

INSPECTION REPORT

Mowden Infant School

Darlington

LEA area: Darlington LEA

Unique Reference Number: 114182

Headteacher: Mr C. J. Taylor

Reporting inspector: Mr P. M. Allen
OIN 17531

Dates of inspection: 22nd – 24th May 2000

Inspection number: 188289

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

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INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Type of school:	Infant
School category:	Community
Age range of pupils:	4 – 7
Gender of pupils:	Mixed
School address:	Bushel Hill Drive
Postcode:	Darlington DL3 9QG
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Appropriate authority:	Governing Body
Name of chair of governors:	Mrs S. Mortimer
Date of previous inspection:	10 th June 1996

INFORMATION ABOUT THE INSPECTION TEAM

Team members		Subject Responsibilities	Aspect responsibilities
Mr P. M. Allen	Registered inspector	English	What sort of school is it?
		Geography	How high are standards?
		Music	
		Under-fives	
		Equal opportunities	
		Special educational needs	
Mr P. Berry	Lay inspector		Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development
			How well does the school care for its pupils?
			How well does the school work in partnership with parents?
Mrs A. Brangan	Team inspector	Mathematics	How well are pupils taught?
		Information technology	How good are the curricular and other opportunities offered to pupils?
		Design and technology	
		Religious education	
Mr J.S. Lord	Team inspector	Science	How well is the school led and managed?
		Art	
		History	
		Physical education	
		English as an additional language	

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PART A: SUMMARY OF THE REPORT

INFORMATION ABOUT THE SCHOOL

Mowden Infant School is an average sized school situated on the western outskirts of Darlington in an area of private housing. Most children live in the immediate area, although a smaller number come from the surrounding communities. The school is oversubscribed. There are 197 pupils on roll, with virtually the same number of boys as girls. There are seven classes, two for Reception, three for Year 1 and two for Year 2. There has been some instability in the teaching provision due to long term teacher absence. At the time of the inspection, two of the seven classes were taken by supply teachers who were relatively new to the classes. Although there is a wide range of attainment when children start school, overall attainment is above average on entry into the Reception classes. Most of the children have had experience of pre-school education, many of them through the playgroup which shares the school's premises. Older children start in the September of the year after their fourth birthday, whilst younger children start in January. The vast majority of children are of white ethnic origin. There are 19 pupils on the register for special educational needs of whom two have a Statement of Special Educational Need. The school aims to provide an environment which is stimulating, challenging, happy, friendly and purposeful. The school has set targets for future development, with information technology as a priority, together with further developing links with the adjacent junior school.

HOW GOOD THE SCHOOL IS

This is an effective school, where there is a will to become more effective. The school is aware of the need to develop a number of areas to improve the quality of education. The most notable of these is information technology. Standards are high in reading, writing and mathematics. The quality of teaching has improved, most of it being good. The school benefits from the care and commitment of the headteacher. In light of the costs involved, the standards achieved and the quality of education provided, the school gives satisfactory value for money.

WHAT THE SCHOOL DOES WELL

- ◆ The National Curriculum results in the core subjects have been consistently good over recent years.
- ◆ The good provision for pupils with special educational needs leads to good progress.
- ◆ Pupils have positive attitudes to learning and standards of behaviour are good.
- ◆ The provision for spiritual, moral and social development is good.
- ◆ The school enjoys a very good partnership with parents who are very supportive.
- ◆ The school has a caring, community ethos.
- ◆ The staff work hard with a strong commitment to the school.

WHAT COULD BE IMPROVED

- ◆ The information technology curriculum and provision.
- ◆ The balance of time given to subjects.
- ◆ The organisation of the classes for the year group with a very high number of pupils.
- ◆ The arrangements for subject leadership and co-ordination.
- ◆ The resources to support the curriculum for the under-fives.
- ◆ Self-evaluation of the school's performance.

- ♦ The school development plan.

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

HOW THE SCHOOL HAS IMPROVED SINCE ITS LAST INSPECTION

The school has moved steadily forward since its last inspection in June 1996. The National Curriculum results since that time indicate that standards have risen in reading, writing and mathematics. Evidence suggests that the quality of teaching has improved. The key issues from the previous report have been largely addressed. More challenging work has been provided, the management of the school has been developed and assessment procedures have improved, as has the guidance for curriculum planning. Although the school has continued to review its planning and monitoring systems, there is still a need to ensure the balance and breadth of the curriculum, including the appropriate coverage of the National Curriculum. There is a shared will to improve the quality of education provided and this can be achieved through a focused programme of review and development.

STANDARDS

The table shows the standards achieved by 7 year olds based on average point scores in National Curriculum tests.

Performance in:	compared with				Key
	all schools			similar schools	
	1997	1998	1999	1999	
Reading	A*	A	A	A	very high A* well above average A above average B average C below average D well below average E
Writing	A*	A	A	C	
Mathematics	A*	A	A	A	

Standards for the under-fives are good. The children are in line to meet the prescribed outcomes of learning for children of that age and many will exceed them. They attain particularly well in language and literacy and in mathematics. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are judged to be good and above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. These judgements are not quite reflected in the results over recent years, where standards were judged to be slightly higher. Standards in science are judged to be good across the school. Standards in information technology are unsatisfactory, as pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. The high standards attained in the core subjects are very creditable.

PUPILS' ATTITUDES AND VALUES

Aspect	Comment
Attitudes of the pupils	Virtually all the pupils have positive attitudes to school with a willingness to try hard and do well.
Behaviour, in and out of classrooms	Pupils behave well, both in the classroom and in the playground. They are courteous, polite and welcoming to visitors.

Personal development and relationships	Relationships throughout the school are good and good provision is made for the pupils' personal development.
Attendance	Attendance is very good, being well above national averages.

The good attendance, behaviour and relationships all contribute to the quality of education provided.

TEACHING AND LEARNING

Teaching of pupils:	aged up to 5 years	aged 5 - 7 years
Lessons seen	good overall	satisfactory and often 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.

At the time of the inspection, two of the seven classes were taken by supply teachers, both relatively new to the classes. Their teaching made a positive contribution to the overall evaluations. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. It was very good in 15 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 49 per cent and satisfactory in all the remainder. The teaching benefits from the very good support of the classroom assistants. The teaching shows a commitment to the raising of standards. The skills of literacy and numeracy are taught well, effective use being made of the national strategies. The needs of the pupils, including those with special educational needs, are generally met. The quality of teaching has a positive impact on the pupils' response to the work. They become engaged in their learning and benefit from the supportive quality of the relationships.

OTHER ASPECTS OF THE SCHOOL

Aspect	Comment
The quality and range of the curriculum	The curriculum for children in Reception is generally broad and balanced. The curriculum at Key Stage 1 is insufficiently balanced. There needs to be a review of the time given to particular subjects, such as science. The information technology curriculum needs significant development.
Provision for pupils with special educational needs	The provision is good and the pupils benefit from the good quality of support from the teachers and the classroom assistants. Parents value this support which ensures that pupils make good progress.
Provision for pupils' personal, including spiritual, moral, social and cultural, development	There is good provision for spiritual, moral and social development and sound provision for cultural development; the pupils respond well in these areas.
How well the school cares for its pupils	The staff care well for the pupils but there are some health and safety matters, of which the school is aware, which need attention.

There is a need to audit curriculum time and to ensure that pupils receive their entitlement

in information technology.

HOW WELL THE SCHOOL IS LED AND MANAGED

Aspect	Comment
Leadership and management by the headteacher and other key staff	The school benefits from the care and commitment of its experienced headteacher. The headteacher and deputy are providing sound leadership and management with a clear will to take the school forward.
How well the appropriate authority fulfils its responsibilities	The governing body meets its statutory requirements and is very supportive of the school. Governors have a will to become more involved in monitoring and improving the work of the school.
The school's evaluation of its performance	There is clear recognition that the school is in the early stages of self-evaluation of its performance. This process can form an integral part of a school improvement plan, which would replace the school development plan and provide a long-term view of planned review and development.
The strategic use of resources	The school generally manages its resources in a systematic and prudent way. Financial resources are managed carefully and the school is beginning to apply the principles of best value.

Accommodation and resources are generally well used, although the further development of resources in information technology and for the under-fives would enhance the provision.

PARENTS' AND CARERS' VIEWS OF THE SCHOOL

What pleases parents most	What parents would like to see improved
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The good progress made. ◆ The standards of behaviour. ◆ Good teaching. ◆ The approachability of the school. ◆ The expectation that children will work hard. ◆ The support given to children to become mature and responsible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Some feel there is too much homework for Reception children. ◆ Some feel there should be more challenging work for the more able pupils.

The school is aware of these particular concerns and is working hard to address them. Overall, most parents are happy with the homework provision. The view of the inspection team is that the homework provision is good and that the higher attaining pupils are generally well provided for, especially in literacy and numeracy. The vast majority of views expressed, including those contained in a good number of letters, were very supportive of the school. Inspectors' judgements broadly support those of parents. The school enjoys a good partnership with the parents who are very supportive of the school.

PART B: COMMENTARY

HOW HIGH ARE STANDARDS?

The school's results and achievements

1. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are judged to be good and above national averages in reading, writing and mathematics. These judgements are not quite reflected in the results over recent years, where standards were judged to be slightly higher. Standards in science are judged to be good across the school. Standards in information technology are unsatisfactory, as pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. In religious education, pupils' standards of attainment are satisfactory and meet the requirements of the locally agreed syllabus. The high standards attained in the core subjects are very creditable.

