is measured and well managed and supported by very good team work. The headteacher has established very effective systems for the day-to-day management and organisation of the school and is very well supported by the deputy headteacher, senior teacher, staff and administrative assistants. Through regular and systematic monitoring of teachers' planning, pupils' work and observing some lessons, the headteacher is well aware of the strengths and areas for development of the school and individual members of staff.

59

The headteacher is very well supported in her leadership of the school by her deputy headteacher who is both able and hardworking. She has a very good knowledge of the school's strengths and areas for development and makes a major contribution to the detailed management of the school. The senior teacher in charge of Early Years education provides very good leadership for this aspect of the school's work and is responsible for ensuring the high standards which are found there. There is a good team spirit, good subject knowledge and very good pupil management and relationships in the Early Years' provision.

60 The governing body provides good leadership for the school. The governors are very interested in and supportive of, the school. There is a strong partnership between the governing body and the headteacher and their commitment to improving the quality of education is a good indication of the common goals they share with the headteacher. The members of the governing body work very effectively in committees that meet regularly and report to the full governing body. Governors are fully involved in the school development planning cycle. They are kept well informed by the headteacher and staff through detailed written and oral reports and some governors visit the school regularly to give support others provide expert knowledge on financial matters. In these ways they carry out the role of a 'critical friend', are kept aware of the day-to-day and longer term issues for the school and as a result are able to base their strategic planning decisions on relevant and accurate information. The governing body fully meets statutory requirements.

61 Subject co-ordinators are well-informed and provide good and sometimes very good leadership for their subject. They have good subject knowledge and provide effective support for their colleagues. They examine colleagues planning and samples of pupils' work and have a realistic view of the strengths and weaknesses in their area of responsibility. Co-ordinators for English, mathematics and science have developed the use of standardised tests at Key Stage 2 in order to set targets for individuals and groups of pupils. With the senior management team they also analyse test data to identify strengths and weaknesses in teaching and learning. However the subject co-ordinator's role in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning is not yet fully developed and the senior management team recognises this as an important area for further development. The special educational needs co-ordinator provides good leadership in the identification of pupils with special educational needs and in the quality of home-school liaison she has established. Educational support staff are well managed and promote good progress for pupils with special educational needs. All subject co-ordinators are able to make a valuable contribution to the overall development of the school, reflecting in their work the high standards expected by the headteacher.

62 The school aims to encourage all children to have high self-esteem, be independent learners who are inquisitive, self reliant and use initiative. It also aims to provide a secure, stimulating and well-resourced learning environment in which social skills and spiritual and moral values are fostered. Each of these aims is fully met through the well thought out policies which all who work in the school promote. There is no doubt in the atmosphere which pervades the school that everyone is focussed on the learning process. The shared vision of all adults and children is a major strength in achieving the very good ethos which exists in the school. In all areas of school life – the classroom, assemblies, the playground and the dining hall and in extra-curricular activities, there are examples of teachers, classroom support assistants, lunchtime supervisors and children following the school's policies to establish and maintain a vibrant, caring environment in which high quality learning takes place. Evidence from the parents' response to questionnaires and at the meeting, shows that they are very happy with the way the school promotes its aims and

values.

- 63 The current targets in the school's development plan are appropriate and are based on a thorough examination of the school's strengths and weaknesses. It is a detailed document that focuses on an appropriate number and range of targets for the development of the school. There are clear programmes of action, which realistically indicate how time is to be used and how initiatives are to be funded. Staff development needs are appropriately planned for and link well with the school's priorities for improvement. All members of staff are involved in the school improvement planning process and as a result are aware of the school's priorities and the part that they are to play in supporting these.

64

The school has made good progress since the previous inspection and all issues identified in the previous inspection report have been dealt with effectively and efficiently. Teaching and planning have improved considerably, as have teachers' expectations of what pupils can achieve. There is now a broad range of teaching styles which involve pupils more fully in their own learning and are helping to develop their speaking and thinking skills. Good policies and new schemes of work ensure that pupils progress well in most classes in the school. Pupils make good progress in almost all subjects of the curriculum; the standard of work in number and writing has improved at both key stages. The school has developed a number of initiatives aimed at raising attainment, including the setting of targets for improvement using analysis of assessment data, identifying pupils for further support and monitoring pupils' progress towards targets. The school has improved its extra-curricular provision for all pupils and this is now excellent. The quality of relationships, provision for the personal development of pupils and their spiritual, moral, social and cultural development have all been improved since the previous inspection and are now very good or excellent. Pupils with special educational needs, in the main school, make good progress and their annual reviews are carried out effectively, though the school recognises the need to provide more classroom support for these pupils. Systems and structures for improvement are effective and the school is well placed for further improvement.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

- 65 The school has sufficient teachers to meet the needs of the planned curriculum. They are suitably qualified and there is a good balance of experience and expertise. Teachers are well deployed and the distribution of curriculum responsibilities is appropriate. However, the provision of non-teaching support staff to support lower attaining pupils is inadequate. This affects their attainment and progress. The administrative manager, school clerk, the premises superintendent, midday supervisors and cleaners all support the school very well and make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.
- 66 Appraisal has been suspended pending the introduction of new government guidelines, but has been replaced in the meantime by personal development interviews. The professional development of staff is generally good and closely linked to priorities identified in the school development plan. All teachers have attended courses on the new Literacy and Numeracy Strategies, and all non-teaching staff and midday supervisors receive regular training to help them carry out their roles effectively. Satisfactory job descriptions are in place and there are suitable arrangements for the induction of new staff.
- 67 The school buildings provide very good accommodation for the delivery of the curriculum, including the curriculum for children under five. Children under five do not have regular access to large play equipment but this is compensated for by the use of very good apparatus and equipment in the infant building. The school's accommodation provides a very good environment for learning. Internally it is spotlessly clean and well maintained, although externally some areas of woodwork require re-painting. Classrooms are appropriately furnished and are of sufficient size for the number of pupils in them. In the infant building they are generally spacious. High quality and imaginative displays in public areas and the majority of classrooms help to create a warm and welcoming atmosphere for pupils to work in. Practical areas are used effectively. The school also benefits from having two large halls, a spacious, well-equipped library containing a computer suite in the junior building and a learner swimming pool on the site. Corridors surrounding the enclosed quadrangles are attractively decorated with numerous varieties of shrubs and flowering plants. Outside, the

large playing field and adventure play equipment are well maintained and used well. The area in front of the school has been improved since the last inspection and is now sound. The surface of the junior playground, however, is starting to deteriorate.

- 68 The quality and quantity of resources have improved since the last inspection and are now good for the vast majority of subjects. In science, history and art, and for the under fives, resources are very good. There are sufficient computers and computer programs to support the teaching of information technology, and a good stock of books in the library. Resources are very well managed, readily accessible and used effectively.

The efficiency of the school

- 69 Effective planning procedures are in place and the school's finances are in good order. The overall standard of financial control is very good. Spending decisions are monitored carefully by the governors and closely reflect the school's aims and priorities for development.
- 70 The senior management team and governors have a clear focus on identified priorities and structure the school development plan so that budget decisions underpin key objectives.
- 71 The finance committee of the governing body meets twice a term or more often when a specific issue requires discussion. Spending levels are monitored carefully and enable the school to function efficiently. The governors and headteacher are actively considering the impact on the school income of changes in the number of pupils on the school roll over the next two years, and are taking this into account when agreeing how money should be used.
- 72 The deployment of teaching staff within the school has been given careful thought. Individual teacher's strengths and experience have been used to make a specific impact on the progress pupil's make. The use of support staff is satisfactory. The funding the school receives specifically for pupils with special educational needs is used well and these pupils make good progress. The funding for the resource base is used appropriately and these pupils make satisfactory progress.
- 73 Teachers make very good use of their classrooms and shared areas. This effective use of accommodation makes a very positive contribution to the school environment. The library is used well, both as a new computer suite, and to develop research and higher order reading skills for the junior pupils. The school makes very effective use of the learner swimming pool to ensure that most pupils achieve their swimming targets. Time is used well in the school, with lessons starting promptly, and the majority moving at an effective pace. The school makes good use of the funding allocated for special educational needs and these pupils make good progress.
- 74 The school administrative manager and school clerk provide very effective financial and administrative support to the headteacher, staff and governors. The administrative manager's skills and experience contribute highly to the smooth running of the school. Both of these members of staff greet visitors warmly and make a valuable contribution to the ethos of the school.
- 75 The most recent Local Education Authority Internal Audit Report took place in June 1996. It was the view of the auditors that the financial systems operated by the school were sound and well operated. The four recommendations made at the time have since been fully implemented.
- 76 The school is clearly adding value to the education of its pupils. Expenditure per pupil is below the national average. Given the low attainment levels on entry and the low social-economic factors present in the local community, the pupils are making good progress in their learning and standards are rising. Pupils have good attitudes to their lessons and their personal development and behaviour in lessons are both very good. In the majority of lessons the quality of teaching is good, and this is having an impact on the many areas of improving attainment seen in the school. The school's provision for the spiritual, moral, social and

cultural development of pupils is very good. Taking all these factors into consideration, the school gives very good value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

77 The provision for pupils who are under five is very good. Children generally spend one year part-time in the nursery before they move into the reception classes at the beginning of the year in which they are five, when they attend school full-time. The reception classes are housed in the infant building. The nursery has access to its own outside play area, and the reception classes use the infant playground. The nursery has a full time nursery nurse assisting the teacher, and the reception classes share the support of a classroom assistant for a limited portion of the week. Attainment on entry is well below the average nationally. Baseline assessments made of children shortly after admission to the reception classes indicate that attainment is well below the average for the local authority. There are nationally expected standards of attainment for children by the time they are five. These are set out in the Desirable Learning Outcomes for each area of learning. Attainment is judged on the standards achieved by the oldest children. Children under five make very good progress overall. Most children are on course to attain the desirable learning outcomes in personal and social development, knowledge and understanding of the world, creative development and physical development by the age of five. The average age of children in the current year's reception classes is lower than in recent years and many do not reach age five until late in the school year. Children make good progress overall in language and literacy and mathematics due to the very good support which they receive and many are on course to attain the desirable learning outcomes. The progress of some of the youngest children is slower and they are likely to fall short of the expected standard. The support for children with special educational needs, including any with physical disabilities is very effective and ensures very good progress. There has been very good improvement in provision for the under fives since the last inspection.

The quality of teaching

78 Teaching for children under five across the full range of areas of learning is consistently good and is never less than satisfactory. It was very good in over ten per cent of lessons. There has been good improvement in teaching since the previous inspection, when it was generally sound. All staff ensure that there is very good provision for all areas of learning. They plan a good balance of adult led and child initiated activities across the full early years curriculum. The nursery nurse makes a significant and positive contribution to the very good progress which children make. She takes part fully in the high quality planning and the careful observations and assessments. Learning support is also very effective in the reception classes although it is not available often enough. Teachers make very good use of parents, students on placement and other helpers and they contribute well to the consistently good quality of provision across the three classes. Staff have very good knowledge and understanding of the national expectations, as well as very good knowledge of their children's strengths and weaknesses. This ensures that a very good, lively and practical curriculum is provided to meet their differing needs. Management of children is very skilled. Time and resources are used very well to make lessons interesting and ensure good progress. Expectations are usually high but realistic for behaviour and learning. On a small minority of occasions, teachers do not set appropriate time limits on activities which go on for too long and do not challenge children sufficiently. Management and organisation of the children and activities are very good.

Personal and social development

- 79 The majority of children are on course to meet the nationally expected standards in this important area of development by the time they reach the age of five and they make very good progress. Behaviour in the reception classes and in the nursery is very good. Children play well together in groups. They listen carefully and respectfully to adults and to other children. They wait patiently for their turn as they read together or work on tasks. They follow instructions carefully, but are confident about asking for help when needed. They concentrate for appropriate lengths of time for their age, even when they are working without adult supervision. They show good confidence levels in choosing activities or putting forward ideas. They look after their own personal needs adequately, going to the toilet independently and putting on coats to go out. They enjoy new activities; children in the nursery class, for example, were very enthusiastic about the introduction of a hairdressing salon in the role play area. They respond well to praise and show friendly concern if another child is upset. Teaching is good in both nursery and reception classes. Every opportunity is taken to extend personal development spontaneously throughout the sessions or as part of planned activities.

Language and literacy

- 80 As a result of good teaching children make good progress in language and literacy in the nursery and reception classes. The oldest four year olds are on course to meet the national standards in language and literacy by the time they reach five, but the majority of children will not. They listen carefully to adults telling stories, asking questions or explaining. Most happily respond to adults' questions and chat confidently to each other during shared activities. Children enjoy books and use them correctly and with care. Language development is a weakness when they first come into the nursery. The majority of children do not spend as much time as expected voluntarily browsing through books. They do not express themselves fluently in speaking. By the time they are in the reception class they have developed a sound range of early reading skills and are beginning to show interest in books. They have a developing vocabulary and are gaining fluency in expressing themselves. Most children recognise their own names and some write them correctly with capitals and lower case letters. Higher attainers write words and sentences in the course of the reception year. All children recognise correctly many letters of the alphabet and know the sounds they make. They are familiar with books and handle them with care. Nursery and reception class teaching is good. Activities are well planned to extend speaking, encourage interest in books and reading, and promote early writing. Teachers make good use of opportunities for spontaneous speaking, reading and writing. For example, in reception class, a wide range of tools and media as well as large scale writing surfaces were made available for children to practice writing letters of the alphabet and this had a positive impact on the progress which they made. On a very small number of occasions, they miss the chance to encourage less confident speakers to repeat new words and enlarge their vocabulary. They join in role play to extend imaginative ideas and language and create many opportunities to build confidence in reading. These include useful weekly sessions where parents and children choose books together for home reading. In the reception class teachers introduce aspects of the National Literacy Strategy appropriately as the year progresses.

Mathematics

81 Children enter school with well below average mathematical skills and make good progress. They are secure in their understanding of big and little. In the nursery class they match similar objects, such as pairs of socks. In reception class, they go on to compare unequal sets competently and recognise that one set is bigger. They count numbers confidently to twenty and are familiar with larger numbers in everyday life, like birthdays. They carry out simple addition and subtraction in practical situations and recognise patterns in numbers up to five. They know thoroughly by heart a wide range of counting games, songs and rhymes. Teaching is good in the nursery and reception classes. Classrooms provide an extensive range of imaginative activities where children consolidate their counting skills and their ideas of length, shape and order. Planned mathematical experiences cover all areas of mathematics based well on practical experiences. Staff make full use of opportunities to practise counting, sorting and matching and making patterns that arise in everyday activities.

Knowledge and understanding of the world

82 Children are on course to meet the national standards in this area of learning by the time they reach five. The majority of four year olds have a clear understanding of the importance to health of cleanliness and healthy food. They take an active part in cooking and understand that it alters the original ingredients. A good example of this was seen in the nursery class where children were making 'millennium cakes' for their parents and were clearly impressed by the way in which the addition of water and colouring transformed the flour into a brightly coloured, malleable dough. They also gain a good understanding of volume and capacity as they explore the properties of sand and water. They respond well to questions put by adults and talk about their own families and themselves. They have secure understanding of some differences between the past and present; for example, about when they were babies and toddlers. They explore texture through play with pliable material and by describing which substances are hard or soft in discussion with an adult. They use a variety of kits and joining techniques to create models of familiar objects. They are given regular opportunities to use the computer mouse and direction keys and to operate the tape recorder. In both reception classes and nursery, teaching is good. Staff ensure that provision covers all the aspects of this wide-ranging area of learning. They effectively encourage curiosity so that children ask questions and seek answers. They warmly encourage children to speak about their experiences or to record them in painting, drawing, or making models.

Physical development

83 A good range of free choice activities in the nursery gives children good practice in developing physical skills. The developing confidence, control and co-ordination are increased in the reception class. This ensures that most pupils are on course to meet national expectations by the time they are aged five. Children of four handle tools such as scissors, paint brushes and glue spreaders with appropriate confidence. Staff are careful to show children how to use equipment with accuracy and due regard for safety. They show a good awareness of space during physical education lessons in the hall. They climb, balance, run and skip with appropriate confidence and control. Teaching in this area is good and sometimes very good. Lessons in the hall are very well planned in line with the Durham

scheme of work. In the nursery class lessons, very good use of adult support is made to provide maximum opportunity for pupils to develop confidence under close supervision. In reception classes, the teacher's very secure subject knowledge and the lively pace of lessons ensure that children continue to work with increasing skill, control and confidence. The very good continuity of provision across the three classes ensures that all children make very good progress and the physical control displayed by many children is above the expectation for their age. Children in reception classes have very limited access to the large scale play equipment for children under five. This occurs because the reception classes are housed in the infant building and support staff are not available often enough to accompany groups of children across the yard to the nursery. However, the very good progress which children make in physical development on the apparatus in the infant hall compensates fully for this omission.

Creative development

- 84 Children are on course to meet the national expectations in this area and make very good progress. The provision for creative art activities is very good in both the nursery and reception. Children use a wide range of techniques in printing, painting and collage to create lively and vivid pictures. In the nursery class, for example, children used a mirror to help them to paint their own self-portrait and produced some striking results. Teachers used the activity well to link with the topic on 'ourselves' and took opportunities to encourage children to describe the features which made them special. They express their preference for toys by making a Christmas list which they produce on computer with adult help. They enjoy listening to music during free choice sessions. All children know a good range of songs and hymns which they sing with enthusiasm in class and in assemblies with other infants. They competently play rhythms on simple percussion instruments. They act out real and pretend situations in the role play area and they are regularly provided with new themes and ideas to explore. Provision is very good for creative development. A wide range of interesting materials and activities are available to promote learning. Teaching is good in both nursery and reception classes. Planned activities are imaginative and stimulating, so that pupils are encouraged to use their ideas to the full and to extend their range of experiences.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

- 85 By the age of seven and eleven, pupils' attainment in English is below the national average. However, since the previous inspection in 1996, when standards in English were below national expectations, the school has worked very hard and is improving standards by focusing on specific targets and has now successfully implemented the Literacy Hour. By maintaining this focus and increasing the monitoring of teaching by the English co-ordinator, standards are set to rise.
- 86 In the 1999 national reading tests for seven year olds, 60.8 per cent of pupils attained the expected Level 2 or above. Overall, although the school's reading results were 9.8 per cent higher than in 1998, the results were still very low in comparison with national averages.

Pupils performed much better in their writing tests and were slightly above the national average. Comparisons with the results of similar schools in the 1999 tests show that in reading, pupil's results are well below average, but are well above in writing. This reflects the 1998 test figures.

- 87 Between 1996 and 1999 the attainment of seven year olds in reading was very low in comparison with the national average. Attainment in writing was close to the national average over the four years. The difference in attainment in reading and writing between boys and girls at the age of seven was very slight, with girls achieving only marginally better than the boys. The school has made a very careful analysis of these results and appropriate action has been planned to address the weakness in reading, but this has not yet had time to bear results.
- 88 The attainment of seven-year-olds in speaking and listening is average for their age and this represents the good progress made from when they enter the Reception year. Pupils are developing their confidence and the necessary vocabulary skills to express their views and opinions in class. Pupils in Year 1 can answer questions in a clear speaking voice and can use correct sounds when reading the alphabet, whilst pupils in Year 2 can give oral instructions clearly for cleaning teeth. During the Literacy Hour, pupils listen carefully to their teachers and to the views of other pupils.

89

Inspection findings show that by the age of seven, standards in reading are well below average. Reading is well promoted within the school and the classrooms and shared areas contain a wide range of good quality books. Very good use is made of Shotton Library, with pupils in the Infant Department visiting the library every Friday morning on a three-week rota basis. Pupils are encouraged to look at books and bring books back to school; however, not all parents have signed the cards allowing their children to borrow a book. When reading independently, higher attaining pupils read accurately, fluently and with expression, reflecting a clear understanding of the story. Lower attaining pupils can, when faced with an unfamiliar word, use a range of strategies to decode the word and are generally successful. Pupils take books home on a regular basis, but do not all enjoy shared reading experiences with their parents. The school does encourage parental involvement in their child's reading by the use of a home-school reading diary; in to which parents are invited, and encouraged, to make comments.

- 90 Seven year olds attain standards in writing that are well above the national average for girls and above the national average for boys. Handwriting skills are good, with the general presentation of work being commendable. Higher attaining pupils know how to use a work-bank of common words to assist with their spelling and can write a short story showing a clear sequence of ideas. Lower attaining pupils, and those with special educational needs, are given support enabling them to write a list of instructions in correct order, for example to make a jam sandwich, or to make a cup of tea. Skills in punctuation are developed as pupils generally use capital letters and full stop correctly, and begin to understand the use of exclamation marks and apostrophes.
- 91 In the 1999 National Curriculum tests for eleven year olds, 50 per cent of pupils achieved the required Level 4, compared with the national average of 70 per cent. This indicates that pupils' attainment is well below national averages. In the 1999 reading tests, 53 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 compared with a national percentage of 81, and 33.3 per cent of pupils achieved Level 4 in writing, compared with a national percentage of 56. There is very little difference in the average attainment in English between boys and girls in Key Stage 2, but boys perform less well in their writing tests.
- 92 Between 1996 and 1999, pupils' attainment in the English tests was very low in comparison with the national average and shows a slight downward trend in attainment over time, against a national picture of rising standards. The overall picture since the school was inspected in 1996 does not show an improvement in attainment, but the school has put in place strategies to improve attainment which have not yet had time to make an impact. The Literacy Hour has been well implemented, and observation of pupils' work in classrooms during the week of inspection, shows an improving and positive picture.
- 93 By the end of Key Stage 2 when pupils reach eleven, attainment in speaking and listening is average. Oral work within the Literacy Hour is encouraging pupils to develop their skills in speaking and listening; for example, pupils in a Year 4 class listen carefully to a discussion about the main features of newspaper writing and can make interesting and relevant points. In a Year 6 higher attaining class, pupils' work with a partner to discuss the points for and against foxhunting and then relate the discussion to the whole class.
- 94 Eleven year olds attain standards in reading that are better than those in writing. All pupils are confident when using the library to develop research skills, and pupils of all ability levels have a very secure understanding of how the Dewey classification system works. Although standards in reading are below average, the school works hard to promote reading throughout

Key Stage 2, with a good range of quality books available. When reading independently, pupils in a Year 3 class are able to identify the contents and index pages in a book and know what a thesaurus is used for. Higher attaining pupils in Year 3 understand clearly the difference between fiction and non-fiction texts. In Year 5, higher attaining pupils are able to read accurately, with fluency and understanding. Lower attaining pupils lack confidence, often reading mechanically and without expression or understanding. This is reflected in Year 6, with higher attaining pupils being enthusiastic readers and showing a clear aptitude in using a number of phonic strategies when faced with an unfamiliar word. Lower attaining pupils read with hesitation, and in some cases, still use a finger to follow words when reading. Not all pupils take their reading books home on a regular basis, with some pupils only taking their reading books home on Friday for the weekend. Other pupils are encouraged to take books home daily. This variable practice reflects a weakness in the school policy for reading.

- 95 Pupils' attainment in writing at age eleven is well below average, although the majority of pupils are trying very hard to improve their skills. In a Year 4 class of higher attaining pupils, the majority could identify verbs in a newspaper text, but when questioned could not explain clearly what a verb is. In a lower attaining Year 6 class, pupils can use a writing frame to write about a poem and can then change the text from first person to third person. Higher attaining pupils in Year 6 can write an argument for and against foxhunting. The content of their writing is interesting, for example, "foxes might eat lambs and chickens, but then, so do we", but the writing often contains many spelling inaccuracies and skills in punctuation are variable. However, the standard of handwriting in re-drafted work throughout the school is well above national expectation and most pupils work hard at their skills of presentation.
- 96 Throughout the school, and particularly in Key Stage 2, the use of information technology to plan, draft, revise and edit their writing is developing well. Older pupils in particular enjoy using the palm-top computers in the classroom to plan and re-write their work.
- 97 The progress pupils make in Key Stage 1 is very good overall. They make good progress in speaking and listening and reading, with very good progress evident in writing skills. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress throughout both key stages. In Key Stage 2, pupils make good progress overall, but there is a marked dip in progress, particularly within reading and writing skills, in Year 4. One of the main factors making this impact on progress is teaching which lacks appropriate pace, with low expectations of pupils' abilities and a lack of challenging activities to extend and develop existing knowledge and understanding. Pupils again make good progress in upper Key Stage 2, but not enough to help them attain the higher standards. Progress in handwriting and presentational skills is very good throughout the school.
- 98 Progress in Literacy lessons is good overall, with clear evidence in classrooms of pupils extending their skills in reading, spelling and grammar. The Literacy Hour was only fully implemented at the beginning of the last year, but is already having a clear impact on the attainment and progress of all pupils in English. Lessons are well planned with learning targets made clear, and pupils respond well to this structure. Literacy is promoted across the curriculum, for example in Key Stage 1, pupils write prayers to God in religious education, in health education they write about exercises they enjoy doing, and the youngest pupils write their name and address on envelopes for work in geography. In the Junior Department, a "Good Work" display shows literacy skills used to record work in science, history and

geography.

- 99 Pupils respond well in the majority of lessons. Their attitudes to learning are good and behaviour in lessons is usually very good. They enjoy the Literacy Hour and work well with the interesting resources provided for them. Relationships within classes are very good, with a mutuality of respect between teachers and pupils evident. In the majority of classes, pupils respond well to the learning challenges made by teachers. Pupils work well in pairs and small groups, but can also work independently when required to do so. A pride in their work is evident, as the presentation of their work is usually of a high standard.
- 100 In over 66 per cent of lessons seen, the quality of teaching ranged from good to excellent, with the majority being very good. In just over 33 per cent of lessons, the quality of teaching was satisfactory. In very good and excellent lessons, teacher's subject knowledge is soundly based and opportunities are sought to extend, develop and challenge the pupils. Planning is very thorough, with evidence of on-going assessment. Assessment in English is thorough, on going and used to inform future planning. Very good, consistent behaviour strategies are used, with frequent praise given to reward positive attitudes to learning. The majority of pupils know their learning targets, and appreciate this very structured guidance. Learning support for the lower attainers, and pupils with special educational needs, is carefully provided by, in the main, classroom teachers, and makes a positive impact on the progress they make in English. In the most successful lessons, teachers have very high expectations of their pupils and they constantly seek to provide challenging activities. Resources are carefully chosen, particularly within reading activities, and classrooms are well organised, bright and stimulating, thereby ensuring a positive learning environment. In less successful lessons, lessons lack pace and interest, and although activities are still carefully planned, opportunities are missed to really challenge and extend pupil's knowledge. Low expectations of what pupils can do has a direct impact on the level and speed of progress made. All teachers provide homework activities clearly relating to on-going classroom lessons, and both pupils and parents appreciate this extension of schoolwork.

101

There is a positive ethos for the subject within school, and teachers have implemented the Literacy Hour effectively. The English co-ordinator analyses data from national and school-based tests, and as a result of this analysis, the school has already planned strategies to improve the standards of reading throughout the school, and within writing activities at Key Stage 2. The library is well used to develop research skills both from books and CD-ROMs. Teacher's planning is monitored and evaluated, and guidance given as needed. However, structured opportunities for the co-ordinator to observe classroom teaching although planned, have not yet been fully implemented, so she does not have a clear picture of the quality of teaching throughout the school.

102 Resources for the teaching of English are good, particularly in the provision of good quality reading books. Displays throughout the school reflect the positive attitude that teachers have to pupils' work and reflect the work done in English in all areas of the curriculum. Resources are used well by the pupils who use books carefully. Library monitors ensure that the library in particular is kept well organised and tidy.

Mathematics

103 In the most recent national tests for 1999, at the end of Key Stage 1, just over 78 per cent of pupils gained the expected Level 2. This is slightly lower than the previous year, whereas the national average has risen to 87%. At the end of Key Stage 2 the school had made a slight improvement on the previous year to almost 52% but this is well below the national figure which has risen to 69 per cent. No detailed comparisons are available at the time of compiling this report.

104 In the 1998 end of key stage tests for pupils at the age of seven, the school's results were close to the national average of pupils attaining the expected Level 2. However, the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 3 was below the national average. In comparison with similar schools the results at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average for the percentage of pupils attaining Level 2 and broadly in line with other schools in their attainment of Level 3. At the end of Key Stage 2, when pupils were aged 11, the percentage attaining the expected Level 4 was well below the average of all schools although the percentage of pupils attaining the higher Level 5 was close to the national figure. In comparison with pupils in similar schools, the percentage attaining the expected Level 4 was close to the average and this school had above average results for pupils attaining Level 5. Taking the three years from 1996, pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 have remained above the national figures, but the performance has been declining. At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils at the age of 11 have been close to the national average, below in 1996 and improving. There has been no significant difference between the performance of boys and girls.

105 During the inspection, evidence of pupils' work and the observations of lessons indicates that the majority of pupils who are coming to the end of Key Stage 1 are on target to meet the nationally expected levels at both Level 2 and Level 3. This is a considerable improvement upon last year. This of attainment is across all of the attainment targets outlined in the National Curriculum. At the time of the inspection, only around half of the pupils who are in their final year at the school and are coming towards the end of Key Stage 2, are performing at an appropriate level. However, these pupils are making very good progress due to high quality teaching and the structure of the Numeracy Strategy. If this progress continues at the present rate, the percentage of pupils attaining the expected levels will be around the national

average.

- 106 Pupils at the end of Key Stage 1 know the mathematical vocabulary associated with addition. They are confident in using plus, sum, more than and total. They know about columns and rows on a number grid and most pupils have a secure understanding of place value of tens and units. Using a hundred square they can accurately add on in tens and higher attaining pupils can use same processes to add on in nines or elevens. They can count forwards and backwards in twos to and from 30. A majority can use appropriate range of vocabulary to describe subtraction and the higher attaining pupils can recall number facts in addition and subtraction to 20. They have an appropriate understanding of a range of two-dimensional shapes including square, triangle, circle, pentagon and hexagon and are using standard units to measure length. They use their skills and understanding confidently to answer mental problems quickly and accurately.
- 107 A significant number of pupils in Year 6 have developed satisfactory investigational skills and use them to solve mathematical problems. They are using this knowledge to solve real life problems such as measuring flooring for a kitchen. They are secure enough in this process to find their own ways of finding a solution. The more able pupils can use the grid method of multiplication and can adapt it accurately to find the product of two numbers to two places of decimals. They can explain accurately how to use the method of calculating and can estimate the probable answer beforehand as a rough check. Lower ability pupils are secure in their understanding of co-ordinates and can plot graphs and positions using both positive and negative quadrants. All pupils are developing appropriate knowledge of number facts and multiplication tables.
- 108 Pupils in Key Stage 1 make good progress enhancing their number skills and their thinking skills and finding strategies for solving mathematical puzzles and problems. They make good progress in developing their ability to estimate answers and they become more secure in their knowledge and how to use it. They are steadily increasing their skills in other aspects and developing their knowledge of shapes and measurements and in ways of handling data. The progress of pupils in Key Stage 2 over the last year is directly linked to the quality of teaching. The attainment of the various cohorts of pupils varies from year to year. Currently pupils are making good progress in most classes. The progress of pupils in years 5 and 6 is particularly rapid. They have already made significant gains in their investigative skills, in mental recall and in the manipulation of number to manage computation. Now appropriate emphasis is being laid on the other attainment targets and programmes of study from the National Curriculum to raise attainment and to reach national expectations.
- 109 Pupils with identified special educational need have full access to the Numeracy Strategy and are well supported on the same topics as the rest of the pupils in their class. They make good progress.
- 110 Pupils have good attitudes to their work. They are well motivated and very well behaved. They work well together in pairs and small groups. They put forward their ideas sensibly and listen well to the ideas and responses of others, They are enthusiastic during mental arithmetic sessions particularly when the pace of the lesson is brisk and the interest of the pupils is aroused. Younger pupils enjoy the games which teachers provide to develop their mathematical skills. They know the classroom routines and quickly settle to work. Older pupils are stimulated by the challenges which seize their interest in the best lessons and keep them on task. Older pupils are particularly keen to respond to these challenges and in oral

lessons, explain their answers confidently and clearly. The only time when pupils lack interest is when the teaching lacks urgency and sets low expectations.

- 111 Overall, the quality of teaching is good with very good teaching in almost half of the lessons and one lesson was observed where the quality of teaching was outstanding. No unsatisfactory teaching was observed during the inspection. In the best lessons, teachers are very secure in the own subject knowledge and understanding, they have clear aims and the lessons are carefully managed so that those aims are met and the pupils make significant gains in their learning. In these lessons teachers are enthusiastic and the productive working atmosphere is punctuated with fun and enjoyment. Teachers know the pupils well and have high expectations of their work closely matched to their needs. The lessons move at a brisk pace. Pupils are given clear instructions, they know what is expected of them and they keep on task. Skilful questioning challenges pupils to higher attainment and they make good progress. There are good relationships and teachers display a sensitive approach to pupils who need support. Where lessons are less successful, but still satisfactory, they lack dynamism, interest and pace and as a result, pupils make slower progress.

112

Teachers plan according to the National Numeracy Strategy. Its successful implementation is already improving the progress of mathematics, particularly with regard to mental mathematics and pupils' investigative skills. In many classes, these are still very teacher directed but pupils' ability to manipulate number and to identify patterns and strategies is improving rapidly. The school has made appropriate moves towards identifying areas weakness in pupils' attainment using an analysis of test results. They have already applied this information to the raising of standards particularly in mental mathematics and the improvement of number work. The well informed and enthusiastic co-ordinator is aware of the need to continue these strategies across the whole range of mathematical programmes of study but needs to be given the opportunity to secure a more detailed picture of curriculum delivery. The school has comprehensive systems for the formal assessment of pupils' attainment. The information gathered should now enable more effective curriculum development and continue to raise standards. This development should include specific planning to meet the needs of each cohort of pupils and the individuals within each group. The school is well resourced for mathematics and the resources are used well to support pupils in their work.

Science

- 113 In the 1999 teacher assessments at the end of Key Stage 1, pupils' attainment was assessed at being well above the national average but no pupils were attaining higher levels for their age. Current work in Key Stage 1 indicates that pupils are now attaining above the national average and are likely to attain higher levels by the end of the key stage. In Year 1 pupils know the stages in the life cycle of a butterfly and have explored the properties of magnetic and non-magnetic objects. Older pupils have looked at how materials can be changed by bending, twisting and squashing. Scrutiny of previous work shows that the more able can understand the conditions necessary for plant growth and most pupils know how to sort living things into various groups.
- 114 The National Curriculum tests at the end of Key Stage 2 in 1999, showed that pupils' attainment was still well below that of pupils of a similar age both nationally and when compared with similar schools. Additionally these results showed a further decline from the previous year, particularly in the number of pupils attaining the higher levels. This was confirmed by scrutiny of previous work of all Key Stage 2 classes, where attainment was shown to be well below the national average for all aspects of science. Further analysis showed that the performance of boys fell well below that of girls. However, current attainment observed during the period of the inspection shows that this trend has been reversed. Pupils in Year 3 were observed studying the waterproof qualities of different materials and the majority show good understanding of what makes a fair test. Year 4 pupils know how to test different circuits to see if they will light a bulb. Older pupils know that light travels in straight lines and how this affects the formation of shadows. Scrutiny of current work in Year 6 shows that most pupils are already working at the appropriate level and above in their work on balanced forces. Higher attaining pupils are already showing they are able to draw conclusions from their experiments based on scientific understanding, whilst the majority of pupils show clear knowledge of how forces work.
- 115 Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are above the national average. By the end of Key Stage 2 they are in line with the national average. This is a reflection of the last inspection, but is an improvement on recent results in the end of year tests. In 1998, for example, test results were well below when compared with both the national average and similar schools. This trend has been continued in 1999. Current attainment at the end of

Key Stage 2 observed during the inspection shows a marked improvement on the previous three years when attainment had remained well below the national average and is now in line with national expectations.

- 116 The progress of pupils with special educational needs is good, reflecting the support they get in class. This was observed in Year 3 where a group of pupils were well supported in their work on testing circuits, and in a Year 6 class studying shadows. The overall progress of pupils in Key Stage 1 is good reflecting the lower base from which they start. In Key Stage 2 progress is less consistent with some unsatisfactory progress in a Year 4 class, but improves by the end of the key stage to be satisfactory overall. However, whilst teachers now plan appropriately for the progressive development of investigational skills, the actual lessons do not always provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to work independently and extend their learning by trying to solve problems for themselves. This particularly affects the progress of higher attaining pupils at both key stages when there is a lack of challenge in some of the tasks set for them and they do not always make the best progress.

117

The response of pupils in Key Stage 1 is good. They are well behaved in class and listen attentively to their teachers. When required to work with others they do so willingly and help and support each other. They are enthusiastic about practical activities and share resources fairly. In Key Stage 2 the response of pupils is more varied but satisfactory overall. It is better in the later stages of the key stage where lessons are presented in a more lively and challenging way. Older pupils work collaboratively in pairs or small groups and respect each others contributions. They normally concentrate well and persevere to complete their work. All classes show very good relationships between pupils and teachers. The good attitudes and very good relationships have a positive impact on learning and the progress pupils make.

118 The quality of teaching is good in Key Stage 1 and satisfactory overall with the teaching of science satisfactory or better in over 87% of lessons seen. Teachers show a sound knowledge and understanding of the subject which is used particularly well in the questioning of pupils. They have high expectations of pupils both in terms of behaviour and work. The majority of lessons are well planned with clear learning objectives and planned activities are generally well organised. However, there are a few instances of all pupils being set the same work were seen and some experimental work still remains teacher-directed, with pupils observing rather than being directly involved. When teaching is good lessons are presented in a lively and interesting manner, resources are used well to motivate and interest pupils, clear learning objectives are well conveyed to pupils so they know what is expected of them, and there is a good pace to the lesson. Less effective teaching is the result of too much emphasis on teacher demonstration, a slow pace to learning and tasks are sometimes set which do not challenge the full range of ability in the class.

119 The subject makes a sound contribution to literacy and numeracy. Pupils listen carefully to instructions and read and write purposefully to record their observations. A range of presentation methods include tables and graphs are used and most pupils measure accurately. Good use is made of information technology skills. An example of this was seen in a Year 6 class where pupils had used a CD-ROM for research in their study of the Earth and beyond.

120 The newly adopted scheme of work will help to address the problems of continuity and progress of the recent past, but it needs to be used more consistently across the whole school. There is still some use of other materials which are used at the expense of the whole-school scheme rather than to support it. Evaluation of lessons is done by some teachers but not by all. Similarly, differentiation of work is not consistent in all classes and too many pupils of differing abilities are attempting the same work. A portfolio of pupils' work has been started and when complete will offer support to the accurate assessment of pupils' attainment and progress. The day-to-day assessment by teachers and its use to develop future planning is satisfactory overall. Opportunities to assess what pupils know, understand and can do are planned for but not in any systematic way across the whole school. The lack of understanding of scientific vocabulary has been identified as a contributory factor to the decline in standards and now all science teaching makes appropriate emphasis on this aspect of pupils' learning.

121 The subject is well led and managed by the recently appointed co-ordinator. She is enthusiastic and has a clear view of the future development of the subject. Time has been planned for her to be released to support other colleagues in the near future. The school has very good resources which have been well organised to support the teaching and learning of science across the school

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

· Information technology

122 Standards of attainment at the end of both key stages are broadly in line with national averages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in their development of skills, knowledge and understanding in the main strands of the subject programs of study. This reflects the position at the time of the last inspection.

123

At the end of Key Stage 1 pupils' can enter text into the computer using a word processor package. They know the main function keys on the keyboard and use the keyboard and the mouse to control a program, to type in text and to open programs that they want they want to use. Lower attaining pupils need help with elements of these skills. Pupils use information technology to enhance and practise their work. They can use a simple 'paint' program to create a picture. Higher attaining pupils can print out their work and save on to the computer hard disk with some support. The pupils can program the Roamer turtle to perform a simple sequence of movements and create simple graphs after entering information such as a class survey of eye colour or hair colour into a database. By the end of the key stage pupils are attaining in line with the national expectation.

124 At the end of Key Stage 2 pupils can word process documents and amend and correct text for basic grammatical and spelling errors. They can use 'paint' software to create simple pictures, save and retrieve files from the hard disk or floppy disk. The pupils can combine text and pictures within a single word-processed document. Using data linked to a science topic on the Solar System they can create a spreadsheet and present the information in an appropriate format selecting either a line or bar graph. They know how to find and print out information from encyclopaedic software on specific topics. The pupils can enter a series of commands in to control the movement and direction of an on-screen turtle. They understand the use of information and communication technology in the wider world and how e-mail and the Internet can be used to inform their work and to speed up communications.

125 Pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress in both key stages. In Year 1, pupils develop their control of the mouse to that they can use simple mathematical and language modelling programs. They begin to use appropriate technical vocabulary, such as 'mouse' and 'keyboard'. In Year 2 pupils continue to make satisfactory progress. They develop an increasing accuracy in their word processing skills and are able to change the shape and size of the text font. Through Key Stage 2 the pupils continue to make satisfactory progress in their word processing skills so that they become able to use these skills in different program packages and for different purposes. For example, they can extract pictures from clipart packages and combine these with their own writing within a word processing package to produce well-presented newsletters. They can change the colour and shape of text in addition to changing the size and style of the text to write letter or to reproduce their extended writing from English lessons. They acquire the skills of computer drawing to create geometric shapes and to use the colour options. They learn to save their work in an appropriate format and to print it out. By using CD-ROM and the Internet they develop their research skills in several subjects and begin to appreciate the value and contribution information and communication technology has in the world around them.

126 Pupils' response to information technology is positive. They have a good attitude to work, respond well to challenges and persevere. The relationships with class teachers and support assistants are good. They work responsibly in pairs, discussing the possibilities and sharing their ideas together. They willingly explain what it is they are doing and enjoy demonstrating their skills. Younger pupils work well with parent helpers in the library and benefit from a supportive relationship with these adults.

127 No teaching was observed in Key Stage 1 during the inspection; however two sessions of instruction given by two parent helpers with small groups of pupils were seen. In these sessions the pupils benefit from good subject knowledge so they are given clear instructions

that encourages them to work for themselves rather than rely on help. The class teacher's planning identifies clear objectives that are effectively linked to the activities. During and after the session notes are made regarding the pupil's work. These provide good guidance to the class teacher as to the pupil's attitude to the session, but less detail about the progress they make in gaining skills and understanding. The quality of teaching in Key Stage 2 is good overall. No unsatisfactory lessons were seen with 4 out of six lessons being of a good standard and the remaining 2 lessons satisfactory. Teachers have good subject knowledge and they use this to plan activities that are well matched to the lesson objectives and the abilities of the pupils. Teachers' planning is satisfactory and draws well upon other subject areas to provide the focus for the development of information technology skills. For example, in year 5 the teacher used Matisse' "The Snail" to teach the pupils how to create and fill with colour geometric shapes. Year group teachers plan together, but the detail of the teaching of these plans varies. For example, in one class the pupils saved their work to a floppy disk whereas in the parallel class this was not the case. This has an impact upon the effectiveness of the reinforcement of basic skills in this class and the record of the pupils' work for assessment purposes. The management of the learning environment and the pupils is good. Due to the number of computers, classes are split into two groups with one group working on the computers and the other group completing a related written task. Good use is made of classroom support staff to work with pupils who are involved in alternative activities. These activities are effectively linked to the practical part of the lesson. The use of assessment is satisfactory. In each classroom the teacher maintains a record of the access each pupils has had to different strands of the scheme of work and the programs they have used.

- 128 Due to good leadership from the co-ordinator the subject has developed well since the last inspection. The school has recently adopted a nationally recognised scheme of work and by using any available source such as the national initiatives and commercial promotions the range of hardware and software has been developed well. Each class has a timetabled session in the IT suite on a weekly basis, but currently classes in Key Stage 1 use these sessions to send groups of pupils rather than take the whole class. This limits the access the pupils have to the computers over the year. Currently, the co-ordinator monitors the subject through checking planning and the portfolios of pupils' work, but opportunities to work with teachers and to observe lessons are limited. This limits the co-ordinator's capacity to thoroughly check the implementation of the scheme of work and the quality of work in the classrooms. A portfolio of work from each year group has been collated. The accommodation for teaching the subject is good. Since the last inspection an IT suite has been created in the library that is used for teaching the pupils, an after-school Computer Club run by the co-ordinator and additional community projects. The range of resources is good and the school is continually adding to these resources.

Religious education

- 129 Pupils' attainment at the end of both key stages is in line with the expectations of the Locally Agreed Syllabus. This represents an improvement since the last inspection, where the attainment of some pupils was judged to be unsatisfactory. At Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of Christianity which they gain in lessons, assemblies and visits to places of worship. They have a satisfactory knowledge of the Bible. They know that it is divided into the Old and New Testaments and that each consists of a collection of books and stories.

They know the names of special people in both the Christian and Hindu religions and are aware of the similarities and differences between the two faiths. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils continue to have a good understanding of Christianity. They have a sound knowledge of the life and ministry of Jesus. They study His parables and healing miracles as well as details of His birth, death and resurrection. Pupils are also beginning to discuss in some depth why Christians believe in God and the effects of faith on people's lives. They know the names of key festivals and important people in the Hindu, Buddhist and Sikh religions and understand common factors across the different faiths. For example, they know that people of several faiths believe in one God.

- 130 Pupils in both key stages, including those with special educational needs, make sound progress. In Key Stage 1, pupils make steady progress in understanding the meaning of religious rituals in different faiths. For example, they develop an understanding of the different ways of celebrating Diwali. They study the artefacts used in everyday worship and make their own puppets to tell the story of Rama and Sita. They visit places such as Durham Cathedral, learn the names of symbolic furniture and appreciate the significance of the special places inside a place of worship. This knowledge and understanding is further developed in Key Stage 2. Pupils in Year 3, for example, gain a good understanding of the very different symbols and traditions found in two separate organisations within the same faith. They visit both the local church and the Salvation Army hall and draw clear comparisons between them such as the symbolism of the cross in church and the crest in the Salvation Army. In some lessons they make good or very good progress. For example, in a 'circle time' lesson, very clear progress was seen in pupils' capacity for self-examination and their willingness to consider the concept of God and heaven. Across the key stage, teachers plan numerous opportunities for pupils to debate and consider the similarities and differences between major religions and to develop tolerance for the values and beliefs of others.

131

The response of pupils to religious education lessons is consistently good and on many occasions, particularly when teaching takes place during assemblies, it is very good. Pupils are genuinely interested in learning about all religions and enjoy looking at the various artefacts which teachers show them. Pupils in Key Stage 1, for example, were visibly impressed and gasped their appreciation when the Headteacher showed them the colourful pages of an old, embossed copy of the Bible. They are quick to recognise that teachings from all religions which they study have a great deal in common. Through 'circle time' they appreciate that forgiveness, friendship and caring for others are the principles on which their own school community is based. Their attitudes in lessons are very positive. They listen well to the teacher and to each other, valuing personal expressions of belief, which are generally well expressed. Relationships amongst the pupils, and between pupils and teachers, are very good and allow pupils the confidence to respond to personal issues.

- 132 Teaching is good overall with some excellent features and there is no unsatisfactory teaching. Teachers plan their work effectively, using the Locally Agreed Syllabus and subject knowledge is generally secure. Lessons are sensitively led, maintain their momentum and have a positive effect on pupils' learning and response. Teachers encourage pupils to express personal opinions and to react to religious ideas. In the lesson seen which contained some excellent teaching, the teacher was very skilful and sensitive in guiding pupils to express their views about the nature of God and heaven. Her careful probing prompted the candid response, "Heaven is underground because that is where people go when they die." Teachers place appropriate emphasis throughout the school on whole class discussion and this makes a positive contribution to their knowledge and understanding of comparative religions and issues. Teaching is less effective when expectations of pupils' written work are too low. There is too much reliance on work sheets which do not fully promote thinking and learning. Subsequently, there are few opportunities for pupils to produce original work or expand on their ideas through extended writing.
- 133 The co-ordinator has worked successfully to meet the increased demands of teaching religious education as a core subject. She is fully in touch with developments through the local network of co-ordinators and provides good leadership. She has ensured that provision for the subject is strengthened by the purchase of very good artefacts and the arrangement of regular visits to places of interest. These resources are used effectively by teachers to produce interesting lessons and displays.

Art

- 134 Most pupils reach standards in art which are above expectations for their age. They make very good progress throughout the school, due to good teaching, the sound subject knowledge of teachers and the well planned scheme of work which promotes the systematic development of knowledge, skills and techniques.
- 135 At Key Stage 1, pupils develop observational skills from an early age when they are guided through self-portraits through discussion about facial features. The many opportunities pupils are given for painting, develop their sense and use of colour. In Year 2, pupils extend their skills to three-dimensional work when they create Divali pots as part of their understanding of Hindu culture or design and make stick puppets with a sad and a happy face. By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are confident in their selection and use of materials. They have learnt a range of techniques which support their visual communication. They show good control of brushes and pencils and copy shapes accurately.

136 In Key Stage 2, pupils combine skills and techniques well. They use their knowledge of European artists to learn and practice new techniques. In an impressive display of Key Stage 2 work in the school hall, there is a wide range of styles and subject represented. From the work of El Greco pupils have learned the importance of mood and form and build on his ideas to create their own interpretations of the local environment using charcoal and chalk. In Year 3, pupil's observational work on citrus fruits shows a good use of a variety of media, such as straws, paste and sand, to create texture in their work. Year 5 show high level skills in line work. They work in crayon and chalk to produce drawings on the theme of Earth to Air – making a link with the airfield in the village. They use line effectively to create weight and shape and have a good understanding of hatching and shading. By the end of the key stage pupils in Year 6 work on pottery and sculpture, showing confidence in adopting the styles of sculptors such as Elizabeth Frink and Barry Flanagan.

137

Pupils have very good attitudes to art. They are enthusiastic and ask questions about technique to clarify their ideas and improve their results. They are confident about what they know in art and engage in discussion about the quality of their own and others' work and state their preferences. In lessons they organised themselves quietly and efficiently at both key stages and then proceed to work independently. Behaviour is very good in lessons because pupils are interested and know how to work.

138 The quality of teaching is very good in all lessons seen and judged from the quality of pupils' work which is very well displayed in classrooms, corridors and the school halls. Teachers have sound subject knowledge and high levels of enthusiasm for the subject. They plan their lessons well, ensuring that the focus is on skills teaching, so that pupils have the ability to rise to the challenges teachers set. They organise materials very well and the management of pupils is always calm and unobtrusive, so that the flow of learning is not interrupted. Relationships are excellent and promote a positive and supportive atmosphere in which creativity can flourish.

139 The subject is very well led. The co-ordinator has developed the scheme of work with great care to ensure that there is a progression in skills and knowledge in the subject from Year 1 to Year 6. The very good scheme of work has succeeded in giving confidence to all teachers in their planning for the subject and good quality in-service training has provided them with the skills needed to teach the subject.

Design and technology

140 Progress in design and technology is satisfactory across both key stages. Pupils design and make a range of models to a standard which is appropriate for their age. Evidence for the judgement is made from work in progress in lessons, teachers' plans, displays of pupils' work and talking to teachers and pupils.

141 Pupils of all abilities make sound progress in Key Stage 1. In Year 1 they design and make a model playground for use by very young children. They gain a firm understanding that numerous examples of a product should be carefully considered before they attempt to make their own. Pupils in Year 2 have a firm understanding of the importance of design. They are well accustomed to selecting confidently and independently from a wide range of materials, for example, when making 'two-faced' stick puppets. They create imaginative designs and are competent in the use of scissors, glue and paper curling techniques to complete their work. They discuss the quality of their models with adults and each other and consider ways of improving what they have made.

142 In Key Stage 2, pupils in Year 3 are engaged in focused activities such as making stable structures. In one Year 3 lesson seen, for example, the majority of pupils produced a stable piece of furniture from a variety of selected materials ranging from construction kits to pipe cleaners. They then discussed the strengths and weaknesses of their product in front of the whole class. Pupils in Year 4 calculate what materials they will need to design and make an illuminated panel which can be switched on and off. They measure accurately and their work shows care in the use of tools for the construction process. This reflects improvement since the last inspection, although some pupils throughout the school still do not take sufficient care in the quality of the finished product. Pupils in Year 5 make use of computer software to carry out research into musical instruments before designing and making their own. Their

finished work shows imaginative use of pasted paper, paint and varnish as well as found materials. Pupils in Year 6 are given opportunities to make a variety of models including controllable fairground vehicles, giving clear reasons for their choice of materials.

- 143 Pupils across the school have good attitudes to design technology. They behave well and show good regard for safe working in lessons. They responded well to a recent challenge when they were asked to make various kinds of puppets at home in collaboration with their parents and the experience was enjoyed by parents and pupils alike.

144

Only a small amount of direct teaching could be observed during the inspection because of timetable arrangements. The lessons seen, along with scrutiny of finished work and teachers' planning, indicate that teachers in both key stages have a firm grasp of what is required to teach design and technology effectively. In the lessons seen, teaching was either satisfactory or good. The objectives of the lesson were made clear, the management of pupils was very good and the necessary materials were made easily accessible. It was occasionally less effective where insufficient thought was given to the suitability of materials provided for the lesson and the task was not completed successfully by all pupils. Teachers plan a good range of imaginative and interesting projects for their classes. These include the use of hydraulics, electricity and wind power, although there is no provision for the use of motors to propel models. Teachers' medium-term planning shows a good understanding of the need to ensure that due emphasis is placed the design stage of the process before pupils are allowed to begin making products. Proper consideration is also given to the evaluation and improvement of models at appropriate stages. The quality of planning reflects good improvement since the last inspection.

Geography

- 145 Due to the way the subject is timetabled, during the inspection only two lessons were observed at Key Stage 2. No lessons were seen at Key Stage 1. However, from these observations, talking to the subject co-ordinator and other staff and pupils, from the scrutiny of previous work and the display of current work, it is possible to make the following judgements.
- 146 Pupils including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress through both key stages. This progression is an improvement on the previous report now that a nationally approved scheme of work has been adopted by the school.
- 147 By the end of Key Stage 1 pupils have explored their immediate environment and mapped their journey to school. Year 1 pupils have studied a large-scale map of the village and this has been compared by Year 2 pupils with the Isle of Struoy. Older pupils have visited Shotton library, which they have shown on a large pictorial map of the area.
- 148 These map-building skills are further enhanced in Key Stage 2, where Year 3 pupils have built up a large display of 'Shotton Estate Agents' detailing the various types of houses in the village and how they would advertise them for sale. Year 5 pupils have completed a field visit to plot the services and were observed colour coding their findings on a large-scale map of the village. It is planned to further develop this theme in Year 6 when pupils will be considering the question of whether to close the High Street in the village to traffic. There is good progress in map-making skills throughout the school. In the lesson observed in Year 4 pupils were considering the contrasting locality of a village in India by looking at the good and bad aspects of the environment prior to linking that with their own. This, and other planned studies of contrasting localities, makes a positive impact on pupils' social and cultural learning.
- 149 In the lessons observed teaching is satisfactory and pupils' response is good. They are well behaved in class and listen to their teachers. All pupils are eager to be part of the discussions and respond well to teachers' questioning.
- 150 Teachers have strong subject knowledge and use this to plan interesting and purposeful

activities to develop pupils' skills and understanding. They make good use of resources, including the local environment. Their management of pupils is very good. The very good relationships between pupils and teachers is a strong feature of these sessions.

- 151 The new co-ordinator has already produced a policy for the subject and its guidelines will give good future support to other staff. She has completed an audit of the subject and its provision. The recent adoption of a nationally approved scheme of work will enable the school to plan more carefully in the future the continuity and progression between year groups and key stages. Current resources are good and give sound support to the teaching and learning of the subject. Particularly good use is made of the local area for the progressive development of map-making skills.

History

- 152 All pupils at both key stages make good progress in history. Pupils with special educational needs, including pupils from the resource base, make similar progress to others in the class because of the additional support they are given or because of the way they are integrated into activities by the class teacher. It was not possible to see all classes being taught during the inspection but a representative sample from both key stages, scrutiny of pupils' work and classroom displays provided an adequate evidence base. Pupils at the end of both key stages reach standards similar to those of pupils nationally.
- 153 At Key Stage 1, pupils develop an awareness of the past by investigating changes in themselves overtime. They build a vocabulary of words such as 'now' and 'then', 'in the past', and 'in the olden days'. They consider how toys have changed – both in the materials used and in the kind of power that operates some toys. By the end of the key stage, Year 2 pupils develop their inquiry skills and know about key events from the past such as the Great Fire of London. They learn about first hand evidence such as diaries and discover what can be learned from pictures and artefacts. Pupils record their work in a variety of ways such as recounts, diaries, diagrams and pictures. They spend a good proportion of time talking about artefacts and events in the past and this has a positive impact on their speaking and listening skills.
- 154 At Key Stage 2, history has a place in the curriculum in its own right. Pupils learn about famous people and key events in history. They develop a sound knowledge of invaders, the Tudor era, the Victorians and life in Britain since 1930. In Year 3, pupils gain a fuller understanding of how archaeologists build a picture of life in the past from evidence gathered from the wreck of the Mary Rose. All pupils select and record information appropriately; higher attainers interpret information and make deductions about the past. By the end of the key stage pupils in Year 6 engage in independent research into events and famous people in post-war Britain. They use their findings to make presentations to the class, explaining the sources they use to gather information. In a study of schools in the past, Year 6 pupils interview their families and people in the village to give them live insight to the past. Pupils are given opportunities in their history topics to develop the skills of investigation by using photographs, diaries, artefacts and in some cases dressing in the costumes of people from the past. The study of history makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development.
- 155 Pupils' attitudes to history are very good. These attitudes are nurtured by the exciting displays of artefacts, pictures, diaries, photographs and costumes which capture pupils'

attention and fire their imagination. All pupils are enthusiastic about the topics they study and enjoy learning from artefacts and pictures. They are eager to offer suggestions and explanations for why things were as they were and contribute fully to class discussions. By the end of Key Stage 2 pupils work very well in groups to do research and accept their role in presentations with a pleasing maturity and team spirit.

- 156 The quality of teaching in history is good throughout the school with some examples of very good teaching. Teachers have secure subject knowledge and communicate enthusiasm for the subject. At Key Stage 1 teachers make very good use of team teaching to generate and develop discussion about toys from the past. The pace of such lessons is good and helps pupils to sustain concentration and follow the contributions of their classmates. Teachers at both key stages make good use of resources both as evidence about the past for investigation and to illustrate for pupils how they might present their ideas. In a very good Year 3 lesson about the Mary Rose a CD-ROM on Tudor life was well used by a group of pupils to expand their knowledge of the era. All teachers make very good use of talk to stimulate and develop ideas about the past and to give pupils opportunities to reflect and ask questions about what they see. Teachers are adept at grading and directing their questions so that pupils are always able to succeed in responding with an appropriate answer. Relationships are excellent and teachers manage pupils very well through well focussed teaching and good humoured prompting.

157

The co-ordinator manages the subject well and is successfully introducing a new scheme of work which focuses on investigation and interpretation of the past. Assessment procedures are satisfactory, with teachers keeping an evaluation of work done and end of year assessments in the subject. Resources for the subject are of very good quality and plentiful. The school makes very good use of the local authority's loan service for pictures and artefacts and promotes living history through visits to local museums and places of historic interest and by performances such as, Visiting Vikings and Evacuees.

Music

158 Pupils make good progress throughout the school. The younger pupils are beginning to gain a good understanding of rhythm and beat. They can echo accurately the rhythms demonstrated by the teacher and can identify loud and soft, high and low sounds. They know the names of instruments such as tambour and tambourine, maracas and coconut shells and can identify them by the sounds which they make when they are played. These young pupils learn new songs quickly and sing along with each other putting in the actions. In the early years of Key Stage 2 the pupils are copying more complex rhythms and are becoming more sensitive to the dynamics of music. They understand how music can be used to represent and describe moods such as the sinking of the Mary Rose. These pupils know that music has different purposes and that a sea shanty was used to help sailors work together when hauling ropes. They use their own skills to find ways of representing the movement during the flight of a kite. The older pupils in this key stage can maintain an accurate and sustained beat against a changing rhythm. They know that small chime bars make the higher pitched notes. This understanding is closely linked with their work in science. These pupils can make a good attempt at finding the notes on a glockenspiel to copy the first phrases of the signature tune to East Enders. By the end of the key stage pupils know about pitch and how instruments are used together to create texture in the music they hear. These pupils have a significant understanding of modern music from the 50's and 60's and have compared the textures of Yellow Submarine (Beatles) and Bohemian Rhapsody (Queen). They are currently listening to extracts from Peter and the Wolf and considering how Prokofiev used different tunes and instruments to represent the characters in the story. These pupils can make their own compositions using tuned and untuned percussion with some stringed instruments and recorders representing the building up of a storm at sea and then returning to calm. They are able to record their compositions graphically. These pupils are able to evaluate their work and refine it as a result of their discussions.

159 The school provides well for additional music. Apart from regular and positive approaches to hymn practice, during the lunchtime break there are recorder groups which meet. They are very well supported. Pupils who attend are making good progress in learning to play music which is used during other school activities and performances. The more advanced group includes both decant and tenor instruments. The school has a very fine choir. More than forty pupils attended the lunchtime meeting of the choir during the inspection and were observed singing a range of songs from Christmas Jazz and a version of All Things Bright and Beautiful with music by John Rutter. This is a challenging piece and was sung with a magical quality with pupils fully aware of the dynamics and maintaining a very high standard of tonal quality. The school produces regular performances and the evidence from video indicates that these too are of high quality. There is also provision for instrumental tuition on violins and cellos. Parents make a contribution towards this provision.

160 Pupils' attitudes to music are good. All pupils enjoy their music lessons. They join in the fun

of singing and performing and they listen well to the music they hear, particularly the works performed by groups of other pupils in their class. They respond well to challenges set for them, they answer questions thoughtfully and sensibly. They express their feelings sincerely. Pupils work well together in small groups making their compositions. They are able to criticise and make constructive suggestions towards improving the work. They listen well and celebrate each other's success. Their behaviour is very good. Even the youngest pupils know the rules of performing and do not play the instruments when it is not their turn.

161

The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, often good and in half of the observed lessons very good teaching was observed. The school uses an appropriate commercial scheme to support all teachers but the quality of teaching is sometimes influenced by their confidence in using the scheme and in what they add to lessons to stimulate the pupils through interest and excitement, through fun and enjoyment. In the best lessons teachers are secure in their aims, they are enthusiastic in their approach, they know the audio programme well and encourage all pupils to take part. There is good development of pupils' understanding of the learning objectives which are met by the end of the lesson. The lessons are well organised with a variety of activities and good opportunities for pupils to reflect. Pupils' ideas are used well to develop their understanding and teachers use well their opportunities for making teaching points. For example, pupils listening to the coda at the end of the music they had been singing were encouraged to identify the instruments which were being played. Lessons are well balanced with opportunities for both listening and performing and teachers enhance pupils' knowledge through the correct use of appropriate terms and vocabulary. Practical sessions are well managed and give pupils plenty of opportunity to experiment and investigate. Singing and playing is well controlled and teachers insist on the accurate following of instructions and directions. Less successful lessons lack excitement and pace and are mundane and uninteresting.

162 The co-ordinator for music is both skilful and well informed. Teachers are well supported in their efforts and the school has a good range of high quality instruments and other resources. The music provision makes a very good contribution to pupils' spiritual and cultural development and there are very good links with other subjects across the curriculum.

Physical education

163 By the age of seven, pupils can use the hall space well and show good spatial awareness. They are skilful in throwing and catching small apparatus, such as beanbags and small balls. By the age of eleven, pupils take part enthusiastically in warm-up activities and build upon previous skills in ball control relating to basketball and net ball. They improve their skills when dribbling a ball with a partner and in simplified versions of competitive team games. At the end of both key stages pupils attain standards similar to those found nationally. At present, the school does not take pupils away on residential visits; but previously, this was used as one way of developing the outdoors and adventurous aspects of the curriculum. The co-ordinator is hoping to re-establish this aspect of the curriculum.

164 The inspection of this school included a focused view of swimming. There is a learner pool on the school site, which is used to full effect. The National Curriculum requirement that all pupils in Key Stage 2 swim safely for at least 25-metres is met, apart from very rare exceptions. Pupils receive very good provision for their swimming, starting when they are in Year 2. Pupils enjoy their lessons and are taught well.

165 Throughout the school pupils make good progress in developing and improving their skills in gymnastics and games. Younger pupils develop skills in throwing and catching and in developing their hand-eye co-ordination. Older pupils make good progress in their games skills, particularly in activities relating to competitive team games. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress overall.

166 The majority of pupils respond to physical activities with enthusiasm and concentration and eagerly participate in their work. Pupils work well with people from outside agencies, for

example soccer coaching with a coach from Sunderland Football Club, and net ball and basketball skills with the Easington Skills team. They listen carefully to instructions and show pride in their accomplishments and increasing skills. Pupils show a very good awareness of safety aspects within the curriculum, and are respectful of specific rules relating to games activities. Pupils enjoy their activities and work well in mixed gender pairs and within small groups. Pupils behave sensibly, showing respect for one another and other adults. In small team and group activities, they are developing a sense of fair play. The behaviour of pupils in lessons, and their relationships with others, is very good.

167

The quality of teaching at both key stages is good. Good lessons show thorough planning, with learning outcomes clearly identified, good use of correct vocabulary and high expectations of both performance and behaviour. Lessons have pace and challenge, with pupils given opportunities to improve the quality of their skills, for example when using large balls in games activities. All teaching staff change into appropriate clothing for lessons, and thus give pupils a good role model. The management of pupils is good, with lots of positive praise given for good behaviour and performances.

- 168 Although it was not possible to observe the full range of work in physical education, scrutiny of work in planning and discussion with the subject co-ordinator, all indicate that the school delivers an appropriate curriculum. Dance, gymnastics and games are taught at Key Stage 1, with athletics at Key Stage 2.
- 169 The co-ordinator, although new to this role, provides good guidance to all staff. The school uses the Local Education Authority's scheme of work to ensure progression of skills. The co-ordinator monitors and evaluates the curriculum by examining teacher's planning, and ensures that staff who require extra training receive appropriate help and guidance.
- 170 Extra-curricular sporting activities, including opportunities for pupils to have professional coaching sessions, are very extensive, well established and make a positive contribution to the curriculum and to the personal and social development of the pupils. The school actively promotes equal opportunities across the curriculum and ensures that health and safety aspects relating to the physical education curriculum are fully met.
- 171 Work in physical education makes a good contribution towards the development of both literacy and numeracy skills. Listening skills are used as pupils follow instructions carefully, and opportunities for correct vocabulary are promoted when pupils become familiar with words such as "attack" and "invasion" when relating to games skills. Numeracy skills are promoted when younger pupils are required to throw and catch a beanbag five times with pupils encouraged to count carefully.
- 172 Accommodation for the physical education curriculum, both indoors and outdoors, is good and used appropriately. Resources are of good quality and are well maintained.
- 173 Standards in physical education have been maintained since the last school inspection, and have improved in the Infant Department. The previous inspection report found evidence of some under-achievement in the progress made by younger pupils, but this is no longer the case and all pupils make good progress.

THE RESOURCE BASE FOR PUPILS WITH MODERATE LEARNING DIFFICULTIES

- 174 The Resource Base is a separate unit funded by the local education authority. It is established to cater for the learning needs of ten pupils with moderate learning difficulties between the ages of five and eleven.
- 175 The standards of attainment of pupils in the Resource Base are well below the national averages in English and mathematics at the ends of both key stages. Pupils make satisfactory progress in these subjects relative to their age and ability. In other areas of the curriculum the pupils make satisfactory progress in their skills, knowledge and understanding.
- 176 At the end of Key Stage 2, pupils' skills in speaking and listening are well below the national average. Pupils listen carefully to the class teacher and generally respond appropriately when answering questions and participating in discussions. They can use appropriate language, depending on the context, but lack confidence and have a limited expressive vocabulary. In reading, pupils' phonic skills are very weak. Their knowledge of initial letter sounds is limited and they have a limited range of letter blends. The pupils are unable to use picture cues to predict from the illustrations or to build a sense of the story. In writing, although it is legible, the pupils' letter formation is variable and all writing is printed. The use of capital letters and full-stops in writing is inconsistent and the pupils' ability to write in different styles for specific purposes is not fully developed.
- 177 In mathematics, pupils can add and subtract numbers to ten, but are not aware of place value. They know the basic two-dimensional shapes, but their knowledge of three-dimensional shapes is under-developed. Their understanding of standard units of measurement is very limited. Some pupils know that length is measured in centimetres and metres, but their concept of using appropriate units for specific purposes, and other units for weight and volume, is not sufficiently developed.
- 178 Pupils make unsatisfactory progress in developing their skills, knowledge and understanding in English because of the teacher's lack of subject expertise. Their acquisition of basic literacy skills does not develop appropriately over time in that they do not systematically build upon and develop a range of reading strategies involving picture cueing, phonic knowledge and a comprehensive sight vocabulary of key words. Key Stage 1 pupils can recognise some initial letters and identify individual words by matching letter shapes, but they are unable to identify these letters or words consistently in written text. Older pupils' range of phonics is still very under-developed by the end of Key Stage 2. Progress in their acquisition of writing and spelling skills is also unsatisfactory. Key Stage 1 pupils can write some letters and copy write, but, by the end of Key Stage 2, these skills have not developed sufficiently to enable the pupils to form sentences using simple punctuation and spelling basic words correctly without a significant amount of support.
- 179 Progress in mathematical skills and knowledge is satisfactory, particularly in number, although the progress they make in gaining skills and knowledge of the wider aspects of the programmes of study is more limited.
- 180 Progress in other areas of the curriculum, where pupils are taught in mainstream classes, is satisfactory and commensurate with their age and ability, although their limited language skills have a significant effect upon the progress they make relative to their peers and other

pupils with special educational needs in the mainstream school.

- 181 The pupils' attitude to learning is good. They listen carefully to the adults in the classroom and try to follow instructions; persevering well, even if the tasks are challenging. The relationships between pupils and adults are positive and this supports the progress the pupils make in lessons. They respond well to the safe, secure and supportive environment that the teacher and support assistant have created. Behaviour in the classroom is good and, when integrated in mainstream classes, pupils maintain this standard of behaviour.

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The quality of teaching is generally satisfactory in the Resources Base, although one unsatisfactory lesson was seen in literacy. In this lesson, the teacher's subject knowledge of teaching the basic language skills was unsatisfactory. Consequently, the resources selected did not match the age or the ability of the pupils. The lesson was planned to follow the pattern of the National Literacy Strategy, but was insufficiently modified to accommodate the very specific learning difficulties of the individual pupils. In the independent section of the lesson, the planning was inconsistent. For Key Stage 1 pupils, it was focussed on the specific targets linked to the individual education plans, whereas, for older pupils, the planning for individual pupils was inadequate and activities were, therefore, insufficiently linked to developing their skills. Links between the teachers' planning and the pupils' individual education plans are weak, mainly because of a lack of expertise in teaching language. As a consequence, the assessment of pupils' progress is unsatisfactory in language and does not provide a secure base for further learning. Good use is made of the classroom assistant to develop and plan sessions for Key Stage 1 pupils and to teach this specific group within the class. These pupils benefited from focussed support and well planned learning which has a positive impact upon the progress they make in these sessions. The quality of teaching in mathematics is satisfactory. Activities are matched appropriately to the pupils' ability. Management and control are good, with behavioural expectations effectively reinforced. The sessions have a good pace. Instructions and explanations are clear. Resources, including the deployment of the classroom assistant, are well used and appropriate.

183 When the Resource Base staff are in the main school in the afternoon, the quality of the support provided for pupils is at least satisfactory and in areas such as information technology lessons at Key Stage 2, very good. However, a significant amount of time is not used effectively, especially when class teachers are introducing lessons or explaining. At such times there are missed opportunities for the Resource Base staff to observe their statemented pupils and record important assessment of what these pupils know, understand and can do.

184 The curriculum for the pupils in the Resource Base is satisfactory. It is broad and balanced and provides access to all parts of the National Curriculum. In the mornings, the pupils are in the Resource Base with a focus upon English and mathematics, following the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategies. Although the planning is based upon these National Strategies, the effectiveness of the use of the literacy strategy, in particular, the use of the plenary element to reinforce skills learned during the lesson and to develop skills in speaking and listening, is unsatisfactory. The use of assessment to identify specific areas of weakness is under-developed beyond the early years. There are no procedures in place to identify and to monitor pupils' progress in learning beyond the early years in the Resource Base or in the mainstream school for these statemented pupils. Consequently, the quality of the individual education plans is variable. The targets in the plans, particularly for older pupils in the area of literacy, are too extensive and lacking in detail. This has an impact upon the capacity of the teacher to plan and teach appropriately focussed activities in lessons and to record accurately the progress that all pupils make. In the afternoons, the pupils are integrated with the mainstream classes and follow the same curriculum as their peers. They have equal access to the extra-curricular activities and join their peers for assembly each day.

185 The leadership of the Resource Base is satisfactory. Satisfactory progress has been made in creating a positive environment in which the pupils can work. Procedures meet statutory requirements in the administration of statements of special educational needs and annual reviews. Links are established with parents and external agencies. However, the direction of the development of the Resource Base, particularly in terms of curriculum development for the teaching of literacy and of the establishment of assessment procedures, are not clear.

There are no clear procedures in place for evaluating the progress of pupils or the effectiveness of the various elements of the provision.

- 186 The teacher in the Resource Base is experienced in working with pupils with special educational needs in a mainstream school and the classroom assistant's qualifications and experience are very appropriate to the context in which she works. Opportunities for professional development are not related to the need to raise levels of expertise to meet the increased needs of pupils with mild learning difficulties. There has been insufficient focus upon developing the very specific skills needed to teach pupils with specific difficulties in learning, particularly in reading and writing.
- 187 The accommodation is satisfactory, but the size of the Resource Base classroom limits the opportunities for group work without disturbing the other pupils. The resources available are satisfactory, overall.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

188 A team of seven inspectors carried out the inspection over a period of 26 inspector days. They spent 119 hours gathering evidence.

The team:

- IX. Observed 94 lessons or parts of lessons
- X. Scrutinised samples of pupils' work
- XI. Listened to pupils in each year group read
- XII. Discussed aspects of their work and school life with the pupils
- XIII. Examined the attendance registers
- XIV. Examined the current school development plan and school policy documents
- XV. Analysed the school's budget
- XVI. Examined the school's register of special educational needs
- XVII. Studied the teachers' planning and pupils' records
- XVIII. Attended school assemblies
- XIX. Attended form and registration periods
- XX. Interviewed the headteacher, staff and members of the governing body
- XXI. Interviewed professional personnel associated with the school
- XXII. Held a meeting prior to the inspection to which parents were invited
- XXIII. Analysed the responses to completed questionnaires returned by parents
- XXIV. Examined the school's annual reports to parents

DATA AND INDICATORS

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	375	8	81	142
Nursery Unit/School	32	2	2	0

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	16.7
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	22.4

Education support staff (YR – Y6)

Total number of education support staff	7
Total aggregate hours worked each week	191

[Where applicable]

Qualified teachers (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)	1
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	18

[Where applicable]

Education support staff (Nursery school, classes or unit)

Total number of education support staff	2.5
Total aggregate hours worked each week	92

Average class size:	26.8
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Financial data

Financial year:

1998/99

	£
Total Income	649954
Total Expenditure	659271
Expenditure per pupil	1421
Balance brought forward from previous year	23297
Balance carried forward to next year	13980

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:
Number of questionnaires returned:

375
118

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	56	42	2	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	55	43	2	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	39	53	4	3	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	43	54	3	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	43	50	5	1	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	53	44	3	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	49	47	3	2	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	46	49	3	2	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	50	47	2	1	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	58	40	3	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	50	47	2	1	0

NB: Percentages of responses are rounded to nearest integer, sum may not = 100%
Percentages given are in relation to total number of returns, EXCLUDING nil replies.