

INSPECTION REPORT

**OUR LADY AND ST. THOMAS RC (VOLUNTARY
AIDED) PRIMARY SCHOOL**
Willington.

LEA area : 840

Unique Reference Number : 114257

Head teacher : Mrs. F. Gowland

Reporting inspector : Mr. D. Ford
T11807

Dates of inspection : 29th November to 3rd December 1999

Under OFSTED contract number: 840/P/707261

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 :	Voluntary Aided
Age range of pupils :	4 to 11 years
Gender of pupils :	Mixed
School address :	Cumberland Terrace, Willington, Crook, Co. Durham. DL15 0PB
Telephone number :	01388 746336
Appropriate authority :	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors :	Fr. J.C. Reid
Date of previous inspection :	6th to 9th May 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members	Subject responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr. D. Ford, Registered Inspector	Science	Attainment and Progress
	Design and Technology	Leadership and Management
	Physical Education	The Efficiency of the School
Mrs. J. Menes, Lay Inspector		Attendance
		Support, Guidance and Pupils' Welfare
		Partnership with Parents and the Community
Mrs. J. Stephenson, Team Inspector	Mathematics	Teaching
	History	The Curriculum and Assessment
	Art	Staffing, Accommodation and Learning Resources
	Equal Opportunities	
Mrs. B. Hudson, Team Inspector	English	Attitudes, Behaviour and Personal Development
	Information Technology	Pupils' Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural Development
	Geography	
	Music	
	Special Educational Needs	

[this table should list all team members and also indicate, in the subject column, the team member with responsibility for Under fives, Special educational needs, Equal opportunities and English as a second language]

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MAIN FINDINGS

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

This is a good school. It has many more strengths than weaknesses. Chief amongst its strengths are:

The high levels of good quality teaching across the school.

The structure of the curriculum and the very good approach to its planning.

The clarity of vision and effective management provided by the head teacher working with her governing body.

The systematic approach to checking on pupils' progress and the individual pupil targets that result.

- The positive attitudes of the pupils and their high standards of behaviour.

The careful use of resources to create and maintain small teaching groups which promote effective learning.

Provision for pupils under five.

WHERE THE SCHOOL HAS WEAKNESSES

There are no significant weaknesses in the school. However, the following areas require some attention:

Standards attained in writing.

Teachers' marking, whilst generally conscientious, does not always provide clear advice on how pupils can improve their work.

The condition of the playground.

- The development of a sex education policy.

These areas have already been identified by the school for development. In particular the head teacher and the governing body have made strenuous efforts to get the playground made good.

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE THE LAST INSPECTION

The previous inspection report was very positive. In the three and half years since that inspection the school has built on its strengths and improved the areas identified for development.

Effective planning for history and geography is now well established and this ensures that there are no gaps or areas of overlap in these subjects. A structured system for teaching handwriting has been introduced and this is having a positive effect on standards of presentation. There is a good health and safety policy and health education is well covered, although there is no sex education policy. The issues of unsupervised access raised in the previous report have been effectively addressed, but despite the best efforts of the head teacher and governing body the school yard has not been improved, is still in poor condition and continues to present a potential risk.

In addition the new head teacher has introduced a comprehensive system for the analysis of performance data. This is used to examine school trends and to set individual pupil targets.

The school is well aware of key areas for further improvement and these are thoroughly addressed in the school management plan. The whole-school performance targets agreed with the LEA are challenging and serve to illustrate the continuing commitment to 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	<p style="text-align: center;">Key</p> <p><i>well above average</i> A</p> <p><i>above average</i> B</p> <p><i>average</i></p> <p><i>below average</i> D</p> <p><i>well below average</i> E</p>
English	D	D	
Mathematics	C	C	
Science	C	D	

Standards in the school have been steadily improving since the previous inspection and are now in line with or above national expectations in the core subjects. This was evident in previous year's Key Stage 2 SAT results where pupils' performance in English and mathematics was above the national average and those of similar schools. The slight drop in 1999 was due largely to the relatively high proportion of SEN pupils (44%) in a cohort with small numbers.

Results from the assessment of seven year olds in 1999 show that the number of pupils attaining the expected levels was well above the national averages and the averages for similar schools. However, the number of pupils achieving the higher levels was below the national average and lower than results from similar schools.

Standards attained in ICT are in line with national averages at both key stages.

QUALITY OF TEACHING

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

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

Across the school there is considerable high quality teaching. In 98% of lessons reading is at least satisfactory. In almost 75% of them teaching is good or better and in 25% is very good or excellent. The high quality of the teaching motivates and sometimes inspires the pupils who are often disappointed when lessons have to end. The very high proportion of good teaching leads to good progress in the majority of lessons. This results in the improving standards observed throughout the inspection.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
Behaviour	Very good. Pupils are polite and courteous, working and playing well together.
Attendance	Attendance declined in 1997/98. It has improved considerably since then and is now just below the national average. The school is working effectively to improve it further.
Ethos*	Relationships at all levels are very good. Pupils are keen and enthusiastic workers and the school is continually working to raise standards.
Leadership and management	The school is well managed. The head teacher provides very clear and effective leadership and she is well supported by an active governing body.
Curriculum	Very good. Pupils are offered a well balanced and broad curriculum. Planning is of a consistently high standard. Assessment is well managed and marking is conscientious, although it does not always provide specific guidance to help pupils to improve.
Pupils with special educational needs	Provision is very good. Pupils are effectively supported and make good progress.
Spiritual, moral, social and cultural development	Very good. The school makes very effective provision. The well managed approach to these aspects is reflected in the pupils' well developed sense of right and wrong and their ability to appreciate the cultural, social, and spiritual elements of the world in which they live.
Staffing, resources and accommodation	There are good levels of staffing and these are very well used to create small teaching groups. The school is well resourced and accommodation is used effectively. However, the school playground is still in a poor condition. This presents a potential hazard and restricts the range of PE experiences.
Value for money	As a small school, costs per pupil are much higher than average. The school provides good quality education for its pupils who are attaining in line with averages in most areas and higher than that in reading and mental arithmetic. The school therefore gives sound value for money.

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

THE PARENTS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What most parents like about the school	What some parents are not happy about
<p>I. The encouragement they receive to take part in the life of the school.</p> <p>II. The ease with which they can share problems with the school.</p> <p>III. The information provided about their children's progress.</p> <p>IV. The values and attitudes that the school promotes.</p> <p>V. The high standards of behaviour.</p> <p>VI. The fact that their children like coming to school.</p>	<p>VII. The condition of the school playground.</p>

Parents are very supportive of the work of the school. The evidence from the inspection confirms their positive views and endorses their concern over the condition of the playground.

KEY ISSUES FOR ACTION

There are no key issues. However, the head teacher, together with staff and governors should give attention to the following:

- VIII. the need to continue to work to raise standards of writing across the school; (Paragraph numbers 8, 10, 13, 83, 92, 94.)
- IX. further development of the approach to marking to ensure that it always provides pupils with guidance on areas to improve; (Paragraph numbers 36, 43, 98.)
- X. the need to continue to press for the condition of the playground to be made good; (Paragraph numbers 52, 67, 132.)
- XI. the development of a sex education policy. (Paragraph numbers 37, 60.)

INTRODUCTION

Characteristics of the school

- 1. Our Lady and St. Thomas Roman Catholic Voluntary Aided Primary School is situated in the town of Willington to the west of Durham City. Pupils come to the school from the town and surrounding villages and farms. Many of them have attended nursery or other pre-school provision and attainment on entry to the school is around the average.
- 2. Currently the school has broadly average levels of entitlement to free school meals but well above average numbers of special educational needs. More pupils than average have formal statements of special needs. However, this is a small school with less than 100 pupils and this means that statistical analysis of the school's data is often difficult as there can be wide variations from one year to the next.
- 3. Priorities in the current school management plan are to:
 - raise writing standards across key stages;
 - revise early years provision;
 - develop monitoring mechanisms;
 - review assessment and recording;
 - include the curriculum directory in RE planning;
 - develop extra-curricular activities;
 - develop new library and improve the school environment;
 - develop a home/school agreement and a homework policy.

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
1998	4	3	7

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	3	3	4
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	6	6	7
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	75	75	88
	National	80	81	84

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 2 or above	Boys	3	4	4
	Girls	3	3	3
	Total	6	7	7
Percentage at NC Level 2 or above	School	75	88	88
	National	81	85	86

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
1998	3	6	9

National Curriculum Test Results		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	5	4	4
	Total	8	7	7
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	89	78	78
	National	65	59	69

Teacher Assessments		English	Mathematics	Science
Number of pupils at NC Level 4 or above	Boys	3	3	3
	Girls	4	4	5
	Total	7	7	8
Percentage at NC Level 4 or above	School	78	78	89
	National	65	59	69

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

Attendance

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

		%
Authorised Absence	School	6.7
	National comparative data	6.0
Unauthorised Absence	School	0.9
	National comparative data	0.5

Exclusions

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

	Number
Fixed period	0
Permanent	0

Quality of teaching

Percentage of teaching observed which is :

	%
Very good or better	24.56
Satisfactory or better	98.25
Less than satisfactory	1.75

PART A: ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

EDUCATIONAL STANDARDS ACHIEVED BY PUPILS AT THE SCHOOL

Attainment and progress

4. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of prior attainment and ability. The overall level of attainment in all areas of learning is about the average for their age as measured by a nationally accredited baseline assessment scheme. However, the average attainment levels of each intake group vary quite widely because of the small numbers in each year group.
5. Across the school pupils make satisfactory or better progress and by the time they leave standards of attainment in the core subjects of English, mathematics and science are at least in line with national expectations. In mathematics it is often higher than this. In the other subjects of the curriculum standards are also in line with national expectations and in music they are often better.
6. Children under the age of five in the mixed-age first class progress well during their first year in school. By the age of five nearly all pupils are achieving the nationally described desirable outcomes and some of them are working beyond these. The progress that the youngest children make is fostered by the carefully managed provision which ensures a good balance between carefully managed, teacher-led activities and a wide range of opportunities for children to learn through well planned play.
7. In the 1999 national tests for seven year olds the number of pupils attaining the expected levels was above the national average in writing and well above the national averages for reading and mathematics. The results were also better than the averages for similar schools.
8. Standards attained in the tests for eleven year olds in 1999 were somewhat lower than in previous years. The proportion of pupils attaining the expected levels was around the national average for English and science and above the average for mathematics. However, in all three subjects fewer than average numbers of children attained the higher levels. Within English, levels attained in reading were well above national averages but levels for writing were well below. When these results were compared with similar schools levels of attainment were below the average in mathematics and science and well below them in English.
9. These Key Stage 2 results show considerable variation from the previous year when in English and mathematics standards were well above the average for similar schools and science results were in line with these averages. Such fluctuations in performance have been found to be a common feature of small schools where there are relatively few pupils in each year group. In particular the 1999 cohort contained a very high proportion of pupils with special educational needs (44%). Through its own analysis of the results the school has identified the need to improve standards in writing across the school and has implemented a well planned programme of development which is already having a positive impact.
10. Pupils' attainment in all aspects of English is now in line with national expectations, although standards are slightly lower in writing than the other aspects of the subject.
11. The youngest pupils speak using a suitable range of vocabulary. They listen carefully, ask and answer questions, share information with a partner and when asked speak to the whole class. By the time that they are eleven pupils can sustain a persuasive argument and their answers are detailed and thorough.
12. The school has worked hard since the last inspection in the development of a consistent approach to handwriting. This has been successful, although a joined script is not introduced until Year 3. Pupils usually write in sentences and use simple punctuation appropriately. Most pupils spell simple words accurately and use their phonic knowledge well in spelling.

13. By the time that they leave school the majority of pupils produce neat, legible and well presented written work. They can write in a sound range of contexts and are able to alter their style of writing to suit the purpose. They know about punctuation such as commas, question marks, speech marks and apostrophes, although a significant minority make mistakes in the use of speech marks. Writing is usually correctly structured, although not all pupils use paragraphing appropriately. Overall, attainment in writing is in line with national expectations, although the minor weaknesses in punctuation and structure of writing have a negative effect on levels achieved.
14. Attainment in reading is at least in line with national expectations and sometimes higher. In the reception class some children are already reading simple texts fluently. By the time that they are seven most pupils tackle a range of texts with confidence and read with accuracy and increasing fluency. They can re-tell a story demonstrating an understanding of plot and character. By the time that they leave school pupils read a good range of fiction and non-fiction. They use the library with confidence and they are able to use their reading skills to support their work in other subjects.
15. Pupils make satisfactory progress in English and in some lessons it is better than this. They develop their knowledge of the structure of language which supports an increasing fluency in reading. Their written work becomes more accurate and they can adapt their writing to an increasing range of purposes. Progress has been enhanced by the school's conscientious implementation of the National Literacy Strategy and by the well planned writing development.
16. In mathematics attainment is in line with national expectations. By the time that they are seven the majority of pupils recognise numbers to 100 and have a sound understanding of place value. They can do simple addition and subtraction sums accurately and many of them can multiply by 2, 5 and 10. They can name simple two and three-dimensional shapes and they are beginning to measure with accuracy.
17. By the time that they leave school most pupils can calculate using the four rules of number. They have good mental skills supported by a number of well understood short-cuts. They can use fractions and decimals appropriately and many of them use their knowledge of factors to identify prime numbers. Pupils accurately measure straight lines and angles and they can name acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They can draw and interpret graphs and charts and they have a sound understanding of probability.
18. Progress is satisfactory across the school. It is better than this in the development of mental arithmetic skills at Key Stage 2. Pupils continually build on previously acquired skills helping them to tackle more complex calculations and, increasingly as they get older, to solve mathematical problems. This progress is underpinned by the systematic planning of the subject and by the consistent approaches to lesson structure resulting from the school's thorough implementation of the National Numeracy Strategy.
19. In science attainment is now in line with national expectations at both key stages. By the time that they are seven pupils have a sound understanding of the main parts of animals and plants as well as simple life-cycles. They can categorise materials based on their properties and they have a sound knowledge of simple forces. They are starting to understand the need for fairness in experimental science and they use equipment well.
20. By the time that they leave school most pupils have a good scientific vocabulary. They are confident in designing experiments to test their hypotheses and they understand the need to identify and control variables. Pupils have a good understanding of key scientific ideas and they are able to record and analyse their findings systematically. Standards in science are underpinned by satisfactory progress across the school. Progress in the investigative aspects of science is more rapid and the oldest pupils are skilled in this approach.

21. In all other subjects progress is at least satisfactory and sometimes better. The deficiencies in progress in geography and history which were identified in the previous report have been made good through the implementation of new, detailed guidance. The school has a large number of pupils with special educational needs and they make good progress. They are well supported by good planning and high quality teaching enabling them to achieve in line with their potential.

Attitudes, behaviour and personal development

22. The attitudes, behaviour and personal development of pupils are very good. This was a strength of the school in the last report.
23. All pupils show an interest in their work. They come to school happily, enjoy the company of their friends, teachers and other adults and this has a positive impact on the way that they learn.
24. Overall pupils' attitudes to learning are very good. In class, the pupils are attentive and show respect and courtesy to the teachers. They are confident and are keen to answer questions. They settle quickly to the work that they are given. The oldest pupils are capable of giving and justifying opinions about their work, such as in analysing the character of Mary from the "Secret Garden" or when they were asked how they could make a friend of a person that they had not met before. To show courtesy is part of the school's motto, this is reinforced by the teachers and pupils respond appropriately.
25. In assemblies pupils listen attentively to adults and each other showing thoughtfulness. They show respect for other people's beliefs by using knowledge from their own faith and other faiths to highlight the significance of light to world religions.
26. Pupils' behaviour is very good. In the vast majority of lessons, during play times and lunch times pupils are well mannered and polite. They move around the school sensibly and are developing self-discipline. The systems in the school, such as the implementation of an effective behaviour policy and also lunch time organisation, help pupils to maintain their very good behaviour. In a minority of lessons pupils can become restless and there is some chatter which disrupts concentration.
27. Relationships within the school are very good. Children work and play together sensibly, listening to one another and taking turns. They develop trust in the adults in the school and are confident to share their feelings, such as how do they feel when they meet someone new for the first time.
28. Pupils' personal development is very good. They have a strong sense of belonging to their community and are developing an understanding for the feelings and views of others. They follow the school's very good expectations for behaviour. They take good care of their equipment and surroundings. When given responsibilities they carry out tasks diligently. So, for example, Year 1 pupils sensibly discussed a given problem whilst the teacher worked with younger pupils and the system for collecting and returning registers is effectively managed by pupils.
29. Since the last inspection the school has improved the pupils' very good attitudes, behaviour and personal development.

Attendance

30. Attendance is improving significantly and is currently just below the national average for primary schools. However, this does not have any negative impact on pupils' attainment or progress. Unauthorised absence is just above the national average. Pupils arrive at school punctually and lessons start on time.

QUALITY OF EDUCATION PROVIDED

Teaching

31. At the time of the last inspection teaching was good overall. It has improved further and it is now a strength of the school. In 98% of lessons teaching is at least satisfactory and in almost 75% of them it is good or better. There is now very good or excellent teaching in 25% of lessons which represents a significant improvement. This high quality teaching is consistent across the school.
32. The school has systematically built on the positive features of teaching from the previous report. There has been effective staff development for curriculum planning, including the revising of daily logs, this has helped to focus the teaching of lessons. A thorough monitoring programme for literacy and numeracy has been successful in providing teachers with ideas of how to improve and develop their skills. These initiatives, combined with teachers' enthusiasm and challenging expectations of what pupils can achieve, results in the good progress and the improved standards observed in lessons.
33. Teaching of pupils under five is frequently good and often very good or excellent. Lessons for these pupils are extremely well planned and resources are carefully prepared. Very good use is made of the daily log to modify plans so that work is well matched to pupils' abilities. Pupils are in a mixed-aged class with older children and lessons are carefully targeted to make sure that the particular needs of the youngest pupils are met. For instance, in an excellent numeracy lesson the teacher used individual target numbers to reinforce work for the youngest pupils and then provided good, practical advice to develop their counting skills. A particular strength is the way in which the teacher structures the school day so that pupils are able to concentrate for long periods of time on literacy or numeracy. Alongside these lessons, the teacher provides an excellent range of structured play to help pupils consolidate learning in all areas. The active involvement of pupils in these activities means that they are ready to listen, concentrate and learn basic skills quickly. The teacher has very clear and sensible routines to underpin all of her work, so that pupils are encouraged to be independent. Lessons are controlled and activities are interesting. Good relationships help to make the classroom a friendly and stimulating place for pupils to make good progress. On many occasions, pupils are disappointed when lessons come to an end.
34. At Key Stage 1, almost all of the teaching is satisfactory and 40% is good or better. All lessons are well planned and teachers are clear about what they are trying to achieve. Teachers generally structure their lessons well, with an introduction, some practising of skills and learning new facts, followed by a review of progress. This is particularly good in numeracy. During one lesson the teacher targeted questions to individual pupils to develop their understanding of digital and analogue time. This was followed by a series of well planned activities, matched to pupils' different levels of abilities to enable them to read the time to the hour or half hour. Good progress in this lesson was demonstrated by pupils' ability to solve problems. Teachers encourage pupils to offer ideas during introductions of lessons and these are usually used well. However, on occasions pupils are allowed to pursue their own interests for too long. This disrupts the flow of the lesson and some pupils become distracted. Time is generally used well and in the best lessons pace is brisk. Some of the lessons for Key Stage 1 children working with reception pupils are very good or excellent. In these lessons pupils are able to focus on clear tasks within an established system and they make good progress. Adults working alongside teachers are well informed and make an effective contribution. This was evident in a science lesson where pupils exploring ice were able to develop good investigational skills because of the quality of questioning within small group situations.

35. Teaching at Key Stage 2 is never less than satisfactory and 85% of lessons are good or better. A high proportion of lessons are very good or excellent. Teachers have very good knowledge of the subjects they teach and are able to inspire and enthuse pupils. Very occasionally, when teachers are working with one group and become passionate about their learning, the working noise levels of remaining groups increase too much. Teachers have high expectations of what pupils should be achieving and challenge them well to work hard and succeed in their tasks. They are able to do this because they know their pupils extremely well. They have good knowledge and understanding of individuals' prior attainment and use this well in their planning. In the best lessons teachers offer very clear and precise explanations. They involve the pupils in their own learning and many are confident to demonstrate this in front of their friends. For example, in an English Year 4 lesson the teacher encouraged pupils to creatively contribute to the class poem "My Gran" using similes and adjectives.
36. Classroom organisation is good and there are clearly established rules and routines. In a Year 5/6 class pupils counted in German to ensure a quick and efficient tidying up of resources at the end of lessons. Teachers always use praise well to encourage pupils and this is also effective in motivating them to make good progress. There are some excellent examples of marking in Year 3/4 which celebrates success and also identifies targets for improvement. However, the detailed identification of such targets is not consistently applied throughout the school. A strong feature of the teaching in all classes is the excellent planning of lessons and the sharing of objectives with pupils. Lessons always follow a common structure and include explanations, demonstrations and discussion. The pace and clarity of teaching in almost all lessons, combined with the effective planning and high expectations, results in the good progress and improved standards which are seen in the majority of lessons. Teaching for pupils with SEN is carefully planned, well matched to their prior attainment and of high quality. It ensures that pupils make good progress.

The curriculum and assessment

37. The school provides a well balanced and broad curriculum. Literacy and numeracy are rightly given a high priority and are central to the school's work. The school's aims and values are successfully reflected in the curriculum, ensuring equality of opportunity for all pupils. There are clear curriculum policies for all subjects and these provide good guidance for teachers in their planning. Opportunities for spiritual, social and personal development are well integrated into the curriculum and pupils are well prepared for the next stage of their education. All curriculum statutory requirements are met, although the governing body has not yet approved a sex education policy.
38. The curriculum for children under the age of five is very good. It provides access to a full range of learning experiences appropriate to pupils of this age, within a mixed-age class. Assessment is detailed and planned activities meet the needs of all pupils. The curriculum gives children a good start to their education and it provides an effective transition to the National Curriculum.
39. The school provides very good support for pupils with special educational needs. There are clear and well defined procedures for identifying and assessing pupils. Individual education plans are thorough and contain detailed and precise targets, which are used very well by teachers to plan appropriate tasks. Special educational needs pupils play a full part in lessons, sometimes with adult support or by using very good special resources. This enables these pupils to make good progress.
40. Curriculum planning is of a very high standard. It is clear, systematic and thorough. In the last inspection report a key issue was to further improve planning for history and geography. This is no longer a weakness. In fact, the planning systems are a strength of the school. Long and medium-term plans provide a very good framework to ensure that appropriate time is given to each subject. National and locally produced schemes of work have been used to identify literacy and numeracy links across the curriculum. This allows pupils greater opportunities for learning in these key subject areas. Teachers complete weekly plans and these are supplemented by daily logs which provide the detail for each lesson. Learning objectives are precise and are very clearly defined so that teachers are aware of what they want their pupils to learn. They provide an effective vehicle for the evaluation of previous work and the modification of work that is currently being taught. The daily logs very effectively support the high quality teaching across the school.

41. The curriculum is enriched by a very good range of extra-curricular opportunities. The recent expansion of sporting activities initiated and managed by the PE co-ordinator allows pupils opportunities to participate in football, netball and basketball. A library club is held three times a week and this encourages a positive approach to books and the enjoyment of reading. Other activities include music and gardening.
42. The school has recently developed an agreed policy on homework. This successful initiative to introduce more focused homework has had the strong support of parents. Homework activities are usefully used to reinforce or extend pupils' learning.
43. In both Key Stages 1 and 2 assessment procedures are good. Assessments are accurate and are used to inform teachers' planning and to target work for individual pupils. Very good use is made of day-to-day assessments in lower Key Stage 2 where marked work informs pupils what they have done well and how to improve. However, this level of detail in marking is inconsistently applied across the school and does not always provide specific guidance for improvement. Records of pupil attainment are maintained for all subjects, with appropriate emphasis on English, mathematics and science. Work of selected pupils in each year group is scrutinised on a regular basis to examine standards across the school. Statutory and other formal assessments are systematically used to monitor and track pupils' progress. This thorough system enables the school to accurately predict the fluctuations in the outcomes of standardised tests associated with small year groups. It also enables the school to set challenging individual and whole-school targets for the future. This will support a better match of teacher assessment to statutory tests. The well planned and carefully implemented approaches to curriculum and assessment make a very significant contribution to the attainment and progress of pupils.

Pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development

44. The spiritual, moral and social development of the pupils is very good. The cultural development is good. Since the last inspection, the school has improved the pupils' awareness of cultures other than their own.
45. The strong Christian values which are part of the school's ethos significantly enhance the pupils' spiritual development. Prayer and times to reflect are used effectively in assemblies, before lunch and at the end of the day to enable pupils to think about their own actions and other people who may need guidance and help. They celebrate significant religious festivals and can see how light plays a significant part in their own and some of the other major religions of the world. Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own lives and the lives of others in English and history lessons. Religious artefacts are treated with reverence.
46. The principles of right and wrong are well established and apparent in all aspects of the school's life. The staff have high expectations of children's behaviour and consistently promote honesty, truth and fairness. The pupils talk about what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour in personal and social education lessons and also other lessons, such as English, when analysing the character Mary from the "Secret Garden". Parents appreciate the teachers' clear and consistent approach to developing pupils' moral development.
47. The teachers have a good understanding of the importance of social development for children's learning and give good support. In one personal and social development lesson, pupils were encouraged to explain how they would get to know someone they had met for a first time and establish whether they could become a friend. A strength of the school is the enthusiasm and quality of the response that pupils make in lessons. They are also good at celebrating the successes of other pupils through the well established reward system in the school.
48. Pupils talk enthusiastically about social events such as after-school clubs, outings and Christmas parties. Play times and lunch times are seen as times to play with their friends and many of the older pupils see them as a time when they care for younger pupils or when a friend needs some medical attention. This type of co-operation between pupils is part of the ethos of the school. The school supports charities and for the first time this year they will be taking a group of pupils to the nearby old people's home. There is a strong sense of community in the school and children make reference to their part in events.

49. Pupils are encouraged to appreciate their own and other cultural traditions through a range of lessons, educational visits, theatre outings and musicians visiting the school. In addition to visits, pupils appreciate their own culture through strong links with the parish and by inviting local people into school to talk about the war or what it was like working in the mines. An awareness of other cultures is evident through displays on Hinduism and the use of Islamic patterns in a mathematics display about shape. In a Year 2 geography lesson pupils learned about some of the cultural traditions in France and compared these with Greece, London and Bishop Auckland. Recently the older pupils have begun to write to another school where the pupils come from different ethnic backgrounds and this is widening their understanding of different cultures.

Support, guidance and pupils' welfare

50. The school provides good support and guidance for pupils. All the staff know pupils well, are willing to listen to them and show care and concern for their welfare. Monitoring of pupils' academic progress, personal development and behaviour is good and pupils with statements are well supported. The school has appropriate procedures to introduce children to reception and has initiated a mentoring system whereby older pupils are given the responsibility of keeping an eye on new starters. This positive approach helps young pupils to settle quickly into school life and the overall procedures for support and guidance make a positive contribution to the standards that pupils attain.
51. The school monitors attendance very carefully and this has resulted in some improvement over the last year. Staff successfully promote good behaviour through praise and encouragement and a merit system which supports good behaviour as well as good work. Bullying is not a problem and parents are satisfied that any incidents are dealt with appropriately.
52. Staff have received training in child protection and there are good links with support services. The school has appropriate arrangements in case of accident and illness, and provides good support for children with special medical needs. Health and safety procedures are in place but the poor condition of the surface of the school yard is still a safety hazard. Major repairs are the responsibility of the LEA and the school has made every effort to get the problem attended to.

Partnership with parents and the community

53. The school makes parents welcome and encourages them to approach staff with any concerns about their children. Information for parents is good. Staff arrange meetings to brief parents on curriculum changes and developments, and letters and newsletters keep them in touch with school issues and events. Parents are invited to formal meetings with staff and the annual written report which is sent to inform them of their children's progress meets statutory requirements.
54. The school works hard to involve parents in their children's education and this has a positive effect on pupils' learning. Questionnaires were sent to elicit a response to the homework policy which is now being implemented with parental support. Homework diaries provide an effective channel for communication for parents and staff and a home/school agreement has been introduced. The school holds a meeting for parents of children about to join reception, which provides useful information on the curriculum and explain how they can prepare and help their children. The school invites parents to help in school, with educational visits and extra-curricular activities.

55. The school has good links with the community. The “Friends of the School” include governors, parishioners and neighbours, as well as parents and grandparents. They are active and effective fund-raisers and participate in the life of the school in a variety of ways, including games nights, making story sacks and running the school bank. The school plays an important role in the parish, pupils help with church activities and a school Mass is held in church every month to which all parishioners are invited. Members of the community have visited school to support pupils' learning by describing their experiences in the war and in the mines. The school has maintained a valuable long-standing business link with a local mining company which now involves pupils in monitoring pond life on the nature reserve created as part of a reclamation scheme. This site is near the village so pupils' work has contributed to an improvement in the environment for their own community.

THE MANAGEMENT AND EFFICIENCY OF THE SCHOOL

Leadership and management

56. The school is well managed by the head teacher working closely with the governing body. Since the last report the governing body has reviewed its organisation and it works effectively through a series of committees which meet termly and report to the full governing body. This structure ensures that the governing body maintains a strategic overview of the school and meets its statutory obligations. There are specific governors identified to monitor literacy, numeracy and SEN and the curriculum committee works with co-ordinators to develop school policies.
57. The governing body is kept up-to-date by detailed reports from the head teacher. These cover attainment, finance and the progress of the school management plan. They ensure that the governors are well informed and, in particular, that they have a clear view of the school's relative performance.
58. The previous report commented very favourably on the quality of leadership and management and these strengths have been maintained. The current head teacher has been in post for less than a year. She is very involved in the life of the school and provides a good role-model for staff and pupils alike. She has already demonstrated clear leadership and the ability to continue the process of school improvement. She is well-informed and has developed a good structure for the production of the school management plan. This ensures that staff and governors are effectively involved and results in a thorough and well organised document. The current plan identifies appropriate developments building on a thorough audit of strengths and weaknesses. There are identified timescales and key personnel are identified. Performance indicators are clear and these, together with regular reports on progress, help governors to monitor the implementation of the plan.
59. The head teacher is supported by a second-in-charge who has only been in post since the beginning of term. She has already started to take on significant whole-school responsibilities and the head teacher recognises the need to clarify the key managerial functions of the post as the induction process proceeds. The head teacher, second-in-charge and curriculum co-ordinators are all involved in a well-planned programme of monitoring. This enables a thorough analysis of planning, teaching and pupils' work to be used to inform future developments.
60. The school has sound policies for important aspects of school life although there is no agreed policy for sex education. The SEN policy takes account of the national code of practice and meets statutory requirements. Communications in school are good and routine administrative procedures are very effective.
61. The high quality leadership and management has played a significant part in the development of the school since the last inspection and makes a very positive contribution to the attainment and progress of the pupils.

Staffing, accommodation and learning resources

62. At the time of the last inspection all pupils in Key Stage 1 were taught in the same class. Surplus money in the budget during 1997/98 allowed governors to make the decision to appoint an additional teacher. Extra government funding for teaching Key Stage 1 pupils has allowed this teacher to be retained for another year. In addition, the head teacher regularly supports teaching in this key stage. The generous staffing levels and the good extra support is having a positive effect on the quality of education provided and the standards achieved, particularly for pupils who are not yet five.
63. The level of administrative support has recently been increased because of an additional government grant. The support is now in line with similar schools and contributes positively to the effective management of the school.

64. Overall, the school is generously staffed. All teachers are suitably qualified and sensibly deployed. They have a clear understanding of their own roles and responsibilities as well as those of others. Non-teaching staff work very well alongside teaching staff and make a significant contribution to pupils' learning.
65. The school has a clear policy for staff development and training is well linked to both school and personal needs. Recent initiatives have focused on literacy and numeracy issues. There is an effective system for monitoring the quality of teaching, which contributes to identifying staff development needs.
66. The accommodation is spacious, attractive and clean. It provides a stimulating environment. Good use of informative colourful and well presented displays enhance the corridors, classrooms and shared areas. A recently refurbished library is situated near the entrance of the school, so that both Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils have easy access. Very good use is made of a large classroom area for reception and Year 1 pupils. This ensures that there are opportunities for structured play and more formal learning.
67. The external accommodation includes one hard-surfaced and one grassed area. At the time of the last inspection the surface of the play ground was an issue. It remains in poor condition despite the considerable efforts made by the head teacher and governing body and this restricts opportunities for outdoor PE. The playing field is used well, particularly for extra-curricular sporting activities.
68. The school is well resourced for its curriculum and the range of pupils. Teachers use the resources well, both in lessons and for display. A good selection of story books are available in each classroom and this is supplemented by an adequate range of fiction and non-fiction books in the library. The school makes very effective use of loans from the LEA learning resource service and Carter House, a centre for religious artefacts. There is an adequate number of information technology resources, although some computers are nearing the end of their working life. The school recognises the need to develop these resources and has plans to purchase computers in the new year. Resources for pupils with special educational needs are good and effectively support their learning.

The efficiency of the school

69. The school budget is very well managed by the head teacher working closely with the governing body. The governors' finance committee works with the head and the LEA to set the budget and monitors its progress through its regular meetings.
70. School income per pupil is considerably above national averages, reflecting the smaller than average pupil population and the LEA funding formula which helps to support small schools. Expenditure on teachers is around the average and has been supported through a government grant to help reduce infant class sizes. This has resulted in relatively small classes throughout the school, although most contain more than one age group. This expenditure on teachers is having a positive impact on the quality of education and standards achieved.
71. Expenditure on resources is in line with national averages. It is planned through the school management plan to ensure that school priorities are appropriately supported. Spending on pupils with SEN is partly managed by the LEA, but sufficient funding is made available to meet the needs of the above-average number of pupils with special needs in the school. There is a relatively high unallocated reserve fund although this is reducing. The governors have agreed a programme of planned spending on refurbishment and computer equipment which will make effective use of this money, whilst retaining a prudent level of funding to protect staffing levels in the future as pupil numbers fluctuate.
72. Financial control procedures are effective and the school has acted positively to take account of the recommendations in the most recent financial auditors report (March 1999). The head teacher and governors work hard to ensure that all finances are used to maximum effect and all expenditure decisions are based on prudent evaluations of cost-effectiveness. This ensures that despite the relatively high cost per pupil the school uses its funds wisely providing sound value for money.

PART B: CURRICULUM AREAS AND SUBJECTS

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

73. Pupils who are under five are well provided for in the mixed reception and Year 1 class. Pupils enter the school with a wide range of prior attainment, but baseline assessment at the beginning of the reception year indicates that the majority attain levels which are in line with the average for their age. By the time that they are five the majority of pupils have attained the nationally determined “Desirable Outcomes” for pupils on entry to school.
74. In the reception year most pupils make a good start to reading and writing. They can write simple words and phrases and the most able are already able to construct sentences. They know the shape of letters and the majority can form them correctly. They understand about books, know that print carries meaning and many can read simple texts. They ask and answer questions and are able to understand and carry out simple instructions.
75. Early mathematical development is sound. They recognise and can name numbers. Most pupils can count and order numbers to twenty. The most able pupils are competent in simple addition and some of them are able to solve simple problems in addition, for example, to finding missing numbers in simple sums. Pupils use practical apparatus such as counters, coins and number lines with confidence to support their work and they are aware of some metric measures such as metres.
76. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of the world through a wide range of practical activities. They use sand and water play to explore simple scientific ideas and they make simple models using scissors, rulers and glue. Pupils have basic computer skills. They know about the key component parts of the computer system and are able to use a mouse to select objects from the screen and work their way through simple programs. They are beginning to understand simple concepts of place and time through structured play, the sharing of “news” and carefully planned teaching sessions. So, for example, pupils started to understand the concept of old and new through a lesson on toys when they had the opportunity to compare a number of teddy bears of different ages.
77. Pupils can use a satisfactory range of media to create pictures and simple models. They can sing simple songs and have a satisfactory sense of rhythm. They develop their physical skills through movement lessons and through the use of simple equipment. The majority of pupils can use scissors well and they have satisfactory pencil control.
78. The teaching of under fives is never less than satisfactory and it is usually good or very good. There are occasions when teaching is excellent, pupils are completely absorbed in their work and are disappointed when they have to go out to play. Lessons are always planned and prepared. The teacher knows her pupils very well and uses this knowledge to good effect to ensure that the under fives are well catered for in the mixed-age class. The teacher uses questions very well and is skilled in encouraging all pupils to participate. This is particularly impressive in the introductory “carpet sessions” when the teacher helps pupils to express simple ideas and moves them easily from their interests to her intended learning. All lessons are conducted in a lively and enthusiastic manner and proceed at a brisk and business-like pace. Instructions are accurate, pitched at an appropriate level and carefully reinforced. Thus in a numeracy session the teacher constantly reminds the children to touch the objects when they are counting them to ensure that none are missed or counted twice.
79. The quality of teaching is reflected in the pupils’ very positive response to lessons. They are usually very attentive and participate in their learning with gusto. They work well together and individually and they demonstrate impressive levels of concentration. This combination of good teaching and effective learning results in progress which is at least satisfactory and often better. In particular, pupils whose prior attainment is below average are helped to meet the objectives for their age.

80. The curriculum for the under fives is well planned and carefully organised. All the areas of learning are covered and there is a very good mix of planned and structured teaching sessions, together with opportunities for the pupils to learn through carefully managed play. This is particularly evident in the way the teacher organises numeracy and literacy sessions, ensuring that the youngest pupils can benefit from whole-class work and supporting it with practical group or individual activities whenever that is appropriate. This approach is assisted by the fact that the Year 1 pupils are taught separately by the head teacher for some of their literacy work.
81. Provision for the under fives is well resourced. The classroom is well organised and managed to provide for all areas of learning and there is good use of extra adult support which helps to ensure high quality teaching to small groups.

ENGLISH, MATHEMATICS AND SCIENCE

English

82. Standards in English are satisfactory, although over the last three years, national test results have shown a considerable fluctuation. This is due in part to the variation in the number of children with special education needs within the small size of each year group.
83. In 1999 in both Key Stages 1 and 2 the results in reading were above the national average. In 1999 the school deliberately targeted reading in Year 6 enabling pupils to achieve the national average. The writing results in the national tests are more variable. In 1999 results in Key Stage 1 showed an improvement on the 1998 results and were above the national average. However, very few pupils achieved the higher levels. The Key Stage 2 national test writing results were well below the national average, but this was due to the high percentage of pupils with special educational needs. In 1999 no pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 achieved the higher levels in writing.
84. Results from the national assessments at KeyStages 1 and 2 indicate that attainment in reading is consistently higher than writing. In response the school has highlighted writing as an area for development in its management plan. Evidence in the inspection indicates that the school is maintaining its good reading scores and making considerable progress in the improvement of writing.
85. Pupils are making satisfactory progress overall in Key Stage 1 and good progress in Key Stage 2. Teachers are making very good use of the recently introduced assessment system to monitor progress and set realistic but challenging targets for pupils. The targets are shared with pupils so they know which aspects they are working on to improve. The evidence during the inspection indicates that this work is enabling pupils to make good progress and improve their attainment in writing. Inspection evidence also indicates that the pupils' good progress in reading is being maintained.
86. In speaking and listening most pupils listen attentively in lessons and assemblies. By the time that they are eleven they speak confidently when answering questions, participate well in discussions and offer viable suggestions. They are also very willing to talk about their work to adults. In an introduction to a Year 1 lesson, the class teacher engages pupils through a clear and entertaining presentation of information which enables pupils to respond with enthusiasm, producing well thought out answers.
87. Good progress in speaking and listening results from the teachers' willingness to listen to pupils' answers and engage them in discussions. Key questions are highlighted in the teachers' excellent planning. Teachers also use speaking and listening opportunities to extend pupils' vocabulary by highlighting interesting words, asking for alternatives or extending pupils' descriptions. For example, in one lesson the teacher asked "how did Grandpa's face look?", and one pupil responded "like a crinkly crisp!". Speaking and listening was highlighted as a strength in the last inspection and this aspect has been maintained and further developed.
88. Pupils enjoy reading and talk about books with pleasure. They read accurately, with expression and understanding. They are keen to read aloud and do so with expression and confidence. By the time that they are seven pupils have good letter and sound recognition skills which aids them in reading unfamiliar words. The older pupils are developing good comprehension and prediction skills. The older, more able pupils can skim and scan text to find information quickly and gain an overview of the meaning of text. Pupils read from a range of books, some chosen by themselves, others by their teacher. They have the opportunity to take books home which they share with others.

89. Pupils know how books are organised. Many have favourite books and authors. They use the school library system effectively to find out more information about topics that interest them. One pupil provided detailed discussions aided by pictures and text about motorbikes. Less confident readers have more opportunities to read to adults within the school and last year this had an excellent impact on the Year 6 pupils' attainment. The more able and confident readers read fluently, accurately and with expression and meaning from a full range of books available. By the time they leave school many pupils are achieving the higher standards.
90. Progress in reading is good. Children make good progress in letter recognition and use these skills to build up unfamiliar words. All teachers plan thoroughly for reading within the literacy lessons and this provides a good basis for the pupils' attainment. Each day an additional time is given to reading when all pupils read from a variety of books. In these sessions, as many adults as possible are used to listen to pupils read. The less confident pupils are heard to read on an individual basis and this makes a significant contribution to their attainment and reading. As part of the school's homework policy, pupils are encouraged to read at home which helps them to make good progress.
91. In the last inspection, attainment in reading was in line with national averages but few pupils reached the higher standards. The number of pupils reaching the average levels has increased as has the number of pupils reaching the higher levels at Key Stage 2.
92. The school has correctly identified raising standards in writing as a target area in the school management plan. Significant progress has been made on this initiative which is being well led by the English co-ordinator. The evidence of the inspection indicates that pupils' attainment in writing is improving.
93. Children are encouraged to write and are developing recognisable letters from early years. They can spell a range of common words and use their knowledge of letter sounds to spell those they do not know. The younger pupils refer to word books to check spelling but most pupils can use dictionaries to check spelling and also to check meanings of words. Since the last inspection handwriting has improved. Pupils write in a legible form but they do not use joined writing until they are in Year 3. The English co-ordinator plans to re-assess the approach to handwriting in the near future.
94. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils write imaginative stories which hold the readers' interest. They can describe the mouse character from the book "A Big Hungry Bear". They understand a story requires a beginning, a middle and an end. They are also aware of characters and describing where the story takes place. They write for a range of purposes, including list-making, imaginative stories, chronological accounts and information on charts. By the end of Key Stage 2, pupils write successfully for a wide range of purposes such as newspaper articles and advertisements, diaries of fictional people, instructions on how to make something, letters, comparison and evaluations of settings and plots and poetry. Their imaginative writing is well structured and is enlivened by the good use of descriptive vocabulary as in the Year 5/6 work on "The Secret Garden". Writing is usually soundly structured and the use of punctuation is satisfactory. However, in a minority of cases pupils misuse speech marks and paragraphing is not always well used to structure written work. In the Year 3/4 class pupils were creating interesting poems about "My Grandpa". Overall spelling is good and irregular words are frequently checked in dictionaries. Standards of presentation are satisfactory.
95. Progress in writing is satisfactory in Key Stages 1 and 2. This progress is supported by meticulous planning and the fact that what pupils are expected to learn is very clearly explained to them. In Key Stage 2 pupils are becoming adept at investigating text and recognising that changes can be made to make it more interesting and easier to read. Teachers have high expectations and are setting pupils challenging work to complete within the allocated time. Extra support throughout the school is provided by the head teacher, the special needs teacher and the support assistant and this ensures that pupils receive clear, high quality guidance which supports their progress. Pupils with special educational needs make good progress.

96. Pupils always respond positively to their English lessons. In the majority of lessons, their response is between good, very good or excellent. Pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They settle down to work quickly, generally quietly and with good concentration.
97. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and often good, very good or excellent. The best teaching motivates, challenges and excites pupils with the work provided. Behaviour is monitored consistently and praise given which encourages pupils in their work. Teachers ask challenging questions, listen carefully to what pupils say and build upon their comments to develop their thinking skills. Teachers' weekly planning and daily logs, which support assessment, make clear the experiences teachers intend for their class. This detailed work is having a positive impact on pupils' progress.
98. In some otherwise satisfactory lessons, however, instructions are sometimes too long and teachers take too much time to pursue pupils' comments which are not always relevant to that lesson. Teachers' marking of pupils' work is conscientious but does not always indicate where pupils can improve their work.
99. The English co-ordinator has made significant contributions to implementing the national literacy strategy. She is having a good impact on raising pupils' writing skills by providing excellent support materials, advice, purchasing high quality resources and being enthusiastic about the subject. In the classrooms staff have good quality resources for teaching reading and writing using fiction and non-fiction texts. The recently refurbished school library has a good supply of fiction and big books. The non-fiction section has a large number of outdated books.

Mathematics

100. Standards of attainment in mathematics at Key Stage 1 in 1999 were well above national average. This is an improvement from results in 1998. At Key Stage 2 national test results for 1999 were above the national averages as they were in 1998. Fewer than average pupils, however, achieved the higher levels in 1999, partly as a result of the high proportion of pupils who were on the school's SEN register at the time they took the test. Over the past three years there has been a trend of improvement and this is reflected in the standards of work produced by pupils currently in the school.
101. Very young children demonstrate impressive counting skills. They can count forwards and backwards to 20 and can accurately count a number of objects in a set. Older pupils build on these numeracy skills and by the time they are seven, pupils can count up to 1000, sometimes beyond. They know addition facts up to 10 and can confidently perform simple addition and subtraction calculations. They know the names and simple properties of regular two-dimensional shapes. Higher-attaining pupils can quickly count in 2s, 5s and 10s, sometimes doubling and halving numbers, and they know simple fractions such as halves and quarters. Most pupils can read analogue and digital time to and past the hour. Less able pupils have a good understanding of the passage of time and are able to put daily routines into a sequence. Overall, pupils make satisfactory progress. They develop their knowledge and ability to use large numbers and build steadily on early mathematical skills of length, shape, time and measurement.
102. At Key Stage 2 pupils build steadily on these skills and make good progress. Years 3 and 6 pupils sometimes make very good progress, particularly in mental arithmetic. This allows them to quickly and accurately calculate doubles, multiples and factors of large numbers. Higher-attaining Year 6 pupils have a good understanding of square numbers and can confidently use the square root symbol. In one very good lesson, these pupils were able to predict and extend the sequence of square numbers up to 100. They also identified rules and recognised patterns for triangular numbers up to 91. All pupils have developed good skills in accurately measuring angles and can name acute, obtuse and reflex angles. They can define lines of symmetry and have a well developed understanding of probability. Their investigative work is often of a high standard. Pupils use their mathematical skills in geography and science to present their data in a variety of forms, including line and bar graphs.

103. Pupils' attitude towards mathematics is good and sometimes very good. Pupils show interest in their work, sustain high levels of concentration and generally approach their tasks with enthusiasm throughout the school, pupils are keen to be involved in their lessons and confidently demonstrate their mathematical thinking. Older pupils take a mature and sensible approach to their work. In all lessons relationships are very good. Pupils are able to work co-operatively and they share resources effectively and with care. This positive response to lessons ensures that pupils make good progress and develop good understanding of new mathematical concepts.
104. Mathematics is taught well. Teaching is never less than satisfactory and is frequently good to better. Teachers have a good knowledge of the numeracy strategy. They are clear about what pupils are to learn and how this is to be achieved. Planning is exceptionally good. Learning objectives are clear, precise and always shared with pupils. Questions are used effectively to ensure that all pupils take part. Teachers listen carefully to pupils' answers and respond constructively in order to take forward their learning. In the best lessons, teachers give accurate, well paced explanations, have high expectations and set challenging tasks. This was clearly seen in a Year 3 lesson on doubling large numbers and in a Year 6 lesson where higher-attaining pupils were able to explore the Ertasthenes method for finding prime numbers. Activities are matched to pupils' differing needs and those with special educational needs are well supported in their learning. Regular assessments are made of pupils' attainment and this is effectively used to plan future work.
105. The introduction of the National Numeracy Strategy and the associated training that teachers have received has enhanced the mathematics curriculum. The recently appointed mathematics co-ordinator is well organised and has completed a useful action plan, which will lead the school in the right direction. This will help support and further improve pupil attainment.

Science

106. Standards of attainment in the national science tests in 1999 were in line with national averages but below those for similar schools. This is lower than in previous years when the results were in line both with the national average and the average for similar schools. This fall is due to the high proportion of pupils with special educational needs and the small size of the year group tested.
107. The attainment of pupils currently in school is line with the national expectations at both key stages. Pupils make a good start to the development of scientific knowledge in the reception class and throughout the infant years. By the time that they are seven pupils have a sound understanding of the main parts of animals and plants, the basic requirements for life and simple life cycles. They can identify a range of materials and categorise them based on their properties. They have a sound knowledge of simple forces and are beginning to recognise the scientific link between cause and effect. They are starting to understand the need for fairness in experimental science and they can identify simple variables that need to be controlled in order to ensure that results can be compared. They have experience of using a range of simple scientific equipment and the majority of pupils use such equipment well.
108. By the time that they leave school most pupils have a good scientific vocabulary. They use it appropriately in their work and they are able to discuss simple scientific principles knowledgeably. They are confident in designing experiments to test their hypotheses and they understand the need to identify and control variables. Pupils have a good understanding of key scientific ideas and they are able to record and analyse their findings systematically. They use tables of results, graphs and charts when required and the more able eleven year olds are able to make their own decisions about the most appropriate way to display their results. This work is often supported by the use of computers to analyse simple data and pupils use these with confidence. Standards in science are underpinned by satisfactory progress across the school. Progress in the investigative aspects of science is more rapid and the oldest pupils are skilled in this approach.

109. Teaching in science is never less than satisfactory and is often good. Lessons are very well prepared and carefully organised. Teachers make good use of questioning to help pupils reflect on previous work and to provide the background to new activities. Group work is well managed and there are particularly good examples of collaborative work when pupils are working on investigations. Teachers take care to ensure that pupils of all ages are appropriately challenged and always use technically accurate vocabulary in their teaching. Resources are well used and this use is carefully planned for as part of the lesson preparation. A particularly good example of this was in a lesson on materials when an investigation was supported by pre-prepared resource packs for all of the working groups.
110. Pupils enjoy science. They work well together and on occasions individually. They are enthusiastic and they concentrate well on the task in hand. They make good use prior knowledge and older pupils in particular apply their knowledge well in new situations. They are particularly keen on investigative work and work hard to come up with sensible hypotheses and practical ways of organising a fair test.
111. The subject is well managed. There is good guidance documentation to support teachers. Good use is made of non-teaching support. There are good levels of resources and these are carefully organised and stored.

OTHER SUBJECTS OR COURSES

Art

112. Attainment in art is in line with national expectations at the end of both key stages.
113. At Key Stage 1 pupils learn to use a range of media including paint, pencils and crayons. They make sensible choices of colour and they are able to observe closely to support their drawing and painting. By the time they are seven pupils can draw and paint both from observation, using their imagination and based on the style of other artists. They produce interesting collages, using paper and textiles and are able to model in a variety of media. Opportunities are offered to pupils to develop their understanding of artists' work, including Picasso and Van Gogh.
114. At Key Stage 2 pupils build on these skills and by the time they are eleven they can produce work using a wide range of materials, including charcoal, pastels, textiles and clay. They produce good quality, accurate drawings from life and they demonstrate good use of imagination in pattern and fabric work. Pupils in lower Key Stage 2 produce good examples of three-dimensional modelling and illuminated writing linked to their history topic of Romans and Anglo-Saxons. All pupils have an understanding about the work of a number of artists, including Monet and Turner, and a minority of pupils can discuss their feelings about the artists' intentions.
115. Progress at both key stages is satisfactory. All pupils, including special educational needs pupils, build steadily on their prior attainment.

Design and Technology

116. Attainment in design and technology is in line with the expectations defined in the National Curriculum. By the time that they are seven pupils can make simple models using card and plastic. They can cut accurately and they are able to plan their work in advance. They can compare their work with their plans and evaluate how successful they were in meeting their intended outcome.
117. Junior pupils build on these skills using an increasing range of materials and tools. Pupils have refined their design skills and can plan quite sophisticated projects. The most able pupils measure with accuracy and produce work of good quality. They are able to work with food and evaluate the success of various recipes. Pupils make steady progress in all aspects of the subject and by the time that they are eleven they have achieved satisfactory standards in designing, making and evaluating their work.

Geography

118. Pupils' attainment and progress in geography is in line with national expectation at the end of both key stages. Since the last inspection planning has improved and now geographical skills and themes are taught with continuity and progression.
119. The number of lesson observations was limited during the inspection. However, it is evident from discussions with pupils, examining their work and class displays, that a well planned curriculum has been developed by the co-ordinator. This has resulted in improved policy and guidelines.
120. By the age of seven pupils have a sound knowledge of their own locality and comment accurately about the differences in places and buildings they know. They use this knowledge to compare similarities and differences with other European countries. Their work with Barnaby Bear is giving a stimulus which the pupils relate to and talk about with affection.
121. By the time they are eleven, pupils have a satisfactory knowledge and understanding of other locations in the world. They are able to compare and contrast aspects of local features with those of other more distant locations. Geographical skills in map work and in understanding weather systems are in line with national expectations.

History

122. Pupils' attainment in history is in line with national expectations at both key stages. Planning in history has improved since the last inspection and now ensures consistent coverage of the subject.
123. Younger pupils are developing a sense of the past through time lines and can distinguish old artefacts from modern ones. They are developing a sound knowledge of historical facts and are learning to use pictures, books and artefacts as primary sources of information. By the time they are seven pupils understand that changes take place over time, using examples such as their own growth and development.
124. At Key Stage 2 pupils develop research skills which give them access to a range of historical sources, including books, photographs and artefacts. They have produced interesting timelines that demonstrate their growing awareness of the chronology that links events in history. Younger Key Stage 2 pupils have a good understanding of Roman and Anglo-Saxon times, whilst older pupils are knowledgeable about Victorian times. The key skill of literacy is used effectively in history and speaking and listening skills are also used well. For instance, in a Year 5/6 class pupils confidently discussed the type of advertisements and an article for a Victorian newspaper, on the opening of a new railway station. All pupils, including those with special educational needs, make satisfactory progress.

Information Technology

125. Standards and progress in information technology are satisfactory throughout the school. By the time they are seven, pupils use a computer independently and with confidence. They are able to select and load a program. All pupils are familiar with the keyboard and mouse. Many can save and print their work without help. The youngest pupils can use programs to reinforce learning of letters and numbers, while the older Key Stage 1 pupils learn about aspects of science, geography and art.
126. By the time pupils are eleven they have satisfactory knowledge of word-processing, using data-handling to produce graphs and using the computer to control a range of devices. Pupils in Key Stage 2 use information technology effectively to support their learning in areas of the curriculum. The older Key Stage 2 pupils are using a range of data-handling and graphic modes to plan a party. Pupils enjoy using IT and are motivated to achieve highly. They co-operate well when working together to solve problems and develop investigations.
127. Throughout the school information technology features in many displays. Attractive labels, pictures and equipment on display make a satisfactory contribution to the curriculum.

Music

128. Overall standards in music are in line with expectation for age by the end of both key stages. By the time they are seven, pupils know the words and melody of a range of nursery rhymes and songs. They can use their voices to good effect. By the time they are eleven, pupils learn and perform a range of songs unaccompanied with good expression and a clear sense of rhythm. They are particularly good at singing rounds. They develop a sense of beat and can copy and create rhythm pattern. Most pupils have a satisfactory knowledge of composition and are able to listen carefully and reflect on how music can be used to convey mood.
129. Progress across the school is at least satisfactory and in some cases good. Pupils listen to a range of music both in lessons and assemblies. The school is planning to extend its music collection to include music from non-European countries. The school makes effective use of the peripatetic music teacher and this has a positive impact on enriching the schools musical capability.

Physical Education

130. Attainment in PE is in line with the expectations defined in the National Curriculum. Pupils in the infant classes develop sound control of movement. They can skip, jump, run and hop in a controlled way. They can use these to interpret music and are starting to develop simple sequences of linked movements. By the time that they are seven pupils are able to use simple games equipment and take part in small-scale team games. Most of them can throw and catch accurately balls of different sizes.
131. These skills are built upon in the junior classes and pupils develop a sound range of physical skills. By the time that they leave school at the age of eleven, they can create and perform quite complex sequences of movements both with and without music. They know the basic rules of common team games and they have developed a good level of ball skills. This aspect of the PE curriculum is further supported by the good levels of extra-curricular sport. At one time or another through the school year pupils can take part in football, netball, basketball, rugby, cricket and cross-country. The majority of pupils can swim 25 metres by the time that they leave school, although at the time of the inspection provision for swimming was restricted by the unavailability of the local learner pool.
132. Pupils at both key stages have a good awareness of safety issues in PE and they know about the effects of exercise on health. It is difficult for the school to provide fully for some of the games aspects of PE which would normally take place out-of-doors, because of the poor state of the playground.
133. Teaching in these subjects across the school is rarely less than satisfactory and often good or very good. Lessons are well planned and prepared with intended learning objectives precisely defined. This thorough planning helps to ensure that teachers can make the best use of the time available to them. The majority of lessons are well organised, interesting and proceed at a brisk pace.
134. Teachers are confident in their subject knowledge and make sure that pupils are introduced to the specialist vocabulary associated with each subject. So, for example, in a history lesson on justice in Anglo-Saxon England the teacher introduced and explained terms such as thane, wergild and trial by ordeal. He usefully supported these explanations by using modern-day comparisons. In all subjects teachers make good use of question and answer sessions. In the best lessons they carefully match questions to groups of pupils so that all pupils across the ability range are challenged to think and build on what they already know.
135. Teachers are careful in their teaching to reinforce pupils' literacy and numeracy skills. They do this by sensibly emphasising key points, particularly in writing, which helps pupils to recognise that basic skills can be applied to a wide range of learning situations. Very occasionally there are unsatisfactory elements to teaching. This is usually because the balance between instruction and activity is wrong. Children spend too long listening to the teacher and some of them understandably lose concentration and this effects their ability to get on with the work set.
136. However, there are examples of good and very good teaching across the school and these lessons really motivate pupils to work hard and to develop real enthusiasm for the work in hand. The careful identification of learning objectives in the approach to planning together with the well-paced and interesting lessons, ensures that good learning habits are fostered and that pupils steadily build on their prior attainment in all subjects.
137. Pupils respond well to this good teaching in all subjects. They are enthusiastic in their approach to learning and eager to demonstrate what they can do. Pupils work very well together and independently. They make good use of resources including computers and they are generally purposeful in their approach to learning. Behaviour in lessons is almost always good and pupils concentrate on their work. Very occasionally, when introductory sessions are too long, pupils become distracted and noise levels rise but, in the vast majority of lessons, pupils are keen to work and eager to learn.

PART C: INSPECTION DATA

SUMMARY OF INSPECTION EVIDENCE

138. The inspection was carried out by a team of 4 inspectors. During the week of the inspection 81 lessons or parts of lessons were observed. In addition observations were made during registration, assemblies, break times and lunch time. A cross-section of pupils in every year group was heard to read. Samples of work were examined from all classes and teachers' planning files inspected. Discussions were held with pupils, staff, parents and the chair of governors.

139. The documentation provided by the school was analysed both before and during the inspection and budget figures and other financial information were examined. The inspectors also considered the views of parents, expressed in response to a questionnaire and at a meeting held at the school.

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	85	2	43	14

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers (YR - Y6)

Total number of qualified teachers (full-time equivalent)

4

Number of pupils per qualified teacher

16

Education support staff (YR - Y6)

Total number of education support staff

1

Total aggregate hours worked each week

30

Average class size:

21

Financial data

Financial year:

1999

	£
Total Income	171,101.00
Total Expenditure	161,281.00
Expenditure per pupil	1,901.00
Balance brought forward from previous year	22,705.00
Balance carried forward to next year	32,525.00

PARENTAL SURVEY

Number of questionnaires sent out:	63
Number of questionnaires returned:	19

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	68.4	31.6	0	0	0
I would find it easy to approach the school with questions or problems to do with my child(ren)	73.7	26.3	0	0	0
The school handles complaints from parents well	36.8	63.2	0	0	0
The school gives me a clear understanding of what is taught	52.6	47.4	0	0	0
The school keeps me well informed about my child(ren)'s progress	68.4	31.6	0	0	0
The school enables my child(ren) to achieve a good standard of work	63.2	36.8	0	0	0
The school encourages children to get involved in more than just their daily lessons	63.2	36.8	0	0	0
I am satisfied with the work that my child(ren) is/are expected to do at home	47.4	47.4	5.3	0	0
The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)	84.2	15.8	0	0	0
The school achieves high standards of good behaviour	78.9	21.1	0	0	0
My child(ren) like(s) school	78.9	21.1	0	0	0

Other issues raised by parents

The only concern raised by parents beyond these responses was over the condition of the playground.