2. In the National Curriculum assessments in 1999, the number of pupils attaining the expected level 2 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average. The proportion achieving at the higher level 3 was also well above the national average. In writing, attainment was well above the national average for pupils reaching level 2; the proportion achieving at the higher level 3 was in line with the national average. The performance in reading and writing was well above average compared with all schools. It was high in reading when compared to similar schools, but only in line in writing. Taking the four years, from 1996 to 1999 together, national performance data confirms that the pupils have performed at a higher level in reading tests than in writing tasks. The school has targeted raising standards in writing during the current school year and is confident of better results in the summer 2000 tests.

3. In mathematics results for 1999, the number of pupils attaining both level 2 and level 3 were well above the national averages. In comparison with similar schools, standards were also well above average. This pattern of attainment is clearly reflected when considering the results over four years from 1996 to 1999.

4. Assessments made when children enter the Reception classes clearly indicate that standards are generally above what might be expected of children of this age. Children make a good start to school and progress in the Reception classes is good although, understandably, progress is more marked for those who spend a full year in Reception. Standards for the under-fives are good. The children are in line to meet the prescribed outcomes of learning for children of this age and many will exceed them. They attain particularly well in language and literacy and in mathematics. The good progress is helped by thorough planning, careful match of work to their needs and the very good contribution made by support staff. The quality of teaching has a significant impact on the progress made by the children.

5. The National Literacy Strategy has been implemented successfully and is having a positive impact on standards. Pupils have very positive attitudes to their language work, they enjoy what they do and make sound and sometimes good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1, attainment in reading exceeds the national average, most pupils becoming fluent readers. Pupils attain good standards in speaking and listening. They are given good opportunities to engage in purposeful discussion which helps them to develop ideas and opinions and respond to the views of others. In writing, skills are promoted well and both spelling and grammar are developed appropriately. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils write in sentences and use full stops and capital letters appropriately.

Imaginative writing and comprehension skills are developed well. Pupils make good use of their English skills in other subjects, such as geography, history and religious education. Information technology is insufficiently used to access information and word processing skills are underdeveloped. Standards of handwriting and presentation are inconsistent across the school and need improving.

6. The National Numeracy Strategy is successfully implemented and is having a positive impact, especially in the development of mental skills. Pupils attain good standards in numeracy skills. By the end of Key Stage 1, most pupils have a good understanding of number and number patterns and can explain the mental processes they use when solving problems. Most have good problem solving skills. Higher attainers are developing different strategies and methods for working out addition and subtraction problems. Pupils have good attitudes to mathematics and make sound and sometimes good progress throughout the school.

7. The good attainment in science is broadly reflected in the results of the statutory teacher assessments for pupils attaining level 2, when results were well above the national average and in line with those found in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was well above the national average and above that found in similar schools. In Reception, children make a good start in science and make good progress. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have developed a good knowledge of living things and life processes. They make satisfactory progress relative to their ability. The judgement of the inspection team is that although the teaching and learning at Years 1 and 2 effectively consolidates knowledge, it does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply skills and understanding in new contexts.

8. Standards in information technology are unsatisfactory as pupils do not receive their National Curriculum entitlement. The school is aware of the problem and a comprehensive subject development plan is in place, evidencing clear intent to address the issue. Progress is slight and by the end of Key Stage 1, the pupils' knowledge and understanding of the subject is unsatisfactory. Pupils have too few opportunities to learn and practise skills and to apply these skills to support learning in other areas of the curriculum.

9. Pupils have good attitudes to their work and make sound and sometimes good progress in all foundation subjects. Progress is at least satisfactory in art, geography, history and music. Progress is good in design and technology and physical education.

10. Pupils with special educational needs benefit well from the effective support provided in literacy and numeracy lessons by the classroom assistants. Throughout the school, pupils with special educational needs make generally good progress, especially in the acquisition of basic skills. Pupils show interest in their work and persevere. They receive good support both in and out of the classroom. This, together with the detailed and realistic targets set in their individual education plans, contributes well to both the pupils' attainment and progress and their self-esteem.

Pupils' attitudes, values and personal development

11. Throughout the school, the pupils' attitudes to learning are good. They maintain a high level of interest in their work, showing commitment and perseverance. They listen attentively to information and respond with enthusiasm when answering teachers' questions. Most pupils, including those who are under five and those who have special educational needs, are able to work at a good rate and progress well. Pupils are keen to

learn and parents were unanimous in saying that their children like school.

12. The standard of behaviour is good; this was strongly endorsed by the parents' response to the inspection questionnaire. Behaviour in lessons is usually good. There have been no exclusions from the school and no instances of serious misbehaviour were seen during the inspection. Pupils know what is expected of them and they generally behave accordingly during lunchtimes and morning break.

13. The movement of pupils around the school is very orderly and this enables the school to function efficiently. Movement to and from assembly, and the attitudes and behaviour during assembly, were observed to be exemplary. The school is a welcoming establishment where good constructive relationships are formed both between the pupils and between pupils and adults. Pupils work and play well together in an atmosphere free from oppression.

14. Pupils' personal development is good. The pupils are courteous and trustworthy showing suitable respect for property and for the views of others. They willingly accept responsibilities, such as helping their teachers to tidy the room, delivering registers and clearing away the meal trays. Pupils in Year 2 elect their own representatives to serve on a school council. Educational visits out of school, talks from visitors and charity fund-raising enhance the pupils' development. The levels of attendance over the last two years have been very good, being well above the national average for primary schools. There is only a minimal level of unauthorised absence and this is invariably due to holidays taken during term time. Pupils arrive on time enabling the lessons to start promptly.

15. Within the school's caring ethos, the pupils are happy and confident. Overall, their attitudes, behaviour, attendance and personal development all make a significant contribution to the quality of education provided.

HOW WELL ARE PUPILS TAUGHT?

16. At the time of the inspection two of the seven classes were taken by supply teachers, both relatively new to the classes. Their teaching made a positive contribution to the overall evaluations. The quality of teaching is at least satisfactory, very often good and sometimes very good. It was very good in 15 per cent of the lessons observed, good in 49 per cent and satisfactory in all the remainder. There was no unsatisfactory teaching. These judgements reflect a clear improvement in the quality of teaching since the last inspection. The very good teaching, mainly in Reception and Year 1, is characterised by very good pupil management and very good working relationships both between the teacher and pupils and amongst the pupils themselves. In the very well taught lessons, teachers have high expectations, both in terms of work and behaviour. Positive but firm relationships ensure high standards of behaviour. Most teachers carefully check on pupils' skills development and use assessment to check whether pupils understand the work and, if not, why not. The teaching benefits significantly from the help of the support staff.

17. There are many strengths and few weaknesses in the teaching. Where teaching is most effective, lessons proceed at a good pace and a range of teaching strategies is used to good effect. In mathematics at Year 1, very good strategies are used bringing obvious enjoyment and very good learning to the lessons. To reinforce the three times multiplication table a 'dance bend routine' is practised whilst one pupil records findings on a 100 square. Another good strategy used to retain interest is using 'soft toys' to choose

three-dimensional shapes from a 'magic bag' to reinforce the properties of three-dimensional shapes.

18. Where the teaching is less effective, the lessons proceed at a slower pace and teaching approaches are less well matched to the interests and abilities of the pupils. The school needs to review its teaching arrangements for music. At the time of the inspection, all lessons were taken by the co-ordinator with pairs of classes grouped together. On one occasion, this involved teaching 69 pupils in one lesson. Although pupils were able to benefit from singing practice, the arrangement was unsatisfactory for work in composition and appraisal of music. The school makes use of a very structured scheme of work which the teachers are capable of using effectively.

19. Teachers' subject knowledge is generally good particularly in the basic skills of numeracy and literacy. They are able to give clear explanations of the work and to extend the learning of pupils of all abilities. This enables pupils to acquire new knowledge and skills effectively. Although expectations are generally high, this is not the case with handwriting and presentation, where sometimes, teachers accept low standards. In information technology many teachers lack confidence and their subject knowledge is insufficient to enable them to teach the subject effectively. In music, teachers need to gain confidence by being involved in the teaching, whereas at the time of the inspection, they were not. The teaching of phonics and other basic skills is good. There is recognition in the school of the need to plan for the monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning in order to further raise standards.

20. Teachers' planning overall is good; they plan in year groups especially the key areas of mathematics and English. They plan different work for pupils of different abilities so that all are given work which is at the right level for them. This clear planning enables pupils of all abilities to apply intellectual, physical and creative effort appropriately as they work. In order to challenge and inspire their pupils, teachers plan interesting and enjoyable activities and present them in an engaging manner so that they are well motivated to do their best. These planning and teaching methods enable all pupils to learn effectively and to show interest and sustain concentration. Where subjects are taught as part of cross-curricular topics there is some inconsistency in planning which can lead to insufficient time within a topic being given to each subject. This was particularly the case in science.

21. In most lessons seen, teachers manage pupils well, good working relationships are established and a purposeful working atmosphere is created. Teachers generally make good use of time, support staff and resources although, in Reception, resources are limited. Teachers have developed good working relationships with support staff and these relationships operate to the benefit of all the pupils. The use of information technology across the curriculum is unsatisfactory and many opportunities are missed with teachers leaving computers unused when they could be making valuable contributions to learning in all curriculum areas.

22. The understanding which teachers show of the individual needs of their pupils and the good provision for pupils with special educational needs are strengths. The use of homework supports the teaching. Although teachers spend time marking work, the quality is variable and this is an area for review and development.

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

23. The school meets statutory requirements in respect of the core subjects and has adopted the locally agreed syllabus for religious education. The school offers a curriculum which appropriately gives priority to the core subjects of English and mathematics. A key issue from the last report was concern about the balance and breadth of the curriculum. This has not been fully addressed. There is sufficient breadth but insufficient time given to both science and information technology. There is insufficient depth and breadth in the subjects of art, history and geography which are taught under topic headings. The planning and assessment of these subjects needs to ensure that all areas of the curriculum are appropriately balanced. In this way the balance of time given to the subjects can be improved and this could be considered in conjunction with the new, revised National Curriculum 2000. Pupils need fuller and more regular access to the programmes of study in information technology in order to receive their full entitlement. The curriculum can be enriched through the development of information technology programmes of study to support learning across the various areas.

24. Individual teachers have no responsibility for leading the subjects and instead a system of team responsibility is in place. Therefore, no single subject manager is in a position to co-ordinate the work and its development. The statutory provision for both music and the daily collective act of worship, which were not being met at the time of the last inspection, have been reviewed. Statutory requirements are now met for the collective act of worship. The large number of pupils being taught music as double class groups is not conducive to pupils being given opportunities to perform, create simple compositions and appraise sounds and pieces of music.

25. Schemes of work for literacy and numeracy follow nationally agreed strategies and provide a clear framework for long term planning. Staff have been well prepared through in-service and in-school activities for the introduction of the two national strategies. This has contributed to the effectiveness of the teaching of the basic skills of both literacy and numeracy which is having a positive impact on standards.

26. There is good provision for pupils' personal, social and health education. The school's prospectus informs parents how sensitive issues will be taught. Whilst no formal sex education is taught, questions which arise informally are dealt with in a sensitive and understanding way. The school is a member of the 'Healthy Schools Project' and, for example, encourages pupils to bring fruit instead of sweets to school. The school has achieved the 'Eco Schools Green Award' for taking action towards protecting the environment, which the school believes is an important area in the development of the pupils' social education. The school's daily assembly regularly encourages all pupils to reflect upon their lives.

27. There is a limited range of extra-curricular activities available to the pupils due to their young age. An environmental 'Ground Project', which involves encouraging plants native to the area to thrive, the planting of trees and the creation of a wildlife area has been introduced by a parent governor and is now becoming well established. The parents have raised money for this and both parents and pupils meet on some Saturday mornings to develop this project. Recycling facilities are being introduced.

28. The curriculum is enriched through the good use of the local area. Pupils visit local

churches and supermarkets. Durham Cathedral and Beamish Museum are visited as part of the history and geography topics. Good links have developed between the school and the community contributing very effectively to the pupils' learning. Visits to the school by the nurse, the local police to give talks on road safety and the transport police to talk about the danger of playing near railway lines, are arranged. A very well organised session led by a council officer and well supported by the class teacher and school patrol officer was observed during the inspection; this session gave very good guidance on road safety.

29. Provision for pupils with special educational needs is good. They are supported through the provision of differentiated activities and the work of the support staff. Individual education plans for these pupils are appropriate and used very effectively to determine their work. Their work is monitored and their progress is evaluated in relation to the individual targets set. Good use is made of support staff so that teachers can give more of their time to groups or individuals as appropriate.

30. All pupils have full access to the curriculum except for information technology. The school promotes equal opportunities successfully, based on the principles of fairness. All pupils have equal access to all the activities provided by the school, with girls and boys working and playing well together.

31. The school has good links with both the pre-school group operating within the spare classroom and the safe play club run by registered leaders from this room before and after school. Good links are established between the school and the adjacent junior school with both headteachers working collaboratively for the benefit of all pupils. Very good transfer arrangements are in place to ensure that pupils move from one school to another with minimum disruption to their learning. A new innovation is the sharing of the information technology policy and the schemes of work across both key stages. Year 2 pupils have enjoyed the recently introduced weekly access to the computer suite at the junior school. One of the school's future targets is to further develop links with the junior school so that the curriculum provision promotes continuity from Reception to Year 6.

32. The school makes good provision for the pupils' spiritual, moral and social development and sound provision for their cultural development. The school has a caring community ethos, which is founded on a clear set of values and well-defined aims. There is a strong commitment from all staff to these aspects and the children respond positively. The good relationships between staff, pupils and parents create a warm, friendly atmosphere in which the pupils are able to flourish.

33. The assemblies make a significant contribution to the school's provision for spiritual, moral and social development. The pupils listen attentively to both Biblical and other stories; for example, how and why Dr Barnardo Homes were set up to cater for less fortunate children. Assemblies also have a strong moral content, teaching values such as honesty, respect and co-operation. In the previous inspection report it was judged that the daily act of collective worship did not meet statutory requirements; the school has addressed this point to ensure that acts of collective worship are of a broadly Christian character. Pupils are given appropriate opportunities to reflect on their own lives and the world in which they live. On Thursdays the school celebrates the 'Pupil of the Week', each class teacher nominating a child, and on Fridays pupils are chosen to celebrate their written work by reading it out. Pupils are also encouraged to be reflective through their schoolwork, particularly through personal writing in English and geography.

34. The school teaches the principles which distinguish right from wrong and there is an

appropriate Code of Conduct. Pupils are encouraged to take responsibility for their own actions. They show suitable respect for others and they work and play together harmoniously. The pupils listened appreciatively and gave sincere applause to the six pupils who had started learning to play the recorder and performed 'Hot Cross Buns' in assembly. Care for the environment is promoted very strongly by the school; for example, through the Mowden Environment and Grounds Action. The local Member of Parliament has recently presented the school with a Green Flag Award. Cleanliness and tidiness are promoted through the caretaker's weekly award to the best class.

35. Pupils' social development is enriched by their involvement with the local community, including the school's good partnership with the parents. Pupils help to choose charities to support, such as the RNIB. They develop an understanding of citizenship through educational visits, assemblies and discussions with the teachers. Tasks and responsibilities are given to help promote their personal development.

36. Cultural development is promoted through music, religious education and through the topic work. Pupils gain useful insights into their own heritage through the community work and visits to Durham Cathedral. Through geography and history they gain knowledge of other times and other places. Although there are some opportunities to learn of other cultures, the school could develop this area more to promote deeper insights into the customs and festivals of a variety of faiths. The necessity for more diversity, in order to prepare pupils for the multicultural society in which they are growing up, was also highlighted in the school's previous report.

37. The parents were in strong agreement that the school helps their children to become mature and responsible. Overall, the provision for spiritual, moral and social development is a strength of the school.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL CARE FOR ITS PUPILS?

38. The school provides a happy, caring environment for its pupils. There are satisfactory policies and procedures in place to ensure that pastoral matters are dealt with promptly. The Reception children are welcomed into a cheerful and secure atmosphere and very good links with the adjacent junior school ensure a smooth transition for pupils at the end of Year 2. There is good monitoring of pupils' personal development in the Reception classes but less recording of their progress in Key Stage 1. Nevertheless all staff, including the supply teachers, know their pupils well.

39. The school has a very good staff handbook. Staff know the school's procedures and apply them consistently. Supervision is good, both during lessons and at break times. The school's Code of Conduct is appropriate, including procedures for the elimination of bullying and other oppressive behaviour. There is equality of access to all opportunities in school. The school actively promotes good attendance.

40. The school has adopted the local education authority's child protection policy. However, there has been no recent training for either the designated teacher or for other staff. Whilst a number of staff have trained in first aid, there has not yet been any such training provided for the lunchtime supervisory staff. Healthy eating and an active lifestyle are well promoted and overall provision for pupils' personal and social education is good. There is good support from external agencies, including the school nurse. Safety education is well promoted by visits from fire, police and road safety officers.

41. The school has a health and safety policy but the procedures need to be more formalised. Although there is an annual inspection by the local education authority, there are no regular, recorded safety inspections by the school itself. Hence a number of health and safety housekeeping matters were evident during the inspection; for example, trailing power leads and unsecured equipment stored around the hall. Additionally, no risk assessments have been undertaken and the school needs to ensure that it maintains a record log for all pupil accidents.
42. Based on its positive ethos, the school generally meets its aims of giving good support and guidance to its pupils. The individual needs of the children, including those with special educational needs, are well met. Overall, the school's caring philosophy enhances the pupils' confidence and contributes to the standards that are achieved.
43. The school has a satisfactory range of tests and assessments to monitor pupils' progress and identify levels of achievement. Baseline assessments are undertaken at the beginning and end of the Reception year and tests in reading and mathematics are given in Year 1 and Year 2. This has the potential to become an effective system through which the school can identify and monitor the progress of individuals and groups of pupils. It is already having an impact on the school's ability to identify pupils who need additional learning support. The school uses the analysis of statutory assessment tests, provided by the government and local education authority, to identify its strengths and weaknesses in English and mathematics. Writing has been highlighted as an area for development and action is being taken to improve this area of the curriculum.
44. There is effective recording of pupils' attainment and progress in English, mathematics and science, although systematic arrangements for recording have not been established in the other subjects. This leads to the annual reports to parents in these subjects reflecting more about what has been taught and pupils' attitudes than on standards attained and progress made.
45. The use of assessment information to inform the planning of work has significantly improved since the last inspection. Assessments are made at the conclusion of a topic. There is a coherent system whereby teachers use the information gained, particularly in literacy and numeracy, as a firm base for future planning, both in the short term and medium term. In the medium term this has led to work being planned for different ability levels and more challenging work is now provided for the higher attaining pupils. This is having an impact on the quality of pupils' learning with standards rising since the last inspection. In short term planning, there is clear evidence that teachers assess understanding in lessons through skilful questioning and observations. They record assessments on weekly planning sheets and these, plus evaluations, often lead to adjustments in planned work.
46. Although pupils' work is marked regularly, in most cases the marking is not clearly focused or used to evaluate learning; it does not make pupils aware of how they are progressing or set targets to improve. This is an area for development. Where individual, group or class target setting is used there is an improvement in the standards achieved, for example, in the presentation of work. The standard of handwriting and presentation is an area for the school to address.

HOW WELL DOES THE SCHOOL WORK IN PARTNERSHIP WITH PARENTS?

47. The school enjoys a very good partnership with the parents. Parents are in strong agreement that the school is welcoming and that the teachers are very approachable regarding any concerns. A large number of parents give valuable help within the school in curricular activities and on other work, such as the Mowden Environment and Grounds Action project to improve the grounds and the environment. The Friends of School group successfully run many events to raise additional funds for the school. There is a good home-school agreement in place.

48. Parents benefit from good communication about school matters in general and about their children's attainment and progress. There are three parents' evenings each year, often achieving participation by all families. Annual reports meet statutory requirements but could benefit from more information about attainment and progress. The school holds curricular information sessions for parents, which are repeated at differing times of the day in order to make them very accessible. Parents receive a very good, detailed and informative prospectus and the governing body produce a good annual report.

49. The school provides work for the pupils to do at home. Written comments by some parents and discussions during the inspection indicated that there is a wide variation in the amount of homework expected by parents. Within the Reception year, a number of parents indicated that there had been too much pressure on children at the start of the current year although they agreed that the school had listened to their concerns and had acted accordingly. In Key Stage 1, the inspection judged that the level of homework was appropriate but acknowledged that more opportunities could be made available for reading books to be taken home.

50. The impact of parents' involvement on the work of the school is good and their contribution to their children's learning is very good. The parents' questionnaire produced noticeably higher agreement percentages than those in the previous report, which indicates significant improvements in this respect. This partnership is now a strength of the school and makes a positive contribution to the quality of education and to the standards that are achieved.

HOW WELL IS THE SCHOOL LED AND MANAGED?

51. The school has made a steady improvement since the last inspection. Through their sound leadership and management, the headteacher and governing body have successfully addressed most of the issues raised. The school is well placed to make further improvements in order to make it more effective.

52. The school benefits from the care and commitment of the headteacher and he is well supported by staff and governors. There is educational direction for the school and the headteacher has successfully created a sense of teamwork amongst the staff. He has promoted positive relationships with colleagues, governors, parents and pupils and has their full confidence.

53. The governing body has a clear committee structure to enable it to fulfil its responsibilities and all statutory requirements are met. Regular meetings of the governing body and its committees have clear agendas and are well minuted. The governors' curriculum committee has an appropriate level of involvement with curriculum development issues. The chair of governors visits the school regularly and along with other members of the governing body takes an active role in monitoring the quality of education.

54. The previous report identified that there were no clear procedures for monitoring and reviewing the quality of teaching and learning in classrooms. Although the school has improved the position there is still some way to go. The formal monitoring of teaching that is taking place is limited. There is a system of peer monitoring where teachers observe the quality of teaching and provide feedback to one another. This system is informal and lacks the necessary rigour to assist in clear evaluation in order to set targets to raise standards of classroom practice.

55. The senior management team comprises the headteacher and deputy headteacher but there is lack of clarity in the overall management structure of the school. Each teacher shares responsibility for a number of subjects and while this is a useful system for co-operative working, it does not allow teachers to take a lead responsibility, especially in view of recent initiatives for literacy and numeracy. The present system of subject co-ordination is not helping teachers in the development and monitoring of subjects and this aspect of their role is having little impact on standards. This was an area for development identified in the previous inspection.

56. There is a comprehensive policy for special educational needs and all the statutory requirements of the national Code of Practice are met. Special educational needs provision is well organised and covers all the various stages of need arrangements for referral. All staff are fully aware of these. The special educational needs co-ordinator and classroom assistants provide effective help and work closely with the class teachers in planning, assessing and monitoring pupils' achievements. Individual education plans are suitably detailed. This is having a positive effect on the progress being made by these pupils.

57. The number, qualifications and experience of teachers and other classroom staff, including the two supply teachers, match the demands of the National Curriculum. The newly qualified teacher is well supported and benefits from a good induction procedure. The school offers effective support to teachers in training and they benefit from their involvement in school. All teaching and support staff are conscientious and work effectively as a team, contributing to the quality of education provided. The learning support staff make a very significant contribution to pupils' progress. All staff have appropriate job descriptions. Arrangements for the professional development of staff are sound and are linked to whole school needs. This makes a positive contribution to the improved standards of teaching. The office manager, site manager, cleaners and lunchtime supervisors, all make a positive contribution to the life of the school. Staff set good role models. The school has achieved the Investor in People Award indicating its commitment to the development of its employees.

58. Formal appraisal arrangements are not in place and this has been the case for a period of time. The headteacher has firm plans for improvement in this area now that he has received appropriate training in performance management.

59. Resources for learning are satisfactory in most areas of the curriculum and for pupils with special educational needs. There are inadequate resources for information technology, history and early years provision and these impact on pupils' learning. The organisation of resources in classrooms generally allows pupils full and independent access to the resources, which has a positive impact on their learning.

60. The school has the benefit of attractive accommodation, which is of a good size, is

clean and well looked after internally. Outside, attention needs to be given to the woodwork which suffers from many window frames which are rotten. There is a library area which is adequately stocked with both non-fiction and fiction books to support the reading scheme and is an attractive place for pupils to visit.

61. There are adequate hard and grassed outdoor play areas and the pupils benefit from these during break times and physical education lessons. The school has recently started to develop and cultivate a wildlife area and, when complete, this has the potential to be a valuable learning resource especially for the science curriculum.

62. The school development plan was identified as a weakness at the last inspection. It still remains an area of concern. There is no procedure for school self-evaluation to enable the school to gather information on its strengths and weaknesses, plan its priorities for development and budget accordingly over a period of time. The present school development plan spans only one year and is not a helpful document to enable the school to evaluate or monitor improvements. It does not set out how success is to be measured or how or who will be doing the checking. The school's information technology development plan is good and provides a suitable model for a school development plan. There has been some improvement in identifying priorities for curriculum development, notably in literacy and numeracy, and this is having an impact on the quality of teaching and learning. The development of a new school improvement plan with manageable time scales can enable the school to move forward over the next two to three year period.

63. The school has appropriate systems in place for helping to monitor spending with effective use made of computers. Financial planning is satisfactory with appropriate costings identified in the school development plan and this is an improvement since the last inspection. The school's office manager and the headteacher have set up appropriate processes to help them gain up to date information about spending trends. The office manager is very efficient and contributes extremely well to the smooth running of the school. The recommendations of the last audit have been carried out. The governing body ensures it obtains the best value from the resources and services it buys and generally makes appropriate use of specific grants and additional funding.

64. Although the school has earmarked additional funding for an extra teacher to allow the reduction of class sizes to 30 pupils it is not using the allocated money effectively. The number of pupils in the large classes is reduced during the morning session but not in the afternoon session, when pupils in the small class become part of the two large classes. The school needs to review the organisation of classes for the large year group, taking into account all the possible staffing options.

65. The set of aims outlined in the prospectus are met and the school's caring, community ethos is characterised by good behaviour and cordial relationships, which in turn, strengthen the culture of school improvement. All pupils enjoy equality of opportunity.

WHAT SHOULD THE SCHOOL DO TO IMPROVE FURTHER?

The governors' action plan will set out how the areas for improvement identified during the inspection are to be addressed. In order to further raise the standards and quality of education provided, the governing body, headteacher and staff should:

- ♦ improve the information technology curriculum and provision by:

- *increasing teacher confidence through further support and training;*
- *significantly improving the level of resources, including both hardware and software;*
- *identifying appropriate opportunities for the use of information technology to support teaching right across the curriculum;*
- *developing structured opportunities for both information technology teaching and the practice of skills;*

(paragraphs 5, 8, 19, 21, 23, 79, 80, 90, 102, 105 and 106)

♦ review the balance of time given to each of the subjects by:

- *undertaking an audit of coverage provided through the present system of topics;*
- *allocating the time proportionately for each subject;*
- *taking account of the coverage included in the National Curriculum 2000;*

(paragraphs 20 and 23)

♦ review the organisation of classes for the large year group by:

- *reconsidering the system whereby pupils in the smaller class become part of the two large classes in the afternoon sessions;*
- *taking into account all the possible staffing options;*

(paragraphs 64 and 101)

♦ develop a new school improvement plan, to include:

- *arrangements for the designation of leadership and co-ordination roles in each subject;*
- *the systematic development of resources to support the under-fives;*
- *manageable time scales for the plans for improvement over a two – three year period with*
 - a) *systematic monitoring and evaluation of teaching and learning, including target setting;*
 - b) *the use of all available data to analyse pupil performance and trends;*
 - c) *the continuing review of pupils' performance to inform target setting.*

(paragraphs 24, 54, 55, 62, 66, 70, 71, 72, 73, 75, 101, 126 and 140)

In addition to the above areas, the following less critical areas should be considered for inclusion in the action plan. These are indicated in paragraphs 5, 18, 22, 24, 40, 41, 46, 59, 81, 83, 90, 100, 131 and 134:

♦ the music curriculum and provision;

- ◆ the marking practices;
- ◆ standards of presentation and handwriting;
- ◆ the monitoring and review of a number of health and safety arrangements.

PART C: SCHOOL DATA AND INDICATORS

Summary of the sources of evidence for the inspection

Number of lessons observed	49
Number of discussions with staff, governors, other adults and pupils	52

Summary of teaching observed during the inspection

Excellent	Very good	Good	Satisfactory	Unsatisfactory	Poor	Very poor
0	15	49	36	0	0	0

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

Information about the school's pupils

Pupils on the school's roll	YR – Y2
Number of pupils on the school's roll (FTE)	197
Number of pupils eligible for free school meals	8

Special educational needs	YR – Y2
Number of pupils with Statements of Special Educational Need	2
Number of pupils on the school's special educational needs register	19

English as an additional language	No of pupils
Number of pupils with English as an additional language	0

Pupils mobility in the last school year	No of pupils
Pupils who joined the school other than at the usual time of first admission	16
Pupils who left the school other than at the usual time of leaving	9

Attendance

Authorised absence		Unauthorised absence	
	%		%
School data	4.2	School data	0.0
National comparative data	5.4	National comparative data	0.5

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

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 1

	Year	Boys	Girls	Total
Number of registered pupils in final year of Key Stage 1 for the latest reporting year	1999	35	34	69

National Curriculum Test/Task Results		Reading	Writing	Mathematics
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 Or above	Boys	34	34	34
	Girls	33	31	34
	Total	97	94	99
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (95)	94 (97)	99 (97)
	National	82 (80)	83 (81)	87 (84)

Teacher Assessments		Reading	Mathematics	Science
Numbers of pupils at NC level 2 or above	Boys	35	34	35
	Girls	32	34	32
	Total	67	68	67
Percentage of pupils at NC level 2 or above	School	97 (98)	99 (95)	97 (98)
	National	82 (81)	86 (85)	87 (86)

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

Ethnic background of pupils

	No of pupils
Black – Caribbean heritage	0
Black – African heritage	0
Black – other	0
Indian	4
Pakistani	1
Bangladeshi	1
Chinese	0
White	132
Any other minority ethnic group	0

Exclusions in the last school year

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

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

Teachers and classes

Qualified teachers and classes: YR – Y2

Total number of qualified teachers (FTE)	8
Number of pupils per qualified teacher	24.6 : 1
Average class size	28.1

Education support staff: YR –Y2

Total number of education support staff	3.5
Total aggregate hours worked per week	115

FTE means full-time equivalent.

Financial information

Financial year	99/00
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	£
Total income	350,688
Total expenditure	339,876
Expenditure per pupil	1,691
Balance brought forward from previous year	3,000
Balance carried forward to next year	13,812

Results of the survey of parents' and carers'

Questionnaire return rate

Number of questionnaires sent out:	197
Number of questionnaires returned:	75

Percentage of responses in each category

	Strongly agree	Tend to Agree	Tend to disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know
My child likes school	72	27	0	0	1
My child is making good progress in school	64	33	3	0	0
Behaviour in the school is good	60	39	0	0	1
My child gets the right amount of work to do at home	45	46	8	1	0
The teaching is good	69	27	0	1	3
I am kept well informed about how my child is getting on	49	38	9	4	0
I would feel comfortable about approaching the school with questions or a problem	79	15	1	4	1
The school expects my child to work hard and achieve his or her best	69	24	5	0	2
The school works closely with parents	52	35	7	5	1
The school is well led and managed	52	37	5	4	2
The school is helping my child become mature and responsible	57	39	3	1	0
The school provides as interesting range of activities outside lessons	32	47	9	8	4

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

AREAS OF LEARNING FOR CHILDREN UNDER FIVE

66. Attainment on entry to the school is, overall, above what might be expected. Most children enter the Reception class with good social skills and positive attitudes to learning. The under-fives are taught in two parallel classes by two teachers who have been working together with this age group since the start of the school year. Although the quality of teaching is generally good and has a positive impact on the children's attainment and progress, there is a need, recognised by the school, to significantly develop resources across most of the areas of learning, to better support the provision for these children. Nevertheless, inspection evidence indicates that the children settle well and make good progress. At the time of the inspection 16 of the 59 children in Reception were under five. Standards for the under-fives are good. The children are in line to meet the prescribed outcomes of learning for children of this age and many will exceed them. Children attain particularly well in language and literacy and mathematics.

67. The teaching is planned co-operatively, with the mornings focused on language and literacy and mathematics and the afternoons focused on the creative and practical areas of learning. The learning activities have clear and appropriate objectives and there is good record keeping of both personal and academic progress. All children, including those with special educational needs, receive good support from the teachers, the classroom assistant and, during the inspection, from the student on teaching practice placement. A lot of the teaching promotes opportunities for children to practise, consolidate and extend their skills.

68. Very good relationships underpin the quality of the learning and the good quality of teaching in all areas of learning. The teaching, benefiting as it does from high expectations and focused questioning, has a significant impact on achievement, attitudes and behaviour. The teaching is made interesting, sometimes through the use of puppets; for example, 'Hettie Hare' is used to help reinforce literacy teaching and 'Mr Moose' to support numeracy teaching. There are very good relationships with the parents, many of whom expressed their appreciation of the positive start their children receive to school life. This positive start provides a good foundation for entering Key Stage 1 of the National Curriculum.

69. Personal and social development is central to the early years' ethos of the school. There is a consistent, caring approach and positive response from the adults and attainment is good and improving through time. The children are given weekly personal and social targets and 'Bertie Bear' is on hand to hold if a child feels unhappy. Children are secure and confident in the school environment with good levels of self-esteem. They are establishing effective relationships with other children and adults. Children work contentedly both individually and in small groups and they particularly enjoy opportunities to choose and make decisions about their activities. They are eager to explore new learning situations and their enthusiasm is clear. They are very enthusiastic when talking about what they are doing. They take turns, share fairly and learn the difference between right and wrong.

70. Children's attainment and progress in language and literacy are good, reflecting the high priority given to this area of learning. They develop good speaking and listening skills, learning to take turns in conversation and listen to each other. They use a growing vocabulary with increasing fluency to convey meaning to the listener. Most children develop good pencil control and soon begin to form letters appropriately. They listen

attentively, many showing good levels of concentration. They enjoy familiar stories using the listening station. Reading is appropriately valued and children know that text conveys meaning and that it is read from left to right. They associate sounds with letters and combinations of letters and progress well using the school phonics scheme. Most children are beginning to read simple text using these skills, some at very good levels. Writing skills are carefully developed over a range of activities. The children enjoy becoming involved in role-play in the 'estate agents', the 'architect's office' and the 'builder's yard'. These activities stimulate their speaking and listening skills. There is recognised the need to further develop the range of books available including big picture books, together with story tapes and computer programs to reinforce skills.

71. The children attain well in mathematics, where they are working towards the appropriate National Curriculum targets. They can sort and classify, sequence, recognise numbers to 10 and beyond and perform simple addition. They recognise the spoken sounds of numbers and their written figures, associating one with the other. They learn to use appropriate mathematical language and begin to understand concepts such as heavier than and lighter than. They can recognise and copy patterns. They can identify circles, squares, rectangles and triangles and enjoy doing this in the school's outdoor environment. Although adequately resourced in this area, there is a recognised need to develop matching and sorting games and sand and water resources.

72. Children are keen to learn and they attain well in knowledge and understanding of the world. They are given some opportunities to explore their own locality, such as a visit to the local supermarket, but there is recognition that more opportunities could be taken to make use of the local area and invite in visitors from the community. They learn about the past and acquire appropriate vocabulary to express the passage of time. They grow and study beans and cress and plant flower seeds. They enjoy baking. Technological understanding benefits from some access to the computer with a limited range of programs to support children's learning. This is an area for development. The children could benefit from experience with a wider range of construction kits. This is an area of learning which can benefit from a wider range of experiences, supported by better resource provision.

73. In their creative development children attain well and become competent at painting, drawing and modelling with a variety of materials, including clay. The creative activities are often linked to the current topic. There are good opportunities for children to stick, cut and make models and they benefit from opportunities to make decisions and choices when selecting and using materials and opportunities to experiment with various media. They sing a range of songs and begin to develop a sense of rhythm. Although most children cope with the very large group when two classes are put together for music lessons, their needs can be better met through class or group activity.

74. As part of their physical development, children attain well through good opportunities for running, jumping and climbing both outside and during regular sessions in the hall. There is currently no outside play area although there are firm plans to review this situation. At present, there are no large toys or equipment to support children's physical development, co-ordination and social skills. Children improve their fine manipulative skills through working with tools, painting, writing, cutting and gluing.

75. The under-fives are given a good start to school life due to the care of the adults and the quality of the teaching. The school is aware of the need to systematically develop resources to make the provision better. The school follows the local education authority guidelines on admissions but there may be a need to review the arrangements in light of the National Early Learning Goals to be introduced for the Reception year in September

ENGLISH

76. Standards of attainment in reading and writing are good and above national averages at the end of Key Stage 1. These judgements are not quite reflected in the results over recent years when standards were judged to be slightly higher.

77. In the National Curriculum assessments in 1999, the number of pupils attaining the expected level 2 in reading at the end of Key Stage 1 was well above the national average. The proportion achieving at the higher level 3 was also well above the national average. In writing, attainment was well above the national average for pupils reaching level 2; the proportion achieving at the higher level 3 was in line with the national average. The performance in reading and writing was well above average compared with all schools. It was high in reading when compared to similar schools but only in line in writing. Taking the four years, from 1996 to 1999 together, national performance data confirms that the pupils have performed at a higher level in reading tests than in writing tasks. The school has targeted raising standards in writing during the current school year and is confident of better results in the summer 2000 tests.

78. Standards in speaking and listening are good. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils listen attentively to the teacher and to each other. They listen very well in assemblies and most can recall clearly what they have been listening to; for example, in recounting the story of Dr Barnardo. Pupils answer questions clearly during shared reading when discussing the cover, title and author of books such as 'Owl Babies' and 'The Story of Elmer'. By the end of the key stage, pupils speak confidently, respond well to questioning and often use vocabulary very well. Higher attaining pupils describe clearly their own experiences and stories they have read; for example, they are able to articulate clearly their reading preferences and are able to describe their feelings about moving school. Pupils are given good opportunities across the curriculum to engage in purposeful discussion which requires them to develop ideas and opinions and respond to the views of their peers.

79. Attainment in reading for the majority of pupils exceeds the national average by the end of the key stage. Pupils read confidently and with accuracy and their ability to read is enhanced by the use of phonic cues, knowledge of high frequency words and picture cues. By the end of the key stage, many pupils are fluent readers who are able to use their prior knowledge to make predictions about a story. Pupils are developing an awareness of publishing techniques such as the use of blurb to find out more about the content of books. They use a wide range of fiction and non-fiction books and most have skills and strategies to tackle unfamiliar texts. Many pupils could benefit from a more flexible approach to the weekly 'home book' lending system; a number of higher attainers had completed their books within 20 minutes of collecting them, with no opportunities to borrow any more until the following week. Pupils have insufficient opportunities to use information technology for research and their attainment in this skill is underdeveloped.

80. The pupils benefit from a good range of writing experiences for various purposes and audiences. By the end of Key Stage 1, higher attaining pupils write imaginatively in sentences and use full stops and capital letters consistently. Pupils in Years 1 and 2 use a widening vocabulary to vary their stories and interest the reader; for example, in stories about Father Christmas and ones involving aliens. They write their own versions of well loved stories and complete good quality book reviews, such as ones of 'Care of Henry' and

'Stranger Danger'. Pupils make good use of their English skills in other subjects such as science and history when they write descriptions of insects and Roman soldiers. They would benefit from more opportunities to develop word processing skills. Spelling skills are practised and most of the pupils write taking due account of spelling and grammar.

81. Standards of presentation and handwriting are variable across the school and this is an area for development. Pupils will respond to higher teacher expectations. Although examples were seen of pupils practising joined writing Year 2 pupils do not routinely use cursive writing. Handwriting is adversely affected by the lack of lined paper for the older pupils. A number of pupils found it difficult to locate their 'best' handwriting in their books.

82. Pupils' attitudes to work are good and generally characterised by good behaviour. Most pupils settle to work quickly, concentrate well and show a strong desire to succeed. They enjoy shared reading and respond well to the wide variety of activities in the literacy hour. When encouraged to work in groups or pairs, pupils remain on task and make good gains in their knowledge, understanding and skills across the range of activities. Pupils make sound and sometimes good progress. Those with special educational needs make good progress due to the clear targets set for them and the effective support they receive from the classroom assistants; they work very successfully alongside other pupils in the classroom.

83. The quality of teaching is good overall and in a small number of lessons it was very good. Planning is thorough and is based upon the National Literacy Strategy. Lesson objectives for the literacy hour are clear and focused and pupils are fully aware of the purposes of the lessons. Teachers make good use of phonic teaching materials. Organisation of shared, group and individual work is good, providing appropriate activities to meet the needs of pupils in the class. Management of pupils is good in most lessons. A wide variety of teaching strategies are used to achieve the learning objectives. Marking needs review, as practice is inconsistent across the school. The very good teaching observed had a clear and positive impact on the pupils' response, behaviour and quality of learning, including productivity. The pupils make good progress relative to prior attainment. The teaching is creative and fast-paced with very good support from the classroom assistants and, sometimes, voluntary helpers.

84. Useful regular assessments are undertaken to record pupils' attainment and progress. The assessment methods used include standardised tests, reading and spelling records and record sheets to plot progress in the three aspects from the Desirable Learning Outcomes through to National Curriculum levels. The recent policy and guidelines ensure that aims and objectives are clear. Curriculum management of English is adversely affected by the sharing of subject leadership. The school needs to do more self-evaluation, including the monitoring of teaching and learning.

85. Resources for English are good. The school has built up good quality non-fiction, fiction and poetry books for the National Literacy Strategy; this has had a positive effect in the implementation of the literacy hour. There is a wide range of books that are linked to the reading scheme which are used systematically to support the development of reading skills, for group reading and for pupils to take home to read. The school library could benefit from a wider selection of reference books. The accommodation is good and is generally used effectively. The work benefits from the enthusiasm of the teachers and the very good support provided by the classroom assistants.

MATHEMATICS

86. National Curriculum test results at the end of Key Stage 1 in 1999 indicate that the standards of attainment in mathematics were well above average when compared with both similar and all schools. The number of pupils achieving the higher level 3 was well above the national average. Over the last three years the performance of pupils has been well above national average. Inspection findings show that standards of attainment are good overall in the subject. Standards of attainment in mental mathematics and basic number are good for all pupils, including those with special educational needs. Overall progress is sound and sometimes good for most pupils, including those with special educational needs who have clear targets and are supported effectively in their learning. Progress is good for the higher attaining pupils with differentiated work and clear targets set. Progress is helped by teaching which builds on previous knowledge to reinforce learning.

87. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of basic number and number patterns. They recognise mathematical shapes and can use appropriate units. They show skill when estimating, solving numerical problems and recording and interpreting data using graphs. The higher attaining pupils are developing different strategies and methods for working out addition and subtraction problems; they willingly share their findings.

88. In Reception, pupils can count and order to 30. They are able to estimate the position of numbers to 10 on a blank number line and they know the properties of a square and names of plane shapes. The higher attainers understand a Carroll diagram. Year 1 pupils recognise two and three-dimensional shapes and know the difference. They can predict shapes from descriptions given by the teacher, for example, a rectangular prism. They interpret data and illustrate their findings about transport to school in a block graph. Year 2 pupils correctly place numbers on a number line between 100 and 200. All pupils identify reflective symmetry of simple shapes and the higher attainers succeed using more complex shapes. They collect and handle data; for example, concerned with favourite African animals, lengths of words, numbers thrown from a dice and they present the findings in the form of block graphs.

89. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils have a good understanding of basic number and number patterns. They recognise mathematical shapes and can use appropriate units. They show skill when estimating, solving numerical problems and recording and interpreting data using graphs. The higher attaining pupils are developing different strategies and methods for working out addition and subtraction problems; they willingly share their findings.

90. The quality of teaching is generally good with teachers demonstrating very secure knowledge and understanding of mathematics and the requirements of the National Numeracy Strategy. All lessons are well planned using the National Numeracy materials, with clear objectives, activities and differentiation covering all the programmes of study of the National Curriculum. Good methods and organisational strategies are used. Teachers use correct mathematical vocabulary and encourage their pupils to do the same. The pace of most lessons is generally good, retaining pupils' interest and attention. Where teaching is good or very good, particularly in Reception and Year 1, the teachers use lively challenging approaches promoting participation and enjoyment. High expectations and effective pace of work promotes the good or very good learning in these classes and pupils achieve well. Homework is a weekly activity and usually relevant to the current lessons. The school policy is that homework should be a shared activity with emphasis on fun. Marking pupils' work is generally good but could benefit from a review to ensure

consistency. Insufficient use is made of information technology in the subject.

91. The attitude to work of the majority of pupils is very positive. They show high levels of interest, respond well, listen to one another and are appreciative of others' achievements. Pupils show genuine pleasure at others' success; for example, when the correct colour crocodile is chosen to match the sorting activity using numbers to 20 in Reception. All pupils collaborate well and most are confident to explain tasks and share their findings with others.

92. The policy was written by the co-ordinating team and the scheme of work is based on a commercial scheme and the National Numeracy Strategy. The school has made a good start in implementing this strategy and planning is appropriate. A range of methods are used to assess pupils' progress, including baseline tests in Reception, standardised tests for Year 1 and national tests for Year 2. Termly assessment is recorded on an individual record sheet and kept with the pupils' profiles. Resources are satisfactory.

SCIENCE

93. During the inspection it was not possible to see any teaching of science in Year 1 or Year 2. This is due to the way science is taught as part of a yearly topic cycle. The undertaken topics during the inspection did not include science for these pupils. No judgements can be made, therefore, about the quality of teaching or pupils' attitudes to the subject these age groups. There is sufficient evidence from teacher's planning, pupils' previous work and discussions with pupils and teachers to allow judgements to be made on the standards attained and the progress made.

94. Standards of attainment at the end of the key stage are good and above national averages. This is broadly reflected in the results of the statutory teacher assessments for pupils attaining level 2 in 1999 when results were well above the national average and in line with those found in similar schools. The percentage of pupils attaining the higher level 3 was also well above the national average and above that found in similar schools.

95. At the time of the previous inspection, standards of attainment were judged to be sound and often better with some underachievement amongst pupils of above average ability. All the evidence indicates that standards have improved, so that current standards in science are good and higher attaining pupils are achieving standards appropriate to their level of ability. This is an improvement since the last inspection, although there is still room for improvement for all pupils across the ability range.

96. In the Reception year, children develop a good knowledge and understanding of science through carefully planned practical activities; for example, they develop an understanding of electricity by experimenting and investigating with a battery, wires and a bulb. Most children are able to make a circuit to light the bulb. One higher attaining child commented that it is called a circuit because the electricity goes round in a circle. Children record what they have done in simple drawings. In Year 1, pupils can label the external parts of the body such as the head, arm, leg and feet. Higher attaining pupils are able to label the external parts of an insect including thorax, abdomen and antennae.

97. In Year 2, pupils develop their knowledge and understanding of living things and life processes. They recognise that different living things are found in various habitats and make a detailed study of a rainforest. Their knowledge and understanding of the human body is well developed and pupils can name parts of the skeleton and locate major internal organs. Higher attaining pupils are able to make the simple generalisation that the further

away they stand from a source of sound the quieter it will seem. In a discussion with a group of Year 2 pupils, none could describe how to carry out a 'fair test' and some thought it was to do with 'taking turns'. By the end of the key stage, pupils are able to describe and record their observations, often being able to explain what they have discovered from their work.

98. The quality of teaching in Reception is good. Teachers of this age group give clear explanations and show a good use of questioning to assess pupils' understanding. They plan practical activities, which are very well managed and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Pupils' attitudes to the subject are good. They listen intently, keep on task and co-operate well with one another. They make satisfactory progress relative to their ability.

99. It is noticeable from the analysis of pupils' books that much of the work covered in Years 1 and 2 is teacher directed. Coverage is not consistent across the science curriculum, there is an over emphasis on life processes and living things. There are too few opportunities for pupils to practise and develop the scientific skills of observation, prediction and investigation or record in a variety of ways. The opportunities given in Reception are not consistently built upon. The present approach to the teaching and learning of the subject, in Year 1 and Year 2, effectively consolidates knowledge but does not provide sufficient opportunities for pupils to apply skills and understanding in new contexts. These points were identified in the previous report.

100. Overall lessons are well planned and generally take account of the different levels of ability within the class but lack sufficient provision for investigations. The marking of work needs to be developed; it does not inform pupils of their progress or what they need to do to improve. The subject is adequately resourced. Assessments are undertaken to monitor pupils' attainment and progress.

101. Subject co-ordination is an area for review. Science is co-ordinated by a team of teachers who have an overview of planning and pupils' work but there is no formal monitoring of teaching and learning. The staff are aware that the three-year topic cycle does not ensure the regular teaching and learning of science. They see a need to review the science curriculum along with the guidelines and intend to use National Curriculum 2000 as a starting point. To move forward and raise standards further, the school needs to ensure that all aspects of science are consistently planned for and timetabled on a regular basis. There is a need to review the way science is integrated into topics to see if this is the most effective way of teaching and learning the subject.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

102. Standards in information and communication technology are unsatisfactory, as pupils do not receive their full National Curriculum entitlement. Many areas of the curriculum are either omitted or given only partial coverage. Standards were judged to be average at the time of the last inspection. The school is aware of the need to keep pace with its teaching and use of information and communication technology in line with the national trend. Across the school, the extent to which pupils are given experience of information technology activities is variable. A comprehensive information and communication technology development plan is in place covering spring 2000 to September 2002 but this is in the very early stages of development.

103. Reception pupils know how to operate single programs, following instructions using the keyboard and mouse. Year 1 pupils become more proficient in their use of the arrow

keys and the mouse and are developing some word processing and picture making skills. A very good session led by a parent volunteer who works with great enthusiasm and high expectations, gave clear focused support to pupils in the subject in the Year 1 classes. Pupils successfully undertook a program which specifically supported what was being learnt in the literacy hour. Year 2 pupils have recently started a weekly session using the computers in the adjacent junior school. They are learning to log on, load programs and retrieve previous work. They practise word processing skills when they write a few sentences about their environment using capital letters and full stops appropriately. They are learning how to delete, how to make fonts larger and smaller, how to print and how to shut down correctly.

104. Scrutiny of pupils' work, displays around the school and discussions with pupils all indicate that standards are below average. By the time the pupils reach the end of Key Stage 1, their knowledge and understanding of the subject is unsatisfactory. They have few opportunities to learn and practise skills and to apply those skills to other areas of the curriculum. Recently the school has begun to address these shortcomings. A comprehensive policy and scheme of work has been developed to guide work from Reception to Year 6 in the junior school. The school has a very useful information technology progression record sheet and individual skills record sheet.

105. During the inspection only two lessons were observed. It is not possible, therefore, to make a judgement on the quality of the teaching overall. In the small amount of teaching seen clear instructions were given, computer language used was explained where necessary and the pace of the activities were well sustained. The lessons were well planned and organised with relevant tasks taking account of both previous lessons and an awareness of what will follow. The pupils were well managed, stayed on task, had good behaviour and collaborated well with a partner. Some members of staff lack confidence and expertise in the subject. During the inspection many examples were seen where opportunities for using information and communication technology to support work across the curriculum were not taken. In most lessons the computer was switched on but unused throughout the lesson, even though its use would have made a useful contribution to pupils' learning.

106. There needs to be a clearer understanding of how the computer could be used in different situations and how the development of skills can be linked to work in all subjects of the curriculum. Examples were seen during the inspection where some teachers had clear ideas about how to make good use of the computers and did so. It is evident that the skills needed to improve this aspect are already available in the school. Ways could be found to share this expertise so that all staff can become proficient.

107. When they are given opportunities to undertake information technology activities, pupils show positive attitudes. Many have computers at home and so are familiar with the basic operations involved. They show interest and enthusiasm for what they are doing. In most classes there are insufficient opportunities for pupils to develop these positive attitudes. The school is now well aware of the need to give both time and resources to enable pupils to receive their full statutory entitlement.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

108. Due to the way the timetable is organised, no lessons were seen in religious education. Through a scrutiny of work displayed, pupils' books and observations of acts of collective worship, it is judged that attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 meets the

requirements of the locally agreed syllabus.

109. In Reception, pupils learn about people who help others through the parable of 'The Good Samaritan'. They enjoy the stories of 'The Wise and the Foolish Man', 'The Good Shepherd', 'The Creation', including why God made a rainbow, and the Christmas and Easter stories. Year 1 pupils learn about St. Cuthbert and his association with Durham. They write and illustrate creation stories and 'Why I am Special'. They know the story of Noah and the animals that entered the Ark and consider all creatures of the world in their display of 'All things bright and beautiful'. Year 2 pupils write about St. Francis; this story contributes to the spiritual development of pupils by promoting ideas of care, thoughtfulness and responsibility to look after the world, linking well with the school's high profile on environmental issues. Some of the stories about the miracles Jesus performed, such as healing the sick woman and the cripple and Jesus walking on water are familiar to the pupils. From their visit to Durham Cathedral they know the names of areas of the cathedral; for example, the chancel and the nave; their knowledge of this church has links with work in history. Visits to the local church of St. Mary's, Cockerton have inspired artwork depicting the stained glass windows of this church.

110. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils make satisfactory progress in their knowledge of Christianity and other faiths. Acts of collective worship contribute effectively to the subject. Although religious education is mainly based on Christianity, pupils have studied Hinduism and Buddhism. Pupils celebrated the Chinese New Year and Hanukkah, the Festival of Light. Opportunities to learn of other faiths could be further developed.

111. The school follows the scheme laid out in the local education authority's agreed syllabus. There are good contacts with parents and the local community. Valuably, a parent visited the school and talked about the Festival of Diwali. The school receives valuable support from the local parish church and the vicar takes assemblies twice a term. No formal assessments take place. The school is underdeveloped with resources of videos and books to support the curriculum and needs to provide more religious artefacts.

ART

112. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. Evidence from examining pupils' work and discussions with teachers indicates that by the end of Key Stage 1 pupils are working at the level expected and progress is satisfactory in the subject. This reflects the standards identified in the previous report.

113. The youngest pupils learn how to handle paints effectively and express themselves using a variety of media. They apply paint to the edges of shapes and print on paper to make their own wallpaper designs. They are introduced to clay and make tiles, which incorporate simple markings using clay tools. In Year 1, pupils observe and draw shop fronts and interpret these into a representational three-dimensional collage using a variety of materials. They use the stimulus of a visit to Durham Cathedral to make Sanctuary Knockers from clay. Through this they learn how to push and pull the clay to make realistic facial features. Year 2 pupils use a range of drawing pencils to sketch faces; these sketches show a developing use of line and tone and a growing sense of size and proportion. They study the work of the artist Paul Klee and use pastels to create imaginative faces in a similar style. Resources are satisfactory. In Year 1 and Year 2, there are too few opportunities for pupils to explore and use a wide range of media and techniques. Mixing colours to create texture and tone is also underdeveloped.

114. The subject is co-ordinated by a team of teachers and there is an awareness that pupils in Year 1 and Year 2 need to be offered a broader range of experiences. Staff feel that this has arisen due to the greater emphasis now placed on literacy and numeracy. The present guidelines are not detailed enough to enable teachers to plan their work effectively. This was highlighted at the last inspection. There is an intention to review the curriculum guidelines and build on the work done in the early years and progressively develop skills and experiences. The introduction of an art book is a positive move towards monitoring and assessing pupils' drawing skills but it is not yet having an impact on standards.

DESIGN AND TECHNOLOGY

115. Pupils attain good standards. During the course of the inspection only two lessons in design and technology were seen and, therefore, judgements are based on a scrutiny of the policy, planning, pupils' work and discussion with pupils and staff. Standards are above those described in the previous report.

116. In Reception, pupils have opportunities to design and make masks and both Easter bonnets and party hats. They experience junk modelling. Pupils engage in regular focused practical tasks in which their skills and knowledge are developed. In Year 1, pupils design and model a street based on their environment carrying out a variety of practical tests to discover the strongest, most durable and suitable materials to use. Year 2 pupils have a weekly challenge to design and produce a model pertinent to their topic.

117. In both lessons observed the pupils were challenged to design and produce a three-dimensional model of their 'Perfect Park'. Designs had been produced earlier and the pupils confidently gave reasons for their designs and suitability. Most pupils worked in pairs and, after sensible discussions, they chose the materials, tools and techniques to be used. Pupils were able to explain about their models and use the correct tools; they had experience of a variety of materials and assembled them to make a 'Perfect Park'. Many pupils demonstrated inventive techniques; for example, making a spiral for a helter-skelter.

118. By the time they reach the end of Key Stage 1, pupils can explore alternatives and make choices in their designs based on an awareness of the purpose of their design. They can use a range of appropriate materials, and evaluate their fitness for purpose. As they move through the school pupils of all abilities, including those with special educational needs, make good progress at all stages. Pupils show positive attitudes towards their work. They are enthusiastic and involved in their tasks, enjoying the practical activities, but they are also aware of the underlying ideas of designing objects that are fit for their purpose and of evaluating their effectiveness.

119. The quality of teaching is good. Both teachers used good teaching methods, giving the pupils plenty of opportunities to discuss their work, as well as preparing the resources needed, and conducting the practical tasks with due regard to hygiene and safety. Most of the practical work was completed without adult intervention although the teacher and support assistant encouraged and helped throughout. The whole range of the design and technology curriculum is taught, and pupils are given opportunities to work through the whole design, make, test and evaluate the process.

120. The subject is team co-ordinated. Resources are satisfactory and due regard is paid to safety when using equipment. Resources are stored conveniently, so as to be available in all areas. Many pupils bring resources from home.

GEOGRAPHY

121. Geography is taught through a cycle of topics and a small number of lessons were observed during the inspection. Standards of attainment at the end of Key Stage 1 are sound and broadly in line with what might be expected.

122. In Reception, children investigate the school's grounds. They draw simple maps depicting a 'bird's eye view' of the school and its grounds. They create a plan of their bedrooms. They learn of different kinds of houses and write about their own house. They compare features of the town and the countryside. They learn about the seasons of the year and the characteristics of each one. In Year 1, they walk around Mowden and learn the geography of their own area. In one lesson observed, pupils considered the range of shops and interviewed the shopkeepers. They begin to learn about their own community in relation to others as part of a topic on 'Our World'. They can identify the countries of the United Kingdom on a map and locate the position of Darlington.

123. In Year 2, they study the local area and note features on a map of Mowden and the surrounding area and start to learn about their own community in relation to others. Following a walk, they evaluate their own local area, deciding what they like and what could be improved. They plan a 'Perfect Park' leading to drawing a plan and creating a model. They consider different types of maps, including road maps and ordnance survey maps, to show hills and footpaths. They study nearby Cockerton looking at maps and photographs to consider how the village has changed over the years. By the end of the key stage, pupils start to use appropriate geographical vocabulary.

124. Pupils make sound progress, developing early map reading skills; they use mathematical skills to plot co-ordinates. Pupils respond well, showing interest in the subject and they generally sustain concentration and work well both independently and co-operatively. They are usually keen to contribute to discussions and develop speaking and listening skills to good effect in oral work.

125. The quality of teaching is generally good. Instruction is clear and lessons are generally conducted at a good pace. An interesting range of activities designed to develop appropriate skills, often supported by good quality resources, are planned for and provided by teachers. Walks into the area are well supervised with clear consideration given to safety.

126. There is a subject policy and guidance on topics which will need to be revised in the light of National Curriculum 2000. The subject is adequately resourced and simple records of attainment are kept. Management of geography would benefit from being undertaken by a single subject co-ordinator rather than the current sharing of responsibility. Visits around the village and to places further afield, such as the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, Souter Lighthouse and Beamish, add to the quality of the experiences offered to pupils.

HISTORY

127. It was not possible to see any lessons during the inspection. History is incorporated in the yearly topic cycle which operates throughout the school; it was not taught as part of the topics being covered during the inspection. Evidence from examining pupils' work, talking to them about it and what they know and discussions with teachers shows that by

the end of the key stage, they are working at the levels expected in the subject.

128. Pupils convey an awareness and understanding of the past in a variety of ways. This can be seen in writing, pictures and oral communication. There is, appropriately, a concentration on oral work with the younger pupils. Through the topic 'Myself', Reception children develop a sense of chronology when they discuss what they could do when they started school and what they can do now. Pupils' sense of chronology is developed further in Year 1 through the topic on 'Transport' where they study transport across the ages. Their understanding is enhanced through a visit to the museum at Beamish.

129. In Year 2, pupils demonstrate factual knowledge and understanding of aspects of the past beyond living memory, through a topic on 'Invaders'. They learn about the way of life of the Romans and Vikings and use a time line to order significant events from the past. There is no evidence in the work seen of pupils developing a full range of historical skills. The majority of the work of the Year 2 pupils develops their knowledge and understanding of history but there is little evidence of pupils' own interpretation of the past or of them developing historical enquiry. By the end of the key stage, pupils start to recognise some of the differences in the way the past can be represented.

130. The subject is co-ordinated by a team of teachers who are aware that standards in history could be higher. The co-ordinators now see a need to review the topic cycle to ensure all the key elements of history are included in the teaching and learning programme. There is a need to review the history guidelines, as they are not developed sufficiently to support teachers in their planning. This issue was raised in the previous inspection report. The subject is adequately resourced. Simple records of attainment are kept. Pupils' historical understanding is enhanced through valuable visits to places such as Durham Cathedral, Ripley Castle and Beamish Industrial Museum.

MUSIC

131. During the inspection the lessons observed were mainly concerned with singing and some percussion playing. Nothing was seen of composition and listening and appraising and there was insufficient evidence to make firm judgements on standards in these two strands of learning. The work is disadvantaged by putting two classes together for every lesson. On one occasion this involved a group of 69 pupils. Although this worked satisfactorily for singing practice, it would be inappropriate for practical, small group work in composition and for appropriate interaction in appraising music.

132. In Reception and at Key Stage 1, pupils learn a wide range of songs, including ones for collective worship. They begin to recognise the main elements of music and have limited experience of a range of percussion instruments. They can differentiate between fast and slow and high and low sounds and can identify the sounds of some instruments. They start to develop a musical vocabulary and become aware of melody and the rhythm of words. Many develop good listening and remembering skills. Pupils have few opportunities to show good musical ability. By the end of Key Stage 1, pupils confidently sing a range of songs; tuneful enthusiastic singing was observed during assemblies.

133. The pupils observed generally responded well, showing interest and co-operation. Many show good listening skills. They sing with enthusiasm and enjoyment, the younger ones enjoying a good variety of action songs. Overall, pupils made sound progress in the activities observed. Progress could be more marked in smaller groups. Some older pupils find it difficult to settle and commit themselves to the work in the large group.

134. The quality of teaching in the small number of lessons seen was satisfactory. The teaching loses its impact when two classes are put together and the quality of learning is adversely affected. Lessons are generally well prepared and have clear objectives. Few pupils have access to instruments. The effectiveness of practical sessions can be enhanced by ensuring that pupils have much more access to instruments. Good quality piano and guitar accompaniment in assemblies and for singing is provided by the subject co-ordinator.

135. There is a recently reviewed policy. The subject is adequately resourced with tuned and untuned percussion instruments. Pupils enjoy performing in concerts at Christmas and at the end of the year. Year 1 and Year 2 pupils have some opportunities to learn to play the recorder. The teaching is mainly based on a commercial scheme of work which can provide effective support for non-specialists. The school needs to review its arrangements for the teaching of music so that they better meet the needs of the pupils and provide better coverage of the different aspects of the subject.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

136. The pupils' levels of attainment by the end of Key Stage 1 are good. Standards have improved since the previous inspection. Most of the lessons observed were of gymnastics with just one games lesson observed. Evidence in planning and discussion with pupils and staff indicate that pupils have experience in all aspects of physical education.

137. In gymnastics, younger pupils can make curled and stretched shapes and link them into a sequence both on the floor and on benches. Older pupils can confidently balance on different body parts to make creative shapes. Their movements show increasing control and quality of posture. This is seen in a Year 1 class where pupils work on different pieces of large apparatus to make shapes, using various combinations of feet and hands. Year 2 pupils can travel in direct and indirect pathways using light, controlled movements. They are inventive in the use of large apparatus taking their pathways along, under and over the apparatus and show good co-ordination. They dismount with light, controlled landings. Pupils make good progress through the school. By the end of the key stage, pupils can link a series of actions and are able to evaluate both their own work and that of others.

138. Pupils' attitudes to physical education are very good and this has a positive impact on their learning. They behave very well in lessons and enthusiastically take part in activities. They quickly and eagerly get changed and co-operate well when working with a partner or in a group. They react well when given responsibilities; for example, when putting away gymnastics mats. They are confident to demonstrate ideas in front of others and, when given the opportunity, will evaluate the performance of others. Pupils' evaluation of their performance has improved since the last inspection.

139. The quality of teaching throughout the school is at least satisfactory and often good. This is an improvement on the judgements made in the previous inspection report. All teachers make use of the good quality scheme of work and allied material. They plan the work thoroughly stating clear objectives and ensure that lessons proceed at a good pace. In better teaching, subject knowledge is used to directly coach individuals and groups. Time is also given for pupil demonstration and evaluation of performance. These aspects have a positive impact on the standard and quality of movements produced. All teachers manage pupils very well and use all available resources, including classroom assistants who work alongside specific pupils. These elements impact positively on the progress pupils make, including those with special educational needs. Teachers stress the

importance of warm up and cool down routines. This deepens the pupils' knowledge about the effects of exercise on the body.

140. Co-ordination of the subject is a shared responsibility but there is no formal monitoring of levels of teaching or attainment throughout the school. The school places much importance on physical education and ensures that it is well represented on the weekly timetable of each class. This has a positive impact on the standards achieved. Resources for physical education are good, accessibly stored and enable the teachers to offer a wide range of activities